THE PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY, AND RHETORIC OF MARIUS VICTORINUS

WRITINGS FROM THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD
SUPPLEMENT SERIES

Clare K. Rothschild, General Editor

Number 20

SBL
SBL PRESS

THE PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY, AND RHETORIC OF MARIUS VICTORINUS

Edited by

Stephen A. Cooper and Václav Němec

SBL PRESS

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Atlanta

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2022947048

In memoriam

John D. Turner

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Acknowledgments

We are happy to thank the people and institutions that supported our work on this project. In the first place, we are grateful to those of the SBL Press who helped bring this project to completion: to Nicole L. Tilford, the production manager at SBL Press, and to Clare Rothschild, editor of the Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement series. We are also much obliged to Vít Hušek, vice-dean of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, University of Olomouc, who initiated the organizing of the Marius Victorinus Conference 2017 in Prague, and to the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR) for their financial support of the conference. Stephen Cooper would like to express his thanks to Franklin & Marshall College for continual support of his research, enabling inter alia his travel to Prague to take part in the Marius Victorinus Conference, with particular thanks as well to the librarians of the college for their help in obtaining needed materials. Václav Němec is grateful to the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR) for its financial support toward his work on the volume. Thanks also are owed to Anna Onesorková, for her help in organizing the Marius Victorinus Conference and for her work in the initial preparation of the bibliography. We are also both grateful for the spirit of collaboration expressed by all the contributors to this volume and for their cheerful readiness to respond to our many editors' inquiries. Finally, it is with a note of sorrow and gratitude that we mention also John Turner, who took part in the Marius Victorinus Conference in Prague and inspired us with his usual thoughtfulness, grace, and wisdom. John passed away on 26 October 2019, and we dedicate this book to his memory.

Stephen A. Cooper
Václav Němec

Abbreviations

Manuscripts

A	Assisi, Biblioteca del Sacro Convento, Fondo comunale 296, eighth century.
B	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Phill. 1786, western Germany?, tenth/eleventh century.
C	Charleville-Mézières, Bibliothèque municipale 187, France, twelfth century.
E	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 50.10, southern Italy, eleventh/twelfth century.
F	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 71.4, Italy, fourteenth century.
H	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, San Marco 166, 1125–1150.
K	Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Thott 166 2°, northeastern France or the Netherlands, tenth/eleventh century.
L	Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 84, northeastern France or Lorraine, eleventh century
Lo	London, Lambeth Palace Library, 339, 1100–1125.
M	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14272, St. Emmeram?, eleventh century.
N	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14819, St. Emmeram?, twelfth century.
O	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 6400E, northern Italy, eleventh/twelfth century.
P	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, nouv. acq. lat. 1611, Fleury, 925–950.

R	Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 912 (66 B. L), France?, eleventh century.
S	Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 811, fifteenth century.
T	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 8591, copied from P probably at the abbey of Fleury at the beginning of eleventh century.
U	Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS IV B4 bis, written in Mantua probably after 1455.
V	Bern, Burgerbibliothek 300, France, eleventh century.
W	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 2269, written in France (Bischoff) or Italy (Huglo), eleventh century.

Ancient Sources

Abst.	Porphyry, *De abstinentia*
Acad.	Augustine, *Contra Academicos*
Acad. post.	Cicero, *Academica posteriora*
Acad. pr.	Cicero, *Academica priora* (Lucullus)
Acts Pet.	Acts of Peter
Ad Cand.	Marius Victorinus, *Marii Victorini rhetoris urbis Romae ad Candidum Arrianum*
Adv. Ar. 1A	Marius Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* 1A
Adv. Ar. 1B	Marius Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* 1B
Adv. Ar. 2	Marius Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* 2
Adv. Ar. 3	Marius Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* 3
Adv. Ar. 4	Marius Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* 4
Adv. nat.	Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*
Aen.	Vergil, *Aeneid*
Allogenes	Allogenes the Stranger, NHC XI 3
An. post.	Aristotle, *Analytica posteriora*
An. procr.	Plutarch, *De animae procreatione in Timaeo*
Aneb.	Porphyry, *Epistula ad Anebo*
Anon. in Parm.	Anonymus Taurinensis in Platonis Parmenidem commentarium
Anth.	Stobaeus, *Anthologium*
Antr. nymph.	Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*
Ap. John	Apocryphon of John
Apoc.	Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus*

Apol.	Plato, *Apologia*
Apol. Hier.	Rufinus, *Apologia adversus Hieronymum*
Apol. sec.	Athanasius, *Apologia secunda* (= *Apologia contra Arianos*)
Ars gram.	Diomedes, *Ars grammatica*; Marius Victorinus, *Ars grammatica*
Ars rhet.	Fortunatianus, *Ars rhetorica*
Asclep.	Pseudo-Apuleius, *Asclepius*
Beat.	Augustine, *De vita beata*
Bell. Cat.	Sallust, *Bellum catalinae*
Cael.	Aristotle, *De caelo*
Caes.	Aurelius Victor, *De caesaribus*
Cand. 1	Marius Victorinus, *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem de generatione divina epistula I*
Cand. 2	Marius Victorinus, *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem epistula II*
Cat.	Aristotle, *Categoriae*
Christ.	Porphyry, *Contra Christianos*
Chron.	Jerome, *Chronicon Eusebii a Graeco Latine redditum et continuatum*
Chron. morbis	Caelius Aurelianus, *De morbis chronicis*
Civ.	Augustine, *De civitate dei*
Cod. bruc.	Codex brucianus
Cod. theod.	Codex theodosianus
Coll. Avell.	Collectio Avellana
Comm. Cic. Rhet.	Marius Victorinus, *Commenta* (vel *Explanationes*) *in Ciceronis Rhetorica*
Comm. Eph.	Jerome, *Commentariorum in Epistulam ad Ephesios libri III*
Comm. Ezech.	Jerome, *Commentariorum in Ezechielem libri XVI*
Comm. Gal.	Jerome, *Commentariorum in Epistulam ad Galatas libri III*
Comm. harm.	Porphyry, *Commentarius in Claudii Ptolemaei Harmonica*
Comm. Jo.	Origen, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*
Comm. Matt.	Origen, *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei*
Conf.	Augustine, *Confessionum libri XIII*
Const.	Hilary of Poitiers, *Liber contra Constantium*
Const. ap.	Constitutiones apostolicae

Conv.	Lucifer of Calaris, *De non conveniendis*
Corp. Herm.	Corpus Hermeticum
Crat.	Plato, *Cratylus*
Cur.	Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda ad Paulinum episcopum*
De nat. hom.	Nemesius, *De natura hominis*
De or.	Cicero, *De oratore*
De vir. ill.	Gennadius of Marseilles, *De viris illustribus*
Def.	Marius Victorinus, *De definitionibus*
Dial.	Augustine, *De dialectica*
Dion.	Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*
Div. nom.	Pseudo-Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus*
Div. quaest. LXXXIII	Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII*
Doctr. chr.	Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*
Dub. et sol.	Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*
Enarrat. Ps.	Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*
Enn.	Plotinus, *Enneades*
Ep.	*Epistulae*
Ep. Alex.	Arius, *Epistula ad Alexandrum*
Epit.	Alcinous, *Epitome doctrinae platonicae* (*Didaskalikos*); Justin (historian), *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum*
Err. prof. rel.	Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*
Eth. Nic.	Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*
Etym.	Isidore, *Etymologiarum libri viginti*
Eugnostos	Eugnostos the Blessed, NHC III 3
Eun.	Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*
Exc.	Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*
Exp. Gal.	Augustine, *Expositio in epistulam ad Galatas*
Fid.	Gregory of Elvira, *De fide orthodoxa*
Fid. symb.	Augustine, *De fide et symbolo*
Fug.	Athanasius, *Apologia de fuga sua*
Gos. Eg.	Gospel of the Egyptians
Gos. Thom.	Gospel of Thomas
H. Ar.	Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum*
Haer.	Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (*Philosophoumena; Elenchus*); Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* (*Elenchos*)

Hebd.	Boethius, *De hebdomadibus*
Hier.	Eusebius of Caesarea, *Contra Hieroclem*
Hist. eccl.	Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica*; Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica*; Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*
Hom.	Pseudo-Clement, *Homilies*
Hom. rec.	Marius Victorinus, *De homoousio recipiendo*
Hymn.	Synesius, *Hymni*; Marius Victorinus, *Hymni de trinitate primus, secundus, tertius*
Eph.	Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*
Il.	Homer, *Ilias*
Ilāh.	Avicenna, *al-Šifāʾ, al-ilāhiyyāt*
In. Cat.	Boethius, *In Categorias Aristotelis libri quatuor*
In Crat.	Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria*
In Eph.	Marius Victorinus, *In epistula Pauli ad Ephesios commentarius*
In Gal.	Marius Victorinus, *In epistula Pauli ad Galatas commentarius*
In Herm.	Boethius, *In Aristotelis de Interpretatione editio secunda*
In Isag. Porph. pr.	Boethius, *In Isagogem Porphyrii commentarius editio prima*
In Isag. Porph. sec	Boethius, *In Isagogem Porphyrii commentarius editio secunda*
In Metaph.	Syrianus, *In Metaphysica Aristotelis commentaria*
In Parm.	<Porphyry>, Anonymus Taurinensis in Platonis Parmenidem commentarium; Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem commentarius*
In Phil.	Marius Victorinus, *In epistula Pauli ad Philippenses commentarius*
In Phys.	Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Physica commentaria*
In Rom.	Ambrosiaster, *Commentarius in Epistulam ad Romanos*
In Somn.	Macrobius, *Commentarius ex Cicerone in Somnium Scipionis*
In Tim.	Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentarius*
In Top. Cic.	Boethius, *In Topica Ciceronis*

Inst.	Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*; Lactantius, *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*
Inst. theol.	Proclus, *Elementa theologiae* vel *Institutio theologica*
Inv.	Cicero, *De inventione rhetorica*
Isaac	Ambrose, *De Isaac vel anima*
Isag.	Marius Victorinus, *Isagoge Porphyrii translata*; Porphyry, *Isagoge sive quinque voces*
Leg.	Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*
Lib.	Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*
LXX	Septuagint
Magn.	Ignatius, *To the Magnesians*
Marc.	Porphyry, *Ad Marcellam*
Mart. Pet.	Martyrdom of Peter
Math.	Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis*
Mens.	John Lydus, *De mensibus*
Metam.	Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*
Metaph.	Aristotle, *Metaphysica*
Mus.	Augustine, *De musica*
Myst.	Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*
Od.	Homer, *Odyssea*
Odes Sol.	Odes of Solomon
Or.	Origen, *De oratione* (*Peri proseuchēs*); Themistius, *Orationes*
Orac. chald.	Oracula chaldaica
Ord.	Augustine, *De ordine*
Orph. Arg.	Orphic Argonautica
Orph. Hymn.	Orphicorum Hymni
Paed.	Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*
Pan.	Epiphanius, *Panarion* (*Adversus haereses*)
Parm.	Plato, *Parmenides*
Part. or.	Cicero, *Partitiones oratoriae*
Phaed.	Plato, *Phaedo*
Phaedr.	Plato, *Phaedrus*
Phileb.	Plato, *Philebus*
Philos. orac.	Porphyry, *De philosophia ex oraculis*
Praep. ev.	Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio evangelica*
Praescr.	Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*
Prax.	Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*
Princ.	Origen, *De principiis* (*Peri archōn*)

Quae gesta sunt	Quae gesta sunt inter Liberium et Felicem episcopos
Quaest. hom.	Porphyry, *Quaestiones homericae*
Quant. an.	Augustine, *De quantitate animae*
Rec.	Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions*
Regr. an.	Porphyry, *De regressu animae*
Relat.	(Q. Aurelius) Symmachus, *Relationes*
Rep.	Cicero, *De republica*
Res gest.	Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*
Resp.	Plato, *Respublica*
Rhet.	Aristotle, *Rhetorica*
Ruf.	Jerome, *Adversus Rufinum libri III*
Sent.	Porphyry, *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*
Sol.	Augustine, *Soliloquiorum libri II*
Soph.	Plato, *Sophista*
Spir.	Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto*
Steles Seth	Three Steles of Seth, NHC VII 5
Syn.	Athanasius, *De synodis*
Tard. pass.	Caelius Aurelianus, *Tardarum passionum libri V*
ThA	Theology of Aristotle
Theol. Plat.	Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*
Three Forms	Three Forms of First Thought, NHC XIII 1
Tim.	Plato, *Timaeus*
Top.	Aristotle, *Topica*; Cicero, *Topica*
Tri. Trac.	Tripartite Tractate, NHC I 5
Trin.	Augustine, *De Trinitate;* Didymus, *De Trinitate*; Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*
Tusc.	Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*
Val.	Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos*
Ver. hist.	Lucian, *Verae historiae*
Ver. rel.	Augustine, *De vera religione*
Verr.	Cicero, *In Verrem*
Vir. ill.	Jerome, *De viris illustribus*
Vit. Const.	Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini*
Vit. phil.	Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*
Vit. Plot.	Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*
Vit. soph.	Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*
VL	Vetus Latina
Vulg.	Vulgate
Zost.	Zostrianos, NHC VIII 1

Modern Sources

ACA	Ancient Commentators on Aristotle
AGLB	*Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel* (= *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel: Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel*). Freiburg: Herder, 1957–.
AGPh	*Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*
AHDL	*Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
AMP	Ancient and Medieval Philosophy
AncPhil	*Ancient Philosophy*
ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers*
AnGr	Analecta Gregoriana
AnPap	*Analecta Papyrologica*
ANRW	Temporini, Hildegard, and Wolfgang Haase, eds. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung.* Part 2: *Principat*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.
APhAClR	American Philological Association Classical Resources
ArabSP	*Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*
ASE	*Annali di storia dell'esegesi*
Aug	*Augustinianum*
AugLex	*Augustinus-Lexikon*
AugStud	*Augustinian Studies*
AUS	American University Studies
AW	Athanasius Werke
BAGB	*Bulletin de l'Association G. Budé*
BAW.AC	Bibliothek der Alten Welt, Antike und Christentum
BAug	Bibliothèque Augustinienne
BChald	Bibliotheca Chaldaica
BCNH	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi
BEHER	Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Sciences Religieuses
BEO	*Bulletin d'études orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas*
BERg	Beiträge zur Europäischen Religionsgeschichte
BG	Codex Papyrus Berolinensis 8502

BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BICSSup	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement Series
BKP	Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie
BPat	Biblioteca Patristica
BPhil	Bibliotheca philologica
BRPS	Berner Reihe philosophischer Studien
BSGRT	Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
Budé	Collection des universités de France, publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé
BzAK	Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
CAG	Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca
Cass	*Cassiodorus*
CEPHE	Conférences de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études
CJJC	Collection Jésus et Jésus-Christ
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina
CEAug	Collection des études augustiniennes, Série Antiquité
Chora	*Chora, Revue d'études anciennes et médiévales*
CH	*Church History*
CICNRS	Colloques internationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
CInq	*Critical Inquiry*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
ClQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CMG	Corpus Medicorum Graecorum
CollLat	Collection Latomus
CommKn	*Common Knowledge*
CorPat	Corona Patrum
CP	*Classical Philology*
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CTHPT	Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought
CZ	Collection Zêtêsis
EC	*Early Christianity*
EHS	Europäische Hochschulschriften
EnAC	Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique
EPh	*Les Études philosophiques*

EPH	*Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism*
EPl	Études Platoniciennes
EPRO	Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
ESUFC	Edizioni e saggi universitari di filologia classica
EUCC	Edizioni dell'università cattolica del S. Cuore
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
FC	Fathers of the Church
FKDG	Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte
FonChr	Fontes Christiani
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftstellern der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
GGPh	Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie
GGA	*Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*
GGPh	Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie
GIF	*Giornale Italiano di Filologia*
Greg	*Gregorianum*
HamThSt	Hamburger theologische Studien
HAW	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
HDAC	Histoire des doctrines de l'Antiquité classique
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IPlSt	International Plato Studies
IRF	Institutum Romanum Finlandiae
JCoptS	*Journal of Coptic Studies*
JBTM	*Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JHI	*Journal of the History of Ideas*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Logo	*Logo: Revista de Retórica y Teoría de la Comunicación*
Ltn	Latinitates

Med	*Mediterranea: International Journal for the Transfer of Knowledge*
MedAnt	*Mediterraneo Antico*
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MH	*Museum Helveticum*
MM	Miscellanea mediaevalia
MnS	Mnemosyne Supplement
Montfort	*Montfort: Vierteljahrschrift für Geschichte und Gegenwart Vorarlbergs*
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
MTS	Münchener Theologische Studien
NA^{28}	Novum Testamentum Graece
NAFM	*Nuovi Annali della Facolta di Magistero*
NedTT	*Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift*
NHC	Nag Hammadi Corpus
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
$NPNF^{1}$	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series
$NPNF^{2}$	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series
NT	*New Testament*
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts / Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca oxoniensis
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
OLAW	Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World
OLD	Glare, P. G. W., ed. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.
Or	*Orientalia*
OSLA	Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity
OTP	Charlesworth, James H., ed. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985.
PAB	Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge
PFLSHA	Publications de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines d'Alger
PG	Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. Patrologia Graeca [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*: Series Graeca]. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.

PGM	Preisendanz, Karl, ed. *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–1974.
PhA	Philosophia Antiqua
PhAb	Philosophische Abhandlungen
PhAn	Philosophie der Antike
PhRu	*Philosophische Rundschau*
PIASH	*Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*
PL	Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. Patrologia Latina [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus:* Series Latina]. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–1864.
PLGMS	Programm des K. Luitpold-Gymnasiums in München für das Studienjahr 1887/88
ProOr	Pro Oriente
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
PW	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft*. New ed. by Georg Wissowa and Wilhelm Kroll. 50 vols. in 84 parts. Stuttgart: Metzler and Druckenmüller, 1894–1980.
QSGP	Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie
RAC	Klauser, Theodor, et al., eds. *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum.* Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950–.
RB	*Revue biblique*
REA	*Revue des études anciennes*
RechAug	*Recherches augustiniennes*
REAug	*Revue des études augustiniennes*
REFM	*Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval*
REG	*Revue des études grecques*
REL	*Revue des études latines*
ResOr	Res Orientales
RFIC	*Rivista di filologia e d'istruzione classica*
RFNS	*Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica*
RhM	*Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
RIPh	*Revue internationale de philosophie*
RPhA	*Revue de Philosophie Ancienne*
RSLR	*Rivista di storia e litteratura religiosa*
RSP	Rochester Studies in Philosophy

RSPhTh	*Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RTAM	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*
RThom	*Revue Thomiste*
SAAr	*Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica*
SAJ	*Saint Anselm Journal*
SacEr	*Sacris erudiri: Jaarboek voor Godsdienstwetenschappen*
SAQ	Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen- und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellenschriften
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SCO	*Studi Classici e Orientali*
ScrTh	*Scripta Theologica*
SD	Studies and Documents
SEAug	Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum
SecCent	*Second Century*
SGRR	Studies in Greek and Roman Religion
SHLS	Studies in the History of Language Sciences
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions (supplements to Numen)
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SKGG	Schriften der Königsberger gelehrten Gesellschaft, Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse
SMSR	*Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*
SO	*Symbolae Osloenses*
Spec	*Speculum*
SPNPT	Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition
SQS	Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen- und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellenschriften
SSL	Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense: Études et documents
STCPF	Studi e Testi per il Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici
StGA	*Studia Graeco-Arabica*
StKP	Studien zur klassischen Philologie
StPatr	Studia Patristica
SubMPat	Subsidia Mediaevalia Patavina
SVF	Arnim, Hans Friedrich August von. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. 4 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1924.

SyHL	Synthese Historical Library
SyllCl	*Syllecta Classica*
SymS	Symposium Series
TBF	Theologische Beiträge und Forschungen
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TK	Texte und Kommentare
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*
TP	*Theologie und Philosophie*
TRE	Krause, Gerhard, and Gerhard Müller, eds. *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–.
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TV	*Theologica Varsaviensia*
UALG	Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
VL	Vetus Latina
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
WGRWSup	Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
WSt	*Wiener Studien*
WStB	Wiener Studien Beiheft
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Introduction

Stephen A. Cooper and Václav Němec

The historical significance of Marius Victorinus rests on his position at the confluence of several streams of late antique intellectual life and in the fact that his contributions to those streams nourished, directly and indirectly, the life of the mind in the schools of medieval Latin Christendom.[1] This is not to deny his impact in his own time and on subsequent generations of Latin Christians. Through his translations of Plotinus and Porphyry, Victorinus made important philosophical texts available to the increasingly monolingual Latin reading public of the western half of the Roman Empire in late antiquity. The repercussions of this were fateful, due to the impact of these works on Augustine and to his enormous influence not only on the theology of the Roman Catholic church, but also on several major branches of the Protestant Reformation and, via Descartes, on early modern philosophy.[2] It is no exaggeration to say that when Augustine read these "books of the Platonists," his mind was changed and so was the history of Western thought (*Conf.* 7.9.13; 8.2.3).

As holder of the state chair of rhetoric at Rome under Constantius, Marius Victorinus was "orator sui temporis ferme doctissimus," in the

1. The unsurpassed monograph on Victorinus is the work of the late Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971).

2. See Stephen Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Menn's conclusion is noteworthy: "One moral of the study of Descartes and Augustine is the lasting vitality of the old Platonist and Augustinian metaphysics, which was able not merely to survive and to adapt in vastly different scientific and religious contexts, but to be reawakened by change and to become the source of new intellectual possibilities. I do not believe that this long history is over" (404).

words of his often severe critic Boethius,[3] "virtually the most learned professor of rhetoric of his time" (Boethius, *In Isag. Porph. pr.* 1.1). In his areas of professional expertise, Victorinus composed school-works of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic that contributed to the formation of the trivium, the curriculum that formed the backbone of the Latin medieval schools. His conversion to Christianity, memorably recounted by Augustine in *Confessions*, brought his learning into another realm of discourse, where Scripture and creed provided a new set of authoritative texts and openings for learned discussion. Shortly after his entrance into the church, Victorinus composed a series of extraordinary theological treatises and hymns that have been described as "the first systematic exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity."[4] His interpretation of the Trinity in terms drawn from Platonist discussion of first principles has earned him various titles from modern scholars: "the founder of Christian Neoplatonism" and "the only Latin metaphysician of antiquity."[5]

But it was not just in the realm of Trinitarian theology that Victorinus brought Platonist ideas in relation to Christian thought and faith. In the last act of his theological authorship, Victorinus turned to comment on the Bible to compose the first commentaries on the Pauline epistles in Latin. Origen and others had preceded him in Greek, but the old rhetor seems to have produced his works independently of the tradition of Christian commentary. Drawing on the literary-critical tools of the secular schools, Victorinus developed a largely literal mode of biblical exegesis to present the ipsissima verba of the apostle Paul not only as regulative of correct doctrine and conduct but also as vehicles for theological speculation. Victorinus emphasized the apostle's discussion of justification and faith, even *sola fide* in his paraphrase, and he worked to understand Paul's utterances

3. Boethius, *In Isagogen Porphyrii commentaria*, ed. Georgio Schepss and Samuel B. Brandt, CSEL 48 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1906), 4.12. Boethius was speaking only of Latin intellectuals here. On Boethius's criticisms of Victorinus as a translator, see John Magee, "Boethius," in *Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2:788–812, esp. 791–93.

4. Paul Henry, "The Adversus Arium of Marius Victorinus, the First Systematic Exposition of the Doctrine of the Trinity," *JTS* NS 1 (1950): 42–55.

5. Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, 2nd. ed. (Paris: de Boccard, 1968), 170: "le fondateur du néo-platonisme chrétien"; Pierre Hadot and Ursula Brenke, *Christlicher Platonismus: Die theologischen Schriften des Marius Victorinus. Übersetzt von Pierre Hadot und Ursula Brenke, eingeleitet und erläutert von Pierre Hadot*, BAW.AC (Zurich: Artemis, 1967), 20.

on predestination with the help of Neoplatonic understandings of the soul and its challenges.[6]

Victorinus is thus an exemplary figure of the transformations undergone in late antiquity as the Roman world became increasingly Christianized. He was "ein Mann des Übergangs," an intellectual figure who crossed over from pagan to Christian Rome and in so doing helped build a bridge for others.[7] Writings composed by him before and after his conversion survive—indeed, he is the only Latin author of whom this can be securely said.[8] The study of his works, accordingly, enriches our understanding of how and why members of the *professional* intellectual

6. On this topic, see the contribution of Lenka Karfíková in this volume. This is not to claim that Victorinus materially anticipated Augustine or Luther in his interpretation of Paul. See Stephen Cooper, *Marius Victorinus's Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 148–69. For the most recent effort to see Victorinus as a genuine anticipator of Reformation doctrine, see Dongsun Cho, "Justification in Marius Victorinus' Pauline Commentaries: *Sola Fide, Solo Christo, and Sola Gratia Dei*," *JBTM* 11 (2014): 3–25.

7. Thus Werner Steinmann, *Die Seelenmetaphysik des Marius Victorinus*, HamThSt 2 (Hamburg: Steinmann & Steinmann, 1990), 22. The German phrase is perhaps best rendered as "a transitional figure." This metaphor of a bridge has often been used in connection with Victorinus, particularly to note how Neoplatonism was a bridge to Christianity for him. Thus, in the first dissertation devoted to him, by Gustavus Koffmane: "He was among those for whom philosophy was like a bridge [*philosophia tamquam pons*] over which to pass into a new religion." See Koffmane, *De Mario Victorino philosopho christiano* (Breslau: Lindner, 1880), 3. Similarly in the standard reference work of Martin Schanz: "Neoplatonism created easy bridges to Christian doctrine." See Schanz, *Die römische Literatur von Constantin bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian: Die Literatur des vierten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 4.1 of *Geschichte der römischen Literatur bis zum Gesetzgebunswerk des Kaisers Justinian*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Beck, 1914), 150 (§828). The matter has been too simplistically put, since Neoplatonism could also be a source of resistence to Christianity in Victorinus's time, as evident from the reign of the emperor Julian; clearly other factors have to be invoked to explain the circumstances under which Neoplatonism could be a bridge to Christianity (or not).

8. See Volker Henning Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:123. "For the writings transmitted under the name of Fulgentius, it is unclear whether they go back to one person; in the case of Firmicus Maternus, it is uncertain whether he was already a Christian" (i.e., when he composed his *De errore profanarum religionum*). For an attempt to take Firmicus's *De errore* as more substantial evidence of the author's commitment to Christianity, see Dennis Paul Quinn, "In the Names of God and His Christ: Evil Daemons, Exorcism, and Conversion in Firmicus Maternus," StPatr 69 (2013): 3–14.

class—that is, those who taught the elite classes—detached themselves from the traditional religious practices of the Roman Empire.

It is no wonder that Victorinus's intellectual profile drew the attention of scholars in the penultimate decades of the nineteenth century. In the entry devoted to him in that eminent product of Victorian theological scholarship, the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, Charles Gore concludes it is "worthwhile calling attention to the evidence, suggested by a good deal of Victorinus's theology, of a closer conexion [*sic*] than has been yet noticed between him and St. Augustine."[9] Adolf von Harnack amplified this claim, pronouncing that Victorinus with his Platonist Paulinism was "an Augustine before Augustine."[10] Significant differences between the two figures, however, were soon noted, and a more accurate formulation was furnished subsequently by the late Pierre Hadot, the scholar who has done the most to advance the study of Marius Victorinus.[11] Attending more deeply than von Harnack to Victorinus's pre-Christian professional works and his importation of Aristotelian logic and dialectic into the Latin curriculum, Hadot saw him rather more of a "Boethius before Boethius."[12] This captures better the full range of Victorinus's intellectual profile and literary activity, but the parallels Gore and Harnack observed between Victorinus and Augustine are noteworthy, notwithstanding the undeniable differences between their theologies.[13]

1. *Vita* of Marius Victorinus

Jerome, Augustine, Boethius, and Cassiodorus are the sole ancient witnesses to Victorinus's life and works, along with his granddaughter's funerary inscription.[14] All of these sources refer to Victorinus in his pro-

9. Charles Gore, "Marius Victorinus," in *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines*, ed. Henry Wace and William Smith (London: Murray, 1877–1887), 4:1138.

10. Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (Boston: Little, Brown, 1898–1907), 5:35.

11. For the place of Victorinus in Hadot's *opera*, see Luc Brisson and Michael Chase, "Behind the Veil: In Memory of Pierre Hadot," *CommKn* 17 (2011): 433–40.

12. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 20.

13. See the contribution in this volume of Nello Cipriani for a discussion of the question of the possible influence of Victorinus's theological works on Augustine.

14. All the ancient testimonia are printed and discussed in Hadot (*Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 13–34) as well as in the introduction to Marius Victorinus, *Ars*

fessional capacity as a teacher of rhetoric. Only Jerome and Augustine supply personal details, with both men referring to his conversion as well as to his fame as a secular scholar. The epitaph of his granddaughter Accia Maria Tulliana refers proudly to Marius Victorinus as a rhetor whose resplendent reputation had brought fame to the family (*CIL* 6.31934).[15] A rhetor, as Victorinus himself defines it in his commentary on Cicero, is "one who teaches literature [*litteras*] and transmits the disciplines pertinent to eloquence" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.*, praef.).[16] Jerome provides a solid floruit, stating that Victorinus taught during the reign of Constantius and received honors in 354, which included a portrait statue in Trajan's forum (*Chron*. 2370). A manuscript of his Trinitarian treatises gives him the title "vir clarissimus," which is not found in his earlier works; thus it may be that the honors Victorinus received with the statue included promotion to the clarissimate, the lowest level of the senatorial order.[17] Victorinus's conversion seems to have come shortly thereafter, if we may surmise as much from his composition of theological treatises beginning in 357 or 358.[18] Jerome, in his *On Famous Men*, adds the detail that he was born in Roman Africa ("natione Afer") and that he became a Christian "in extreme old age" ("in extrema senectute"; *Vir. ill.* 101). Based on the usage of this Latin phrase in regard to figures whose lives we are better informed about, we

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grammatica: Introduzione, testo critico e commento, ed. Italo Mariotti (Florence: Le Monnier, 1967).

15. The inscription indicates she had married a "vir clarissimus" (a man of the lowest level of the senatorial order). For the inscription, translation, and discussion, see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 16–17.

16. Marius Victorinus, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, ed. Thomas Riesenweber, BSGRT (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 3.18–20: "Rhetor est, qui docet litteras atque artes tradit eloquentiae." On the meaning of *orator* and *rhetor* as "professor of rhetoric," see Mariotti, *Marii Victorini Ars grammatica*, 12–14.

17. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 31–32.

18. The fourth work in his series of treatises that make up the correspondence with Candidus (*Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem de generatione divina epistula I*, *Marii Victorini rhetoris urbis Romae ad Candidum Arrianum*, *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem epistula II*, *Adversus Arium IA*) reacts against the theological dossier drawn up by Basil of Ancyra and others in 358 but shows no trace of the events at the council of Rimini in October of 359; his later treatises reveal acquaintance with doctrinal development and creedal statements extending to 363. See below, §2.2. For the discussion of the dating of the treatises, see the introduction of Mary T. Clark to her translation, *Theological Treatises on the Trinity*, FC 69 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 22–36.

can infer that Victorinus was likely born in the 280s. Thus he would have been in his seventies at the time of the award of the statue.[19]

The only event of his life after his conversion we know about, besides his composition of theological writings, comes from the note of Augustine that Victorinus had to resign his teaching post in response to the emperor Julian's school-law of 17 June 362 CE (Cod. theod. 13.3.5; see *Conf.* 8.5.10).[20] With this law Julian apparently intended to keep Christians out of public teaching positions.[21] About the date of his death we have no information, except for the sense given in *Confessions* that Victorinus was not recently deceased when Simplician related his story to Augustine in 386 (*Conf.* 8.2.3). Since Victorinus was already *in extrema senectute* when he converted in the mid-350s, it is unlikely he would have lived much longer than another decade after that.

2. Marius Victorinus's *Opera*

Victorinus's writings can be conveniently divided into works written before and after his baptism (355 or 356). Compositions from both periods have been lost, so we possess only part of his oeuvre, which in its original extent was more impressive in volume and variety than what remains.

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19. See Albert H. Travis, "Marius Victorinus: A Biographical Note," *HTR* 36 (1943): 83–90. Fuller discussion of his *vita* in Cooper, *Marius Victorinus's Commentary on Galatians*, 16–21.

20. See *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions: A Translation with a Commentary, Glossary and Bibliography*, trans. Clyde Pharr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 2:388: "Masters of studies and teachers must excel first in character, then in eloquence. But since I cannot be present in all municipalities, I command that if any man should wish to teach, he shall not leap forth suddenly and rashly to this task, but he shall be approved by the judgment of the municipal senate and shall obtain the decree of the decurions with the consent and agreement of the best citizens. For this decree shall be referred to Me for consideration, in order that such teachers may enter upon their pursuits in the municipalities with a certain higher honor because of Our judgment."

21. This intention is clarified in Julian's *Ep.* 36 (423c–d). The possibility that Julian's law did not actually compel Victorinus to resign but that he did so in response to local Christian pressure has been suggested by Neil McLynn, "Julian and the Christian Professors," in *Being Christian in Late Antiquity: A Festschrift for Gillian Clark*, ed. Carol Harrison, Carolyn Humfress, and Isabella Sandwell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 120–38.

2.1. Pre-Christian Writings

Three works from Victorinus on grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic survive.[22] Of his *Ars grammatica* we have the introduction and four chapters (titled *De voce*, *De litteris*, *De orthographia*, *De syllabis*); the rest of work was replaced early in the manuscript tradition by the *De metricis* of Aelius Festus Aphthonius. His longest composition is a commentary on Cicero's textbook of rhetoric, *De inventione*.[23] Victorinus's work is the earliest surviving commentary on that standard school-text,[24] which he (*Comm. Cic. Rhet. praef.*), like Quintilian (*Inst*. 2.15.5: "in rhetoricis"), Augustine (*Cur.* 11.13: "rhetoricos Ciceronis libros"), and Cassiodorus (*Inst.* 2.2.10: "in Arte Rhetorica duobus libris") did not know under that title but simply called Cicero's *Rhetoric*. Victorinus's commentary treats the entire work, though without quoting it fully, in two books. His commentary itself became a standard text of the Middle Ages because of the central place of Cicero's *De inventione* in the curriculum, which it accompanies in some manuscripts.[25] It may be the latest of his professional writings, since it refers to his *Ars grammatica* and perhaps also his brief treatise *De definitionibus*.[26] The latter work, the only treatise from antiquity devoted to definitions, is an expansion of Cicero's discussion of

22. The fullest general treatment of Victorinus's pre-Christian works in English is Michael von Albrecht, *A History of Roman Literature from Livius Andronicus to Boethius*, trans. Frances Newman et al., rev. Gareth Schmeling and Michael von Albrecht, MnS 165 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 2:1616–27. See also Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 61–198, as well the contributions in the present work by Guadalupe Lopetegui Semperena, Florian Zacher, Stephen Cooper, and Thomas Riesenweber.

23. The long standard edition of Carolus Halm has been replaced by two recent editions. See Marius Victorinus, *Explanationum in rhetoricam M. Tullii Ciceronis libri duo*, in *Rhetores Latini Minores*, ed. Carolus Halm, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1863), 153–304; Marius Victorinus, *Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*, ed. Antonella Ippolito, CCSL 132 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); Marius Victorinus, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, ed. Riesenweber.

24. Amedeo Alessandro Raschieri, "Qualche osservazione sugli antichi commenti al *De inventione* di Cicerone," *Sileno* 41 (2015): 343–61.

25. John O. Ward, "From Antiquity to the Renaissance: Glosses and Commentaries on Cicero's Rhetorica," in *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 25–67.

26. Thus Paul Monceaux, *Le IVe siècle, d'Arnobe à Victorin*, vol. 3 of *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne* (Paris: Leroux, 1905), 382. Thomas Riesenweber discusses the evidence in §1 of his contribution to the present volume.

definitions in *Top.* 5.26–28.[27] It was transmitted as part of Boethius's logical corpus and restored to Victorinus by Heinrich Usener in 1877.[28]

Victorinus's commentary on Cicero's *De inventione* notably displays his pedagogy, his expository techniques, and his efforts to integrate elements of Aristotelian logic and dialectic into the rhetorical curriculum (e.g., *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.9). The digressions he includes on *virtus*, the soul, on time, nature, and the syllogism indicate that he aimed to expand the horizons of his students with some basic philosophical teachings.[29] This is evident from the preface to the first book of this commentary, where Victorinus develops Cicero's attempt to forge a positive relation between wisdom and eloquence through his reflections on the proper role of rhetoric in society.[30] The *habitus* ("condition" or "state") of the soul, Victorinus maintains, must be reconstructed through *disciplina* ("training"); and in this line of discussion we see his tendency to weave in aspects of basic Platonist anthropology. Thus here he explains the difficulties of attaining wisdom and virtue while the soul "is entangled and mired in a kind of thick coat of the body."[31] This aspect of his teaching was uncontroversial in its reception in the medieval schools, but the same cannot be said of his elaboration of elements of dialectical argumentation. Cicero's discussion of the distinction between probable and necessary arguments (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.29) elicited from Victorinus remarks about Christian beliefs—the virgin birth and the resurrection—that gave rise to some controversy in the eleventh-century schools.[32]

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27. Andreas Pronay, *C. Marius Victorinus: Liber de definitionibus: Eine spätantike Theorie der Definition und des Definierens, mit Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, StKP 103 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997). The critical edition of the treatise by Theodore Stangl is reprinted in Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 331–62. See Stangl, *Tulliana et Mario-Victoriniana*, PLGMS (Munich: Wild, 1888), 12–48.

28. Heinrich Usener, "Eine unechte Schrift des Boethius," in *Anecdoton Holderi: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Roms in ostgotischer Zeit* (Bonn: Georgi, 1877), 59–66.

29. Guadalupe Lopetegui Semperena, "El comentario de Mario Victorino al *De inventione* de Cicerón," *Logo* 7 (2004): 43–62.

30. Full treatment in Karlhermann Bergner, *Der Sapientia-Begriff im Kommentar des Marius Victorinus zu Ciceros Jugendwerk De inventione*, StKP 87 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1994).

31. For translation and discussion of the philosophical passages of this work, see Stephen Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: The Latin Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 2:719–27.

32. Joseph de Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XIIe siècle*, 2nd ed. (Bruges: de Tempel, 1948), 289–93.

Some of the lost or fragmentarily preserved works of Victorinus are of a piece with his *On Definitions* in displaying his efforts to incorporate Aristotelian logic and dialectic into the rhetorical curriculum. These include a translation of Porphyry's *Introduction to Aristotle's Categories*, used by Boethius in his first commentary on the work (Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 2.18); a commentary in four books on Cicero's *Topics*; and a treatise *On Hypothetical Syllogisms* (Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 2.13).[33] Jerome's statement that as a student he read a commentary by Victorinus "on Cicero's dialogues" probably refers to his work on his *Topics*, which in ancient discourse was lumped with Cicero's philosophical dialogues (Jerome, *Ruf.* 1.16).[34] Cassiodorus also attributes to him translations of Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation*, and even a commentary on the *Categories* in eight books (*Inst.* 2.3.18), but because of the several recensions of book two of Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*, the attribution of these works to Victorinus is dubious.[35] Another side of Victorinus's intellectual profile is represented by his translations of the *libri Platonicorum*, to which Augustine alone witnesses (*Conf.* 7.9.13; 8.2.3). These probably involved writings of both Plotinus and Porphyry,[36] likely including

33. The fragments of Victorinus's translation of Porphyry's *Introduction to Aristotle's Categories* found in Boethius have been edited by Paul Monceaux, "L'Isagoge latine de Marius Victorinus," in *Philologie et linguistique: Mélanges offerts à Louis Havet* (Paris: Hachette, 1909), 291–310; and Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 371–80. For the traces of *On Hypothetical Syllogisms* in Martianus Capella and Cassiodorus, see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 323–27.

34. Thus Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 211–14; see also 313–21 for the vestiges of this work.

35. For discussion, see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 108–13.

36. Pierre Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, trans. Harry E. Wedeck (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 7; *pace* Pier Franco Beatrice, "Quosdam Platonicorum Libros," *VC* 43 (1989): 248–81. Fuller reference to the scholarly discussion in Lenka Karfíková, "Victorinus (Marius—)," in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques, VII, d'Ulpien à Zoticus*, ed. Richard Goulet (Paris: CNRS, 2018), 157–58. For a recent attempt to deny that any works by Porphyry were among the *libri Platonicorum*, see Paolo Di Leo, "Augustine between Plotinus and Porphyry: A Possible Answer to the Problem of the Identity of the *Platonicorum Libri*," *GIF* 68 (2016): 213–39. The endeavor to assign to Victorinus an anonymous compilation by Françoise Hudry has been rejected on stylistic grounds by Thomas Riesenweber. See Hudry, ed., *Marius Victorinus*, *Le livre des vingt-quatre philosophes: Résurgence d'un texte du IVe siècle*, HDAC 39 (Paris: Vrin, 2009); Riesenweber, *C. Marius Victorinus*, 1:10.

the very selections of the *Enneads* and Porphyry's *De regressu animae* that Augustine quotes in book 10 of *City of God*.

2.2. Theological Writings

While the writings of the pagan period of Victorinus's life are more or less standard literary works belonging to the areas of *artes liberales* and befitting a scholar of his type, the theological treatises and hymns he wrote in what was likely the final decade of his life are in many respects unique and exceptional. Victorinus's theological work consists of twelve writings, comprising nine treatises and three hymns on the Trinity.[37] The first of them is *Candidus's Letter* (*Candidi Epistula* 1), a letter, as it were, to Victorinus from a Latin Arian named Candidus, who has long been considered a literary creation of Victorinus himself.[38] The second treatise, the *Letter to Candidus*, represents Victorinus's response to the anti-Nicene arguments of the first epistolary essay.[39] These two works were transmitted

37. The term *theological* is used in the narrow sense here, to distinguish these writings from Victorius's exegetical works on the Pauline epistles. In newer editions the entire set of writings is titled *Opera theologica*. However, medieval catalogs refer to the whole theological corpus by the title *De sancta trinitate*, while Alcuin used the name *De fide catholica*. See Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques sur la Trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 1:61. A slightly revised version of this critical text is Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, eds., *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971). A valuable tool, with facing Italian translation and introductions reflecting more recent scholarship, is Claudio Moreschini and Chiara O. Tommasi, eds. and trans., *Opere teologiche di Mario Vittorino* (Turin: Unione Tipografica-Editrice Torinese, 2007).

38. Manlio Simonetti, "Nota sull'Ariano Candido," *Orpheus* 10 (1963): 151–57; Pierre Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien," in *L'homme devant Dieu: Mélanges offerts au Père Henri de Lubac*, Théologie 56 (Paris: Aubier, 1963–1964), 1:309–20. For a recent confirmation of this thesis, see Florian Zacher, "Marius Victorinus, *Opus ad Candidum*: An Analysis of its Rhetorical Structure," StPatr 95 (2017): 127–35. Candidus is either a representative of an otherwise unknown stream of Latin Arianism or a literary fiction Victorinus created to provide the reader with a comprehensive exposition of supposedly Arian doctrine and with a set of possible objections, which he refutes in his treatises *Marii Victorini rhetoris urbis Romae ad Candidum Arrianum* and *Adv. Ar.* 1A. Volker Drecoll in his contribution to this volume argues for Candidus's authenticity.

39. The two writings have been preserved in six manuscripts. The oldest of them (Bambergensis 46) dates from the ninth century. The other ten writings have been preserved in a single manuscript (Berolinensis Phillipps 1684) from the tenth century. These ten writings are also contained in the first printed edition of J. Sichard from

separately (and more fully, in six manuscripts) from the rest of his theological opus, which is preserved by a single witness (the tenth-century Berolinensis Phillipps 1684). Associated with these first two epistolary works is a third, shorter text—also found in this Berlin manuscript—that is framed as a response by Candidus to Victorinus's *Letter to Candidus*. This work contains Latin translations of Arius's letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius's letter to Paulinus of Tyre, all preceded by an explanatory introduction by Candidus. Editors have accordingly called it *Candidi Epistola II ad Marium Victorinum*.[40]

The Berlin manuscript also contains a series of treatises referred to by modern scholars (since the 1528 version of Johannes Sichard) as the four books *Adversus Arium* (*Against Arius*). The title came about as a result of a misunderstanding. Sichard, who had an incomplete corpus of ten writings at his disposal, believed that the second letter of Candidus was just an introduction to a separate work consisting of four (or five) major theological treatises. He labeled these treatises with the collective title *Adversus Arium*, following Jerome's entry on Victorinus in *On Famous Men*, which states that he had written "adversus Arium libros valde obscuros" ("very incomprehensible books against Arius") (*Vir. ill.* 101). Thus the first book of this series of treatises is referred to as *Adversus Arium* 1,[41] although what Sichard conceived as the first part of this putative treatise *Adversus Arium* clearly belongs instead to the correspondence with Candidus. In its opening (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.1), Victorinus refers to Candidus's second letter and disputes the arguments contained in the letter of Arius and Eusebius,[42] although his attention to the two protagonists of the early Arian controversy soon

1528, which was based on another manuscript that no longer exists but that seems to have come from the same archetype as Berolinensis Phillipps 1684. All twelve writings were published together for the first time in 1772 in the edition of André Galland (see Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:93–95). The internal connection between the first four writings shows that all the writings of Victorinus's theological work originally formed a single corpus and had been divided into two parts only during their copying in the Middle Ages (Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 255).

40. This writing, however, did not bear any title in the manuscript originally. It is only by a later hand that the designation *Praefatio Candidi ad Victorinum* was added (Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:61).

41. The *incipit* preserved in the manuscript (*liber primus de trinitate*) was probably written by a later hand (Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:61).

42. On this work, see the contributions of Josef Lössl and Volker Henning Drecoll in this volume.

subsides. The work continues with a survey of Scripture relevant to the Trinitarian controversy, culminating in chapter 47 with a profound confession of faith (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.47), which creates a logical conclusion to the writing. Everything suggests that *Adv. Ar.* 1A (chs. 1–47) is in fact still part of the correspondence with Candidus, while with chapter 48 a new and separate work begins.[43] For this reason, newer editions divide the first book *Adversus Arium* into 1A (*pars prima*) and 1B (*pars secunda*).[44] The remaining three books of the *Adversus Arium* (2–4) were likewise also originally separate works.[45] These treatises are followed by a brief composition that modern editors, starting with Sichard, titled *De homoousio recipiendo* (*On the Necessity of Accepting Homoousion*).[46] The whole corpus is closed by the three hymns on the Trinity (*Hymn.* 1–3), in which Victorinus expresses his theological doctrines in largely nonmetrical verses.[47]

Despite Victorinus's occasional references to Arius and first-generation Arianism, his theological work was not a reaction to the initial phase of the Trinitarian controversy occasioned by the original teaching of that

43. See Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:63. See especially the opening words: "My dear Candidus: In the first discourse of this work, you proffered and developed many arguments, and some of them are stronger than the arguments of these men, i.e., Arius and Eusebius" (Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 54.4; translation follows Clark, *Marius Victorinus: Theological Treatises*, 89).

44. The original title of the treatise now called *Adv. Ar.* 1B was probably *Quod trinitas ὁμοούσιος sit* ("On the consubstantiality of the Trinity," to translate it somewhat freely), which is included in the manuscript in the form of an explicit (Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:61–62).

45. Also in the case of these writings, the Berlin manuscript seems to indicate the original title in the form of an *explicit*: for the second book, "Et graece et latine de *ὁμοουσίῳ* contra haereticos"; and for the third and fourth books: "De *ὁμοουσίῳ*" (see Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:62).

46. In the Berlin manuscript as well as in Sichard's edition, however, the first of Victorinus's hymns follows immediately after the books conventionally titled *Against Arius*. The order of the last four texts seems to have been jumbled in the Berlin manuscript and in the manuscript available to Sichard. Therefore, the newer editions rank *De homoousio recipiendo* after *Against Arius IV* as the ninth writing of the theological work, while placing *Hymn.* 1–3 to the end of the entire corpus (see Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:62–63). The small treatise has no title in the manuscript, but it is also preserved in another manuscript from the tenth century, alongside the pseudo-Augustinian work *Collatio cum Pascentio Ariano* (*Parisinus latinus* 13371), where it bears the title *Item de ὁμοούσιον*.

47. On Victorinus's hymns, see the contribution of Miran Špelič and Jan Dominik Bogataj in this volume.

Alexandrian presbyter,[48] nor was Arius himself the main target of Victorinus's criticism and dispute. It is apparent from a number of polemical allusions spread across his theological treatises that what prompted Victorinus to begin a new stage of his literary career at an advanced age and to write his theological treatises were contemporary dramatic events on the church-political scene that touched very particularly the church of Rome, whose member Victorinus became after his conversion and baptism.[49] In 353, the emperor Constantius succeeded in defeating the usurper Magnus Magnentius, who had plotted a coup d'état against the ruler of the western part of the Roman Empire, Constantius's brother Constans, who was then killed by Magnentius's forces.[50] When Constantius became the supreme ruler of the entire Roman Empire, he began to implement a consolidation policy in its western part, which included measures aimed at restoring the unity of the church. His main purpose was to overcome the schism that had existed between the western and eastern episcopates since the failed attempt at a grand ecumenical council of Serdica (modern Sophia, Bulgaria) in 342.[51]

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48. The so-called Arian controversy, which was indubitably one of the greatest doctrinal controversies in the early church, broke out around 318 as a local conflict in the Alexandrian church between the presbyter Arius and his bishop, Alexander, but soon grew into a protracted crisis of the entire church in the Roman Empire. According to Opitz's traditional chronology, in 318 a synod took place in Alexandria, where Arius and several of his followers were excommunicated. On the problems of this chronology see Christoph Markschies and Charles Piétri, "Theologische Diskussionen zur Zeit Konstantins. Arius, der 'arianische Streit' und Konzil von Nizäa, die nachnizänischen Auseinandersetzung bis 337," in *Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (250–430)*, vol. 2 of *Die Geschichte des Christentums: Religion, Politik, Kultur*, ed. Charles Piétri and Luce Piétri (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1996), 294–95. Nevertheless, the controversy about Arius's original teaching was simply the occasion that set in motion an avalanche of events that rolled with its own momentum for decades after the condemnation of Arianism at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and after Arius's death circa 335. See Adolf M. Ritter, "Arianismus," *TRE* 3:693. For a description of the events after Nicaea, see Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 67–81.

49. See Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:18–59; Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 263–80; Hadot and Brenke, *Christlicher Platonismus*, 43–70.

50. See Richard P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 316–18.

51. For the Council of Serdica see Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 293–306; Winrich A. Löhr, *Die Entstehung der homöischen und homöusianischen*

The contentious point between the Eastern and Western churches was the Nicene Creed, particularly the controversial term ὁμοούσιος ("of the same substance"), which was intended to express the consubstantiality of the Son with God the Father. The Eastern church tried to omit the term *homoousios* and declared a hypostatical difference between God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the formula "they are three in hypostasis" (τῇ ὑποστάσει τρία).[52] This formulation was set within the framework of a subordinationist theology distinguishing the Father as the supreme God from the Son or Logos as the lower deity, which, on the one hand, was similar to its model and, on the other, had a lower ontological dignity.[53] This doctrinal position was apparently inspired by the theologies of two prominent Eastern bishops, Eusebius of Caesarea and Eusebius of Nicomedia, who in the early phase of the Arian controversy supported Arius but finally distanced themselves from the extreme points of his teaching at the Council of Nicaea.[54] The Western church, on the contrary, insisted on adherence to the Nicene Creed and its term *homoousios*. In contrast to the Eusebian three-hypostasis theology, they declared their belief in a single hypostasis (μία ὑπόστασις) explicitly identified with the divine οὐσία or substance (Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 2.81).[55] However, their interpretation of the Nicene Creed and of the term *homoousios* strikingly resembled the doctrine of the simple numerical identity of the divine persons held by the (long discredited) modalistic monar-

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Kirchenparteien: Studien zur Synodalgeschichte des 4. Jahrhunderts (Bonn: Wehle, 1986), 17–25.

52. This formula expressing the dogmatic position of the Eastern church occurs in the so-called Second (Dedication) Creed of Antioch—the creed composed at the council of Antioch in 341 (see Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 286; Löhr, *Entstehung der homöischen*, 10–11).

53. See Charles Piétri, "Von der partitio des christlichen Kaiserreichs bis zur Einheit unter Konstantius: Arianerstreit und erster 'Cäsaropapismus,'" in Piétri and Piétri, *Entstehen der einen Christenheit*, 356.

54. On the Eusebian theology see Joseph T. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ankyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999); Friedo Ricken, "Die Logoslehre des Eusebios von Caesarea und der Mittelplatonismus," *TP* 42 (1967): 341–58; Holger Strutwolf, *Die Trinitätstheologie und Christologie des Euseb von Caesarea*, FKDG 72 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

55. This formula occurs in the creed that was produced separately by Western bishops at the failed ecumenical Council of Serdica in 342 (see Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 286; Löhr, *Entstehung der homöischen*, 21–23).

chianism. In fact, the doctrinal formulations of the Western synods seem to have been inspired to a certain extent by the doctrine of the single divine hypostasis by Marcellus of Ancyra (modern Ankara),[56] who was referred to as the "new Sabellius" in the East and as such was repeatedly condemned by the synods of the Eastern church. Consequently, the Eastern episcopate suspected the Western church and its interpretation of the Nicene Creed of the Sabellian heresy, while the Western bishops blamed their Eastern counterparts for Arianism.

The culmination of Constantius's effort to overcome the schism and to unite the divided church was to be a new ecumenical council at which representatives of the churches of both the East and West would jointly adopt a new creed.[57] This new confession of faith, however, was to be based on the then-dominant Eastern subordinationist theology. The emperor's main advisers on theological issues at that time were Ursacius of Singidunum (Belgrade) and Valens of Mursa (Osijek in Croatia), two renegades of the Western episcopate who joined the Eastern Eusebian party, and by Basil of Ancyra, who was appointed to the office of bishop in Ancyra after

56. See Löhr, *Entstehung der homöischen*, 22. On the theological doctrine of Marcellus of Ancyra, see Markus Vinzent, *Markell von Ankyra: Die Fragmente, Der Brief an Julius von Rom; Herausgegeben, eingeleitet und übersetzt von M. Vinzent*, VCSup 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), xxvi–lxxvi.

57. This ecumenical council actually took place in Constantinople in 360. The council was preceded by the preparatory Synod of Sirmium in May 359 and by the subsequent great synods of the West in Rimini and of the East in Seleucia, which finally—despite the initial stiff resistance of the Western episcopate—leaned toward the position of homoians in using the formulation that the Son was "similar to the Father in accordance with Scripture" and in refusing the term *substance*. The triumph of the homoians was accomplished at a joint meeting of the Western and Eastern delegations of the synods of Rimini and Seleucia at the imperial court in Constantinople at the end of 359. In the final creed, confirmed at the council in Constantinople in 360, not only was the term *substance* rejected but the condemnation was extended to the term *hypostasis*, so that in addition to Marcellus's theology of one hypostasis, the original Eusebian theology of the three hypostases was rejected implicitly. This result was the defeat not only of the pro-Nicean majority of the Western church but also of the Eastern faction of the homoiousians. See Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 362–82; Löhr, *Die Entstehung der homöischen*, 93–155; Hanns Ch. Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers und die Bischofsopposition gegen Konstantius II: Untersuchungen zur dritten Phase des Arianischen Streites (337–361)*, PTS 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), 5–56.

Marcellus had been removed from it in 336 (or 337).[58] At the same time, however, the Eusebian party itself was splitting into two different factions.[59] The so-called *homoiousians* around Basil of Ancyra proposed the formulation that the Son is only "of a similar substance" (ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν) to God the Father (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.7.6; 8.5),[60] as an alternative to the Nicene Creed's term ὁμοούσιος. The so-called *homoians*, represented by Ursacius and Valens, on the contrary refused the term οὐσία ("substance") completely and adopted the formulation that the Son is similar to God the Father "in accordance with the Scriptures" (ὅμοιος τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς).[61] The two factions were connected by their common resistance against the Nicene Creed and the term *homoousios*. Thus the church in the West found itself under concentrated pressure to accept a confession of faith that did not correspond to its doctrinal traditions.

It was in this extremely difficult situation for the Roman church that Victorinus wrote his theological treatises, which were both a defense of the Nicene Creed and an open polemic against the chief architects of the Constantius's church policy, men who ranked among homoiousians and homoians. Victorinus's theological writings were not only a manifestation of personal courage but also a bold intellectual undertaking, as he attempted a systematic conceptual reflection and exposition of the term *homoousios*, a satisfactory theological interpretation of which was still lacking more than thirty years after the Council of Nicaea. Hence his efforts to find, on the one hand, an alternative conceptual model to

58. See Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 349; Löhr, *Entstehung der homöischen*, 39.

59. On the factions of *homoiousians* and *homoians*, see Löhr, *Entstehung der homöischen*; Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers*.

60. These formulations occur in the synodal letter of the synod that took place in Ancyra in 358 under the chairmanship of Basil. On the Synod of Ancyra see Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 348–57; Löhr, *Entstehung der homöischen*, 63–75.

61. The formulation, originally composed in Latin, is attested for the first time in the creed of the preparatory Synod of Sirmium in May 359 and preserved by a number of Greek witnesses, including Athanasius, *Syn.* 8; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.37. Text cited from August Hahn and Georg L. Hahn, eds., *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche* (repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1962), §163. This synod sought to establish a doctrinal basis for the negotiations of the subsequent great synods of the West in Rimini, of the East in Seleucia, and of the ecumenical council in Constantinople (see Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 364; Löhr, *Entstehung der homöischen*, 99–102; Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitier*, 5–23).

Marcellus's theology, which had been unable to conceive the differences in the Trinity, and on the other hand to the Eusebian subordination theology, which was inspired by the Middle Platonist and Neoplatonist idea of the layered hierarchy of divine entities and accordingly considered the Son as a god of lower ontological status. In doing so, Victorinus incorporated into his theological work metaphysical concepts derived from philosophical texts of his time that treated the relationship of the highest principles in a somewhat different way from the mainstream representatives of Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. In his sources, Victorinus found remarkable attempts to solve the delicate metaphysical problem of the generation of intelligible being or divine intellect that represented the first manifestation of difference and multiplicity from the transcendent One. The metaphysical systems of his sources enabled Victorinus to express conceptually and explain the idea of the generation of the Son and of his consubstantiality with God the Father. Particularly, the solution to the problem of identity and difference among the members of the metaphysical triad existence–life–intelligence and its modalities, as elaborated in his philosophical sources, provided Victorinus with a conceptual model for exploring the idea of the substantial identity and the hypostatical difference of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

2.3. Exegetical Writings

After composing his Trinitarian treatises and hymns (ca. 357–363), Victorinus wrote a commentary on the Pauline letters, composing works on at least Romans, the Corinthian epistles, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians.[62] Only the latter three survive, but they refer to his treatments of the previous letters and suggest that he intended to compose a full series, much as was accomplished within two decades, likewise in Rome, by the

62. The critical edition is that edited by Franco Gori: Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior: Opera exegetica*, CSEL 83.2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986). Gori also translated the commentaries into Italian with introduction, notes, and an earlier version of his critical text: *Commentari alle Epistole di Paolo agli Efesini, ai Galati, ai Filippesi*, CorPat (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1981). For English translations, see Stephen Cooper, *Metaphysics and Morals in Marius Victorinus' Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians: A Contribution to the History of Neoplatonism and Christianity*, AUS 5.155 (New York: Lang, 1995); and Cooper, *Marius Victorinus's Commentary on Galatians*.

anonymous presbyter whom scholarship has dubbed Ambrosiaster.[63] Victorinus's exegetical work on Paul was likely the final project of his long life, and it was probably left unfinished. These commentaries are important for the history of exegesis, not just as the earliest Latin works devoted to the Pauline corpus, but as an adaptation of the literary-critical methods of the Latin grammarians and rhetors to the church's need for a reliable method for elucidating the intentions of biblical authors and the conceptual content of their works.[64] Victorinus's surviving works on Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians contain a mix of literal exegesis, lively paraphrase, and applications of the apostle's teachings to the doctrinal and moral concerns of the church. They also contain philosophical material in passages scholars have labeled "digressions" or "excursions" insofar as they deviate from textual exposition in the narrow sense. Yet scholars have also recognized that these digressions are occasioned by evocative elements in the epistolary texts and thus represent Victorinus's attempt to penetrate, via close attention to the details of the text, the thought world of Paul—and, in the case of Ephesians, the deutero-Pauline author—and to make it applicable to his audience. The mixture of expository paraphrase and philosophical digressions reveals Victorinus's didactic aims and his sense of an audience that needs to understand the theological, soteriological, ethical teachings contained in the Pauline epistles.[65]

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63. For this author and his use of Victorinus's commentaries on Paul, see Theodore S. de Bruyn, Stephen A. Cooper, and David G. Hunter, introduction to *Ambrosiaster's Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*: *Romans*, trans. Theodore S. de Bruyn, WGRW 41 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), xxiii–cxxx. That Victorinus wrote a commentary on Romans is implied his remarks on Gal 4:7; 5:8; and 5:14; likewise on 1 Corinthians by his comments on Eph 4:11–12 and Gal 5:6; and on 2 Corinthians by his remarks on Eph 4:10 and *In Gal.* 6.14.

64. See Alexander Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927); also Maria Grazia Mara, *Paolo di Tarso e il suo epistolario: Ricerche storico-esegetiche* (L'Aquila: Japadre, 1983). The most ambitious attempt to assess the impact of Victorinus's exegetical works on subsequent Latin commentators is Erik A. Koenke (now Erik A. Estrada), "Paul's Divided Patrimony: How Late Antique Commentators on Galatians Shaped the Reformation Debate over Justification by Faith Alone" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2014), 277–485. The most comprehensive treatment of Victorinus's exegetical method is that of Giacomo Raspanti, *Mario Vittorino esegeta di S. Paolo*, BPhil 1 (Palermo: L'Epos, 1996); see esp. 48–52.

65. See the groundbreaking article of Bernhard Lohse, "Beobachtungen zum Paulus-Kommentar des Marius Victorinus und zur Wiederentdeckung des Paulus in

3. The Question of Victorinus's Philosophical Sources

From the point of view of the history of philosophy, Victorinus's twelve (or thirteen) theological writings are of particular importance. Victorinus incorporated into his theological treatises and hymns philosophical doctrines and concepts stemming from Greek authors whose writings are not extant. A brief look at these texts suffices to show that they contain original and surprisingly developed metaphysical doctrines using very differentiated and elaborate terminology and anticipating some of the great themes of medieval philosophical thought. Thus the theological writings of Marius Victorinus bear witness to the varied intellectual life of the Greek pagan environment of late antiquity, from whose original wealth we can now enjoy only a few select gems. For this reason these writings have attracted the attention of many important historians of the ancient and medieval philosophy and theology. Nonetheless, the identity and nature of Victorinus's sources has remained uncertain and controverted despite the significant discoveries made in this field in the twentieth century.[66]

Until the 1970s, there was no dispute that Victorinus should be considered a Neoplatonist author. An early stage of research largely held that Victorinus was directly dependent on Plotinus.[67] Other scholars, however, who were aware of the striking differences between Plotinus and Victorinus, supposed that the source of Victorinus's theological work was one of the Neoplatonists after Plotinus.[68] It was Paul Henry who first made

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der lateinischen Theologie des vierten Jahrhunderts," in *Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum, Festschrift für C. Andresen zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Adolf M. Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 351–66. For discussion of the philosophical digressions, see Stephen Cooper, "Philosophical Exegesis in Marius Victorinus' Commentaries on Paul," in *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity: The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition from Rome to Baghdad*, ed. Josef Lössl and John Watt (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 67–89.

66. For a summary of the discussion of these sources, see Karfíková, "Victorinus (Marius—)," 162–66. See also the contributions in this volume by John Turner, Chiara Tommasi, and Václav Němec.

67. See Godhard Geiger, *C. Marius Victorinus Afer, ein neuplatonischer Philosoph*, 2 vols. (Landshut: Thomann, 1887–1889); Ernst Benz, *Marius Victorinus und die Entwicklung der abendländischen Willensmetaphysik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932).

68. See Reinhold Schmid, *Marius Victorinus Rhetor und seine Beziehungen zu Augustin* (Kiel: Uebermuth, 1895).

a serious attempt to find textual parallels between Plotinus and Victorinus in his 1934 *Plotin et l'Occident*, but in fact he was able to identify only one passage in Victorinus's theological work as a verbatim parallel. Although Henry admitted a number of significant conceptual differences in their systems of thought, he explained them as a result of Victorinus's transformation of Plotinus's philosophy according to the requirements of Christian theology articulated in the Nicene Creed.[69]

This hypothesis was challenged already by Willy Theiler in 1934, who rejected the claim that non-Plotinian elements in Victorinus's Neoplatonism could be considered a mere consequence of the Christian reinterpretation of Plotinus. According to Theiler, these differences can be explained by the fact that Victorinus's theological work drew from Plotinus's student Porphyry.[70] It was Hadot who corroborated Theiler's hypothesis in a decisive way. In 1961, Hadot published an article analyzing the content of an anonymous commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*, fragmentarily preserved in a Turin palimpsest, and he ascribed it to Porphyry.[71] In this article, Hadot for the first time pointed out the conceptual and terminological parallels between the anonymous commentary and Victorinus's theological writings. Like Victorinus, the author of the commentary identifies the pure activity of being, or "to be"—τὸ εἶναι, or *esse* in Victorinus's usage—with the transcendent One. Like Victorinus, the anonymous commentator explicates the generation of the divine intellect from the transcendent One by means of the metaphysical triad existence–life–intelligence, which plays the central role in Victorinus's Trinitarian theology.[72] Hadot elaborates his hypothesis of Victorinus's dependence on Porphyry in detail in his comprehensive *Porphyre et Victorinus*, published in 1968.[73] In the first volume, he identifies and analyzes philosophical

69. See Paul Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident: Firmicus Maternus, Marius Victorinus, Saint Augustin et Macrobe*, SSL 15 (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Bureaux, 1934), 49–54.

70. See Willy Theiler's review of *Marius Victorinus und die Entwicklung der abendländischen Willensmetaphysik*, by Ernst Benz, *Gnomon* 10 (1934): 493–99. See also Willy Theiler, *Die chaldäischen Orakel und die Hymnen des Synesios*, SKGG 18.1 (Halle: Niemeyer 1942).

71. Pierre Hadot, "Fragments d'un commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide," *REG* 74 (1961): 410–38.

72. Hadot, "Fragments d'un commentaire de Porphyre," 429–30.

73. Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2 vols., CEAug 33 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968).

passages (*morceaux néoplatoniciens*) included in Victorinus's theological treatises, which he considered to be excerpts or paraphrases of a Greek philosophical source. Based on a detailed comparison of these *morceaux néoplatoniciens* with the writings and fragments attributed to Porphyry, and in particular with the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, Hadot identifies Porphyry as the philosophical source underlying Victorinus's theological work. Hadot concludes that Victorinus drew from Porphyry's writing or writings, which were closely related to the Chaldean Oracles and which probably contained Porphyry's Neoplatonic interpretation of the Chaldean theological system.[74]

An entirely new light on the question of Victorinus's sources, however, was shed by the examination of gnostic literature. A real sensation was caused by the results of research into the twelve-volume set of Nag Hammadi manuscripts discovered in 1945 that only slowly and under dramatic circumstances reached the hands of scholars and were finally published completely in the 1970s. At this time, only a few years after the publication of Hadot's major work on Porphyry and Victorinus, terminological parallels in these works with Victorinus's theological writings were already noticed. Researchers' attention was drawn mainly to three writings from the circle of the so-called Sethian gnosis: Zostrianos (NHC VIII 1), Allogenes (NHC XI 3), and Three Steles of Seth (NHC VII 5), all of which abundantly use specific metaphysical terminology of Platonic origin including the metaphysical triad existence–life–intellect. Moreover, the titles of two of these gnostic writings, namely, Zostrianos and Allogenes, coincide with the titles of the writings that, according to Porphyry's testimony in *Life of Plotinus* (*Vit. Plot.* 16), were known to Plotinus and his disciples.

It was Michel Tardieu in his commentary on Three Steles of Seth who for the first time noticed the parallels between this gnostic writing and Victorinus's theological work, although he did not yet question Hadot's hypotheses.[75] Already in the same year, however, James M. Robinson challenged Hadot's hypotheses in his contribution on Three Steles of Seth

74. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:461.

75. See Michel Tardieu, "Les Trois Stèles de Seth: Un écrit gnostique retrouvé à Nag Hammadi," *RSPhTh* 57 (1973): 545–75. Some similarities of terminology in gnostic texts and Victorinus had already been noted by Antonio Orbe, *Hacia la primera teología de la procesión del Verbo*, vol. 1.1 of *Estudios Valentinianos*, AnGr 99 (Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1958), 17, 490–503. He maintains Victorinus was

(presented in 1973 but published in 1977).[76] Robinson points out that the triad existence–life–intellect also occurs in Allogenes and Zostrianos, and he for the first time suggests that these Nag Hammadi texts may be identical to the gnostic writings of the same name mentioned in *Vit. Plot.* 16. According to Robinson, if the triad existence–life–intellect is attested in the gnostic writings known to Plotinus and thus probably represents a pre-Plotinian doctrine, then the whole question of the origin of Victorinus's terminology needs to be revised. John Sieber in his article published in 1973 draws the same conclusion as Robinson from his comparison of Zostrianos with Plotinus's antignostic writings.[77] Sieber suggests that the Zostrianos of the Nag Hammadi Corpus is not only identical to the eponymous writing mentioned in *Vita Plotini* but also represents one of the sources of Plotinus's knowledge of the gnostic doctrines he criticized. In his introduction to the edition of Zostrianos from 1991, Sieber puts forward the hypothesis that Zostrianos probably drew from Middle Platonic sources and that the triad existence–life–intellect consequently originated in pre-Plotinian Platonism.[78]

In 1992, Michel Tardieu edited several lines from Zostrianos, with a French translation, for his study of *Vit. Plot.* 16 included in the second volume of *Porphyre, La Vie de Plotin*.[79] Hadot, after reading this study, pointed out to Tardieu that the text from Zostrianos has a literal parallel in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.16. Hadot worked through the adjacent passages in Zostrianos and drew up a list of textual parallels to *Adv. Ar.* 1B.49–50, on which basis Tardieu prepared a synopsis and critical edition of the relevant chapters in Zostrianos. This synopsis of textual parallels and

indebted to the gnostic texts for this vocabulary. See the contribution of Chiara Tommasi in this volume for full discussion of this hypothesis.

76. James R. Robinson, "The Three Steles of Seth and the Gnostics of Plotinus," in *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Gnosticism*: *Stockholm, August 20–25, 1973*, ed. Geo Widengren and David Hellholm (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1977), 132–42.

77. See John H. Sieber, "An Introduction to the Tractate *Zostrianos* from Nag Hammadi," *NovT* 15 (1973): 233–40.

78. John H. Sieber, "Introduction to Zostrianos," in *Nag Hammadi Codex VIII*, ed. John H. Sieber, NHS 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 22–25.

79. Michel Tardieu, "Les gnostiques dans la Vie de Plotin: Analyse du chapitre 16," in *Porphyre: La Vie de Plotin*; *Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction français, commentaire, notes complémentaires, bibliographie*, ed. Luc Brisson et al., HDAC 16 (Paris: Vrin, 1992), 2:503–63.

paraphrases in *Adv. Ar.* 1B and Zostrianos, along with a critical edition of the relevant passages of both texts and with a commentary, was published in 1996.[80] Here Tardieu points out the occurrence of similar terminology in other gnostic writings and Middle Platonic authors and concludes that both texts presuppose a common Greek source of pre-Plotinian or Middle Platonic origin. Tardieu maintains that the best candidate for a Middle Platonic author of this source, who may have been acceptable to both the gnostic sect and the Christian theologian, is Numenius.[81]

Many other researchers support the hypothesis that the Sethian treatises and Victorinus's theological works drew from a common pre-Plotinian or Middle Platonic source.[82] Moreover, some even hold that the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, attributed to Porphyry by Hadot, is also of Middle Platonic origin.[83] Thus, the question of the sources of Victorinus's theological writings and their parallels in gnostic texts has led some scholars to rethink radically our conception of Middle Platonism. Occurrence of specific gnostic terms and doctrines in Victorinus's theological work led also to the hypothesis that he drew directly from gnostic writings as well as from Platonist sources.[84]

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80. Michel Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 7–114.

81. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 112.

82. See Luc Brisson, "The Platonic Background in the *Apocalypse of Zostrianos*: Numenius and *Letter II* Attributed to Plato," in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. John J. Cleary (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate 1999), 173–88; John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition*, BCNH, Études 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 742–44. See also Turner's essay in this volume. However, Turner sometimes admits that Porphyry may have been an intermediary between Middle Platonic sources and Victorinus. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 744; Turner, "Victorinus, *Parmenides* Commentaries and the Platonizing Sethian Treatises," in *Platonisms: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 85; and Turner's contribution to this volume.

83. See Kevin Corrigan, "Platonism and Gnosticism: The Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides, Middle or Neoplatonic?," in *Gnosticism and Later Platonism*: *Themes, Figures, and Texts*, ed. John D. Turner and Ruth Majercik, SymS 12 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 141–77; Gerald Bechtle, *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's "Parmenides,"* BRPS 22 (Bern: Haupt, 1999); Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 743.

84. See Chiara O. Tommasi, "L'androginia di Cristo-Logos: Mario Vittorino tra platonismo e gnosi," *Cass* 4 (1998): 11–46; Tommasi, "*Tripotens in unalitate spiritus*:

However, some researchers continue to defend Hadot's original hypothesis that Victorinus's main source was Porphyry.[85] Luise Abramowski and Ruth Majercik have argued that the Allogenes and Zostrianos of the Nag Hammadi Corpus are not identical to the revelations of the same name that Porphyry references in *Vit. Plot.* 16. They argue that these Sethian treatises represent a younger version of those texts, which ex hypothesi were rewritten under the influence of criticism raised by Plotinus's students Amelius and Porphyry.[86] Hadot himself also believed that theses parallels with gnostic writings did not completely rule out his hypothesis, and that the Middle Platonic doctrines—those of Numenius, for example—may have been transmitted to Victorinus through an intermediary Neoplatonic source, namely, Porphyry.[87]

Some researchers have even suggested that Victorinus's sources stem from later Neoplatonism.[88] According to Jens Halfwassen, not only Porphyry but also Iamblichus may have been the source of some passages in *Adversus Arium*.[89] Matthias Baltes points out the striking similarities between the metaphysical concepts included in Victorinus's theological work and the speculative systems of later Neoplatonists such as Iamblichus, Theodorus of Asine, Proclus, and Damascius, arguing that Victorinus's source was a later Neoplatonist, subsequent to Porphyry and perhaps even later than Iamblichus.[90] This hypothesis also presupposes that Victorinus's

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Mario Vittorino e la gnosi," *ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ* 20 (1996): 53–75. See also Tommasi's essay in this volume.

85. Thus Pier Franco Beatrice, "So Spoke the Gods: Oracles and Philosophy in the So-Called *Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides*," in *Theologische Orakel in der Spätantike*, ed. Helmut Seng and Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, BChald 5 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2017), 115–44, as well as Michael Chase's essay in the present volume.

86. See Luise Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius und die römischen Gnostiker," *ZNW* 74 (1983): 108–28; Ruth Majercik, "The Existence–Life–Intellect Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism," *ClQ* 42 (1992): 475–88.

87. Pierre Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus: Questions et hypothèses," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 115–25.

88. Matthias Baltes, *Marius Victorinus: Zur Philosophie in seinen theologischen Schriften*, BzAK 174 (Munich: Saur, 2002); Jens Halfwassen, "Das Eine als Einheit und Dreiheit: Zur Prinzipienlehre Jamblichs," *RhM* 139 (1996): 52–83.

89. Halfwassen, "Eine als Einheit," 54, 73–77.

90. See Baltes, *Marius Victorinus*, 123–25; Václav Němec, "Metafysické systémy v theologickém díle Maria Victorina," in *Miscellanea patristica*, ed. Ladislav Chvátal, Vít Hušek, and Jana Plátová (Brno: CDK, 2007), 57–60, 71. Unlike Baltes, however, Němec emphasizes the differences between the metaphysical systems underlying

Neoplatonic sources themselves were strongly dependent on the Middle Platonic authors whose influence is probably found in the Sethian gnostic writings, or that later Neoplatonists integrated into their metaphysical systems terminology and concepts that they had taken over directly from gnostic writings, including the triad existence–life–intellect.[91]

The question of Victorinus's sources is far from resolved in contemporary research, as evidenced by the essays in this volume of Chiara Tommasi, John Turner, Václav Němec, and Michael Chase, whose contributions acquaint readers more fully with the various current hypotheses.

4. Contributions in This Volume

The essays offered in this volume aim to present Marius Victorinus in the many facets of his writings and thought. The initial impetus came from the Marius Victorinus Conference in Prague, September 2017, organized by Associate Professor Václav Němec of Charles University. This volume presents the work of the scholars who gathered there and subsequently revised their papers, along with additional papers by four other scholars who were invited to contribute.[92] While no edited volume can treat all aspects of research relevant to the life, work, and thought of Marius Victorinus, we hope in the present work to contribute to the ongoing inquiry in these areas. We also hope to promote further research on this fascinating figure of Latin antiquity, who remained an obscure figure until the pioneering work of Hadot drew the attention of scholars of late antiquity and early Christianity to the many intriguing aspects of his writings and thought.

In the first paper, "Textual Analysis and Rhetorical Metalanguage in the *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam* of Marius Victorinus," Guadalupe Lopetegui Semperena focuses on the hermeneutics of his

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Victorinus's individual theological treatises and argues that he drew not from one but from several sources (see Němec's essay in this volume).

91. The hypothesis that the triad existence–life–intellect and other Sethian gnostic elements were borrowed directly from the Sethian gnostic writings by some later Neoplatonists between Porphyry and Proclus was put forward by Antoinette Clark Wire, "Introduction: NHC XI,3: *Allogenes* 45,1–69,20," in *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick, NHS 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 187–88.

92. The scholars invited to contribute papers, which they revised in light of the editors' comments, are Michael Chase, Nello Cipriani, Volker Henning Drecoll, and Guadalupe Lopetegui Semperena.

pedagogical commentary on Cicero's textbook of rhetoric, *De inventione*. Introducing readers to the more technical aspect of the late antique *artes liberales*, Lopetegui Semperena discusses how Victorinus makes use of the exegetical tools of grammar and dialectic, chiefly definition and the syllogism, to interpret and expound Cicero's teachings on rhetoric. Drawing on modern communication theory, she argues that through the combination of these resources Victorinus achieved an integral perspective on the communicative act to consolidate a rhetorical metalanguage in Latin.

The second and third essays also focus on Victorinus's commentary on Cicero but with a historical-biographical interest in determining whether his brief remarks on Christianity reveal anything about his attitude toward that religion prior to his conversion. In "Hidden Truth? Philosophy and Rhetoric in Marius Victorinus's *Commenta in Ciceronis rhetorica*," Florian Zacher argues against previous scholars who have followed Hadot in regarding the phrase *verum latet* in Victorinus's commentary as an implicit citation from Porphyry (it is quoted as such by Macrobius, *In Somn*. 1.3.17–18). Zacher maintains that the putatively skeptical passages in this work do not reveal Victorinus's philosophical positions but rather the didacticism of his rhetorical teaching. Thus it would be a misreading of these passages to infer from them either that Victorinus had gone through a skeptical phase—a kind of a "Porphyrian pessimism," for which Zacher finds no evidence—or that he had been hostile to Christianity. When reading Victorinus's commentary on Cicero, rhetoric should not be mistaken as philosophy; Zacher maintains he could even have already been a Christian when he composed this text.

In "Christianity in Marius Victorinus's Commentary on Cicero's *De inventione*," Stephen A. Cooper also attempts to resolve the puzzle of Victorinus's brief remarks about Christianity in his commentary on Cicero. Does this passage constitute evidence of Victorinus's hostility to Christianity prior to his conversion, such as most scholars prior to Hadot imagined, following Augustine's depiction? Or is Victorinus's recourse to the Porphyrian tag "what is true is hidden" evidence of a Porphyrian-inspired skepticism about the possibility of finding final truth in any form of cultic observance? Cooper rehearses the history of this debate and examines the evidence and arguments alleged, concluding that the exegetical context of the passage and the conceptual superstructure of the commentary as whole indicate that the remarks in question are indeed a verbal jab at Christianity. This paper thus confirms the picture of Victorinus as having

engaged in anti-Christian polemics, much as Augustine claimed to have learned from Simplician (*Conf.* 8.2.3).

Thomas Riesenweber's "Critical Remarks on the *De definitionibus* of Marius Victorinus" concludes the section devoted to Victorinus's professional writings. Reporting on his efforts to produce a new critical edition of this highly original text, Riesenweber presents a general overview of *De definitionibus*, its manuscript tradition, and a discussion of notable examples of the difficulties textual critics face in their important work. Riesenweber's contribution is particularly valuable in light of the fact that it is the sole piece of scholarship in English on this text, substantial portions of which he presents in translation.

The next essay examines the least researched part of Victorinus's theological work, his three *Hymns on the Trinity*. In "Marius Victorinus's *De trinitate hymni*: Bible, Theology, Poetry," Miran Špelič and Jan Dominik Bogataj work to widen our perspective on these fascinating opuscula. These three little works, because they are nonmetrical compositions, have generally been characterized as rhythmical prose hymns and therefore not poetry in the classical sense. Špelič and Bogataj argue that this formal analysis with its negative conclusion is insufficient, and that these works can according to a broader modern understanding be legitimately considered poetic compositions.[93] They christen Victorinus's hymns as "theo-poetry" and examine them in light of the developing traditions of Latin Christian poetry and hymnody. Comparing the content of his hymns with material from Victorinus's treatises *Adv. Ar.* 3 and 4, they argue for an understanding of this theo-poetry as a deliberate literary form, one he created to communicate the Nicene Trinitarian faith exposited in these treatises through a more inspirational vehicle.

In "'Elegit nos ante mundi constitutionem': Ephesians 1:4 between Victorinus, Origen, and Plotinus," Lenka Karfíková treats the interpretation of Eph 1:4 presented by Marius Victorinus in his commentary on that epistle. She compares his interpretation, according to which souls had existed in Christ from all eternity but were sent into the sensible world to achieve their full perfection, with various accounts of the soul in Victorinus's theological treatises that deepen the motifs encountered in his

93. This has been maintained by no less an expert in Latin literature than von Albrecht, *History of Roman Literature*, 2:1620: "His non-metrical hymns open a new page in the history of poetry; the parallelism of prose artistry converges with the quasi-musical refrain to produce a powerful effect."

commentary. His exposition of Eph 1:4 is then contrasted with Origen's exegesis of the same passage in his Greek commentary on Ephesians, written more than one hundred years earlier (but known almost exclusively through Jerome's commentary on the same epistle). Karfíková shows that although both Origen and Victorinus take into account the preexistence of souls and the creation of the world in their interpretations, they differ in many respects. Unlike Victorinus, Origen suggests that the world was created as a consequence of souls' faults in their preexistent state and that the souls were accordingly diversified before their incarnation, according to their merits. In the concluding section, Karfíková examines the accounts given by Origen and Victorinus of the preexistence and incarnation of souls in the context of Plotinus's solution of the same question in his treatise *On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies* (*Enn*. 4.8).

In "Epistolarity, Commentary, and Profession of Faith: Reading Marius Victorinus's Fictional Exchange with Candidus in the Context of His Conversion," Josef Lössl focuses on Victorinus's correspondence with his fictional Arian interlocutor Candidus (*Ad Candidum* and *Adv. Ar.* 1A). Thoroughly treated for their philosophical and doctrinal content in previous scholarship, these works are explored by Lössl in terms of their biographical-prosopological and social-historical context. He compares Victorinus's career and literary production with that of Themistius, who left a more impressive historical footprint in his compositions and in the notices of his contemporaries. Arguing that Victorinus's engagement in the Trinitarian controversy relates to his preconversion interest in gnostic, Hermetic, and Neoplatonic thought, Lössl maintains the strongly apologetic character of these treatises and suggests that the confession of faith in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.47 may well be the public confession mentioned by Augustine in *Conf.* 8.2.5.

In "Candidus—Fiction or Reality?," Volker Henning Drecoll discusses the widely accepted hypothesis, advanced independently by Pierre Nautin and Manlio Simonetti,[94] according to which the two letters of Candidus are pseudepigraphal writings of Marius Victorinus himself. To check the plausibility of the hypothesis, Drecoll inquires into the transmission of the manuscripts, lexicographic and stylistic arguments, and internal evidence present in Victorinus's correspondence with Candidus. As Drecoll shows, the connection of the so-called Candidus's *Ep.* 2 with Candidus the Arian

94. See note 38 above.

is not attested by the manuscripts, which may suggest that the second letter was indeed a fictitious literary product written by Victorinus. Drecoll argues this does not mean that the same holds true also for Candidus's *Ep.* 1. From his analysis of lexicography and style, he concludes that the lexicographical and stylistic grounds adduced by Simonetti and Nautin in favor of Victorinus's authorship are far from conclusive. They fail to prove that both texts were written by the same author, but demonstrate only that both works belong to a similar philosophical milieu. Considering the internal evidence, Drecoll points out that Candidus's *Ep.* 1 contains many arguments that are not picked up by Victorinus and are totally absent from his own refutation in *Epistula ad Candidum*. Not only this but other pieces of evidence, Drecoll argues, make the hypothesis that Victorinus was the author of the first Candidus's letter highly implausible. In conclusion Drecoll maintains that we can consider Candidus as a representative of a specific form of Latin Arianism, an author who used similar or even the same Platonic philosophical sources as Victorinus for his own theological purposes.

In "The Intelligible Triad in the Sethian Platonizing Apocalypses, Plotinus, the Anonymous *Parmenides* Commentary, and Marius Victorinus," John D. Turner, synthesizing nearly forty years of his research, examines various implementations of the triad being–life–intellect in the gnostic treatises Zostrianos and Allogenes, Plotinus, the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, and Victorinus's theological treatises. In particular, Turner points out the similarities in the ontogenetic implementations of the triad employed by the gnostic texts and by Platonic authors to explain, respectively, the emergence of the Barbelo Aeon from the invisible Spirit or the procession of the divine intellect from the transcendent One. The similarities suggest an intertextual exchange between Plotinus, the Sethian Platonizing treatises, and the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*. On the basis of detailed comparison of parallel passages of Zostrianos and *Adv. Ar.* 1B, and pointing out some parallels between Allogenes and Victorinus's writings, Turner argues that both these gnostic texts and Victorinus drew on a common source. This may have been a commentary on the first two hypotheses of *Parmenides*, similar but probably not identical to the anonymous commentary. Turner concludes that the common source was pre-Plotinian and Middle Platonic, and that it predated even the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary. At the same time, however, Turner claims that the Sethian Platonizing treatises are not only the earliest attested source but also the ultimate provenance of an ontogenetic implementation of the being–life–intellect triad.

In "Once Again: Marius Victorinus and Gnosticism," Chiara Tommasi focuses on gnostic elements in Victorinus's theological work and argues that he worked not only from Middle Platonic and Neoplatonic sources but also from gnostic texts, as well as some Christian documents pertaining to the Arian controversy. She points out that very specific words and doctrines used by Victorinus in his theological work occur massively in gnostic writings but are otherwise rare in Greek literature. Especially the triad being–life–intellect in its various modalities, characterized by abstract nouns or verbs, is best attested in gnostic treatises. Tommasi also suggests that Victorinus may have borrowed the term *tripotens spiritus* (found in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50) directly from gnostic literature. Of similar provenance may have been his characterization of the Holy Spirit as blessedness, his idea of self-generation of the Logos, and his conception of Christ's androgyny, as well as some elements of his doctrine of the soul. Tommasi concludes that Victorinus used a plurality of sources in his theological work, including gnostic literature, chiefly of the Sethian school, but that he worked over and deployed these sources with an independence of thought.

In "Metaphysical Systems in the Theological Work of Marius Victorinus," Václav Němec offers a new, concise reconstruction of the metaphysical background of Victorinus's theological work while pointing out the differences between the metaphysical systems underlying the individual treatises. Němec's comparative analysis of Victorinus's writings indicates that he made use of three metaphysical concepts that modify the triad being–life–intelligence in three different ways. The different concepts included in Victorinus's theological treatises are compared with the metaphysical systems of Porphyry, the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, two anonymous authors mentioned in Proclus's commentary on *Parmenides*, and the treatises of Platonizing Sethian gnostics. This comparison shows that Victorinus probably drew on three different but cognate sources stemming from a common intellectual milieu. As Němec argues (following Matthias Baltes), the metaphysical systems present in Victorinus's theological writings have many elements in common with later Neoplatonists such as Iamblichus, Theodorus of Asine, and Proclus. Consequently, Němec considers it very improbable that Victorinus drew immediately from Middle Platonic or gnostic sources. Setting out these lines of inquiry, the essay concludes with a discussion about the plausibility of the main hypotheses under consideration in the research in this area.

The final two essays in this volume focus on the reception history of Victorinus's Trinitarian works and their sources. Nello Cipriani treats a

topic that has been a matter of scholarly controversy since the late nineteenth century. In "Augustine and the Writings of Marius Victorinus," Cipriani provides extensive discussion of the most compelling passages alleged as evidence for the claim that Victorinus's writings were read and studied by Augustine. As Cipriani has argued previously, Augustine in his dialogues appears to have incorporated a number of features of Victorinus's Trinitarian language and conceptuality. Cipriani also discusses several passages from slightly later treatises of Augustine (*De vera religione*, *De libero arbitrio*, *De fide et symbolo*), as well his commentary on Galatians, where he maintains the influence of Victorinus is also palpable. In the final section Cipriani presents a plethora of evidence that in *De Trinitate* Augustine criticizes several points of Victorinus's Trinitarian thought and terminology but still adopts his understanding of the Holy Spirit as the "bond"—*copula*, *conexio*, or *complexio*—of the Father and the Son. Cipriani is not alone among recent scholars in rearguing the case for Augustine's use of Victorinus,[95] but here he does so in a comprehensive manner, making the results of his many contributions in Italian on the question now available to a wider audience.[96]

The concluding essay in the volume brings us to the connections between ancient Neoplatonism and medieval Arabic philosophy, thanks to the wide expertise of Michael Chase, who traces some of the key ideas Victorinus absorbed from his Greek philosophical sources into the world of Islamic philosophy. Chase's contribution, "Essence and Existence in Marius Victorinus and in Avicenna," focuses on Victorinus's doctrine of existence or "to be" as a pure, indeterminate act, in distinction to what one encounters in a concrete existent determined by its substantial and

95. Many of Cipriani's claims have been assessed by Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 26–37, 79, 126, 294–95 (we are grateful to Sarah Byers for this reference). See also Sarah Byers, "'Consubstantiality' as a Philosophical-theological Problem: Victorinus' Hylomorphic Model of God and His 'correction' by Augustine," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 75 (2022): 12–22.

96. See the contributions of Nello Cipriani on this issue: Cipriani, "Le fonti cristiane della dottrina trinitaria nei primi Dialoghi di S. Agostino," *Aug* 34 (1994): 253–312; Cipriani, "La *retractatio* Agostiniana sulla processione-generazione dello Spirito Santo (*Trin*. 5.12.13)," *Aug* 37 (1997): 431–39; Cipriani, "Agostino lettore dei Commentari paolini di Mario Vittorino," *Aug* 38 (1998): 413–28; Cipriani, "La presenza di Mario Vittorino nella riflessione trinitaria di Agostino," *Aug* 42 (2002): 261–313; Cipriani, "Le fonti patristiche e filosofiche del De Trinitate di S. Agostino," *Aug* 55 (2015): 427–60.

accidental qualities. Following Pierre Hadot's original hypothesis, Chase maintains that the source of this specific metaphysical doctrine was Porphyry. Particularly Victorinus's concept of God the Father as pure "to be" and of the Son as the existent or the first substance was inspired by the metaphysical scheme of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* that Hadot has attributed to Porphyry. According to Chase, the distinction between "to be" and the existent—a distinction found in Porphyry, Victorinus, and Boethius—is analogous to the Avicennian distinction between essence and existence. As Chase argues, a whole complex of shared ideas common to Victorinus, Boethius, and Avicenna may have been encountered by Avicenna in the Neoplatonica Arabica, a set of Neoplatonic texts circulating in the Arabic world, some of which were likely of Porphyrian origin.

Textual Analysis and Rhetorical Metalanguage in the *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam* of Marius Victorinus

Guadalupe Lopetegui Semperena

Marius Victorinus, known as a grammarian, rhetorician, and Neoplatonic philosopher, represents perfectly the figure of the intellectual and teacher versed in the disciplines of the trivium. This triple status conditions the facture of his exegetical work, both rhetorical-dialectical and philosophical. Such an approach must also be taken into account when evaluating the didactic procedures that Victorinus applies in his extensive commentary on Cicero's *De inventione*.[1] Moreover, this perspective explains the role he takes with respect to the reader: exegete, teacher, and interpreter. In this vein, he shows a constant interest in clarifying the technical meaning of numerous terms and in analyzing the conceptual framework of the text.

While it is true that the relationship between dialectic and rhetoric has often been presented in terms of rivalry, it is also true that the two "have collaborated and competed"[2] over their long history and that since

1. The critical edition cited here is that of Antonella Ippolito, although I have taken into account the annotations of Thomas Riesenweber about several passages. See Marius Victorinus, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, ed. Ippolito, CCSL 132 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar und Indices*, vol. 2 of *C. Marius Victorinus, Commenta in Ciceronis rhetorica*, UALG 120 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015). In the present contribution I refer to Victorinus's commentary on *De inventione* under the title of Ippolito's edition and the one used by Riesenweber. Ippolito notes the terminological diversity found in the complex manuscript tradition: "The commentary survives … with the title of *Explanationes, Commentum*, or *Commentarium in Ciceronis Rhetoricam* in approximately twenty witnesses, datable, with the exception of D, from the ninth to the twelth century" (*Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, xxxv). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

2. Peter Mack, "Humanist Rhetoric and Dialectic," in *The Cambridge Companion*

Aristotle they have been considered complementary disciplines relating to logical argumentation and persuasive communication, respectively. In fact, the two share a common tool in the analysis of the communicative act: argumentative and eloquent resources. In the Roman sphere, Cicero and Quintilian favored including dialectic in the training of the orator, on the condition of avoiding excessively technical aspects. As Peter Mack points out, "the cycle of the seven liberal arts … institutionalized cooperation between the two."[3] In his commentary on *De inventione*, Victorinus undoubtedly displays not only a profound mastery of the arts of trivium but also an example of how to apply them together in order to read and comment on a classical text. This integrative view is the most striking feature of Victorinus's commentary—more specifically, the hermeneutic application of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic as disciplines that provide a range of techniques for analyzing texts.[4]

In previous scholarship, the aspect emphasized most about the commentary on *De inventione* has been the author's inclusion of numerous philosophical digressions, especially in the first of the two books of this work.[5] Since I have dealt with this question elsewhere,[6] here I am going to

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to Renaissance Humanism, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 83.

3. Peter Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 7–8. Mack also insists on the idea that the three arts were necessary to provide the cultivated man with a complete formation. Significant figures of humanism claimed an integrating conception, which was to be lost in the following centuries.

4. In fact, the prevailing tendency in the evolution of rhetoric was to restrict its field to the judicial and elocutive spheres, so that in the following centuries took place a kind of divorce between dialectic as an art of debate and argumentation, and rhetoric as a technique for the elaboration of persuasive and elegant discourses. In the Renaissance "what distinguishes humanist from medieval approaches to rhetoric and dialectic is that the two subjects were made to work together in the study of classical texts" (Mack, "Humanist Rhetoric," 83).

5. See Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), 79: "But the interesting thing about the commentary is not in these few details [about rhetoric that Victorinus adds to Cicero's teaching]. It is above all in the digressions and philosophical remarks, thanks to which Victorinus makes available to his students or readers ideas contained in philosophical handbooks."

6. Some time ago I studied the digressions in Victorinus's preface to his commentary on *De inventione*, in Guadalupe Lopetegui, "El comentario de Mario Victorino al *De Inventione* de Cicerón," *Logo* 7 (2004): 43–62; Lopetegui, "Mario Victorino, *In*

examine the techniques that Victorinus applies for reading and interpreting the Ciceronian text. As we will see, such procedures are linked to the author's grammatical-rhetorical formation and his professorial activity as rhetor and philosopher. In addition, this analysis allows him to consolidate a rhetorical-dialectical metalanguage based on previous Greco-Latin sources and to ensure its transmission to later centuries.

1. Grammar, Rhetoric, and Philosophy in Late Antiquity

As I have already noted, our starting point for understanding the procedures of textual analysis in Victorinus's commentary is the close connection that was established between the trivium disciplines in the Greco-Roman school.[7] The rhetorical formation described by Quintilian in his *Institutio oratoria* (ca. 95 CE) shows a general framework in which grammar and rhetoric share, to a certain extent, didactic and exegetical methods for textual analysis.[8] In late antiquity, the hermeneutic proceedings of dialectic, in connection with the rhetorical *inventio*, should be included in this general framework.[9]

On the other side, the epistemological breadth that characterized grammar in antiquity allows us to state that this *ars* constituted the foundation on which all higher education was based. In addition to the study of the various linguistic levels, the *virtutes* and *vitia*—"strengths and faults"—of language uses, and the extensive range of figures and poetic licenses, formed part of the contents of this fundamental discipline. Thus

rhetoricam M. Tullii Ciceronis explanationes," in *Antología de textos sobre Retórica (ss. IV–IX)*, ed. Guadalupe Lopetegui, María Muñoz, and Elena Redondo (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2007), 223–72.

7. As regards the relationship between grammar and rhetoric, "the one concerned with textual commentary, the other with textual (or oratorical) production, there was much contested ground, for the concerns of these two disciplines overlapped and intersected in a variety of ways." Thus Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 9.

8. As Copeland states, Quintilian's work provides an interesting perspective on the intersection of grammar and rhetoric. The famous rhetor, when introducing the theory of declamation, "remarks on the value for the rhetor of adopting the expository methods of the *grammaticus* … the exegetical methods of the grammarians may be brought the aims of rhetoric" (*Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation*, 24).

9. Guadalupe Lopetegui, "La evolución de la teoría retórica de los siglos IV a IX," in Lopetegui, Muñoz, and Redondo, *Antología de textos sobre Retórica*, 23–29.

it should be pointed out that definition, a key procedure in the commentary to the *De inventione*, was a fundamental means used by dialecticians, *rhetores* (teachers of rhetoric), and grammarians. On the one hand, within the scope of rhetoric and dialectic, definition was an essential tool to formulate arguments; and it therefore played an important role within the rhetorical *inventio*. In the field of grammar, it was a fundamental instrument for analyzing the various types of words and the linguistic uses in general, especially the *vitia verborum*. The extensive use of definition as an analytical resource shows the profound interaction of the three language arts in Victorinus's commentary.

In the following sections, I will first point out some data relating to Victorinus's dialectical-rhetorical works in order to situate them within the broader framework of the grammatical teaching of his time. Subsequently, I will list the main hermeneutic procedures applied by the author in the commentary of the Ciceronian text. This will allow me to prove that such procedures, which are common to the three arts, are an effective conceptual tool for textual interpretation. Finally, I wish to underscore the degree of precision Victorinus achieves in his terminological analysis and the importance of commentary in the consolidation of a rhetorical metalanguage in Latin.

2. Victorinus's Written Production and the Trivium Disciplines

First, it should be noted that Victorinus's grammatical works are closely linked to his dialectical treatises.[10] Yet, as Pierre Hadot explains, the latter

10. Anneli Luhtala postulates a continuous interaction between grammar and philosophy during the first three centuries of the Christian era. See Luhtala, *Grammar and Philosophy in Late Antiquity: A Study of Priscian's Sources*, SHLS 107 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2005), 150. According to the traditional view, during the second century BCE grammar adopted its standard philosophical categories. However, Luhtala proves that this interaction has also existed from the time of Andronicus the Rhodian until the time of Priscian. In this sense, Augustine's works are significant. In the dialogues *De ordine* and *De magistro*, he offers what Luhtala calls "the most explicit statement of the importance of dialectic for the study of grammar, which is true and scientific insofar as it employs the dialectical method. Grammar ought to make use of dialectical definitions, divisions and syllogisms, it is claimed.… This is precisely what we find in fourth century grammar: philosophical semantics as well as the philosopher's method of definitions are fully integrated into its framework" (*Grammar and Philosophy*, 150). Concerning this question, Victorinus defends the same position as Augustine. For a

have experienced a different fortune: the translations of the Porphyrian *Isagoge* and of the *Categories* of Aristotle together with the corresponding commentary, as well as the translation of the *Peri Hermeneias*, have all been lost.[11] In addition, the commentary on Cicero's *Topics* is preserved only in the summaries of Capella, Boethius, and Cassiodorus.[12] Two small works complementary to the latter are the treatises *De syllogismis hypotheticis* (lost but summarized by Cassiodorus) and *De definitionibus* (preserved and summarized also by Cassiodorus). This latter work is therefore the only part preserved of a corpus of dialectical writings that probably existed in the sixth century.[13] It is a treatise of great interest because "it is the only work of antiquity devoted to definitions that has come down to us."[14] In the introduction to *De definitionibus*, Victorinus points out that words are naturally ambiguous: they designate things through a sign that does not clearly express the definition of the object in question (*Def.* 1).[15] Therefore, it is essential to make use of definitions in order to resolve the ambiguity inherent in individual terms. Throughout the commentary Victorinus uses definitions, exempla, and digressions as means for reading and interpreting the Ciceronian text.

On the other side, the doctrine relating to definition has already been outlined in Victorinus's commentary on Cicero's *Topics*. In this work, the distinction between the loci ("topics") inherent to the defined object and those that are external to it is made to correspond with the distinction between arguments extracted from definition and arguments obtained through reasoning. This commentary discusses a list of loci related to the definition.[16] According to Cicero, there are three types of loci: *a toto*, taken from the totality of the notion in question; *a partibus*, from the enumera-

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general overview about the interaction between grammar and philosophy and their evolution until the end of antiquity, see Catherine Atherton and David Blank, "From Plato to Priscian: Philosophy's Legacy to Grammar," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Linguistics*, ed. Keith Allan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 326–37.

11. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 108–13.

12. For these remaining traces, see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 115–41.

13. "These works perhaps formed an established body of texts from late antiquity that Cassiodorus found ready made" (Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 109).

14. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 163.

15. The critical text of *De definitionibus* cited here is Theodor Stangl, ed., *Tulliana et Mario Victoriniana*, repr. in Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 331–62, with Stangl's pagination and line numbers; translations are my own.

16. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 166.

tion of the parts; and *a nota*, from the etymology of the word designating that notion. Victorinus adopts most of the Ciceronian and ultimately Aristotelian precepts on definition, as well as the parts into which it was divided (*Def.* 9.9–13).[17] Thus the purpose of not a few lemmata is the need to resolve a possible ambiguity and to specify the exact meaning of a term. To this end, Victorinus explains and applies the theory of definition in such a way as to offer theoretical clarifications and specific definitions of the terms analyzed, following the subtypes listed in his treatise *De definitionibus* (*Def.* 16–17).

Yet it should be recalled that since ancient times the examination of the poetic function of language, specifically the study of tropes and figures, was part of grammar,[18] as proved by Dionysius Thrax, Quintilian, or Sextus Empiricus. In the grammars of Priscianus, Donatus, Charisius, and Diomedes, the *tropoi* occupy a fundamental place within the "vitia et virtutes orationis" ("faults and strengths of a speech").[19] Over time, this section became detached from the strictly grammatical contents, and works devoted exclusively to the study of figures were published.[20]

Among the late ancient grammarians, the debate on synonyms, homonyms, and ambiguity, or *amphibolia* ("double meaning"), is an important issue within the *vitia orationis*.[21] Among the many types of *amphibolia*,

17. "Verum et Aristoteles, in libris quos Topica appellavit, docuit quid genus sit, quid species, quid differentia, quid propium, quid accidens; et plurimi praeterea philosophi libris suis complexi harum vim rerum et potentiam declararunt" (Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 166; "In the work called *Topica*, Aristotle explained what *genus* is and what *species, differentia, proprium*, and *accidens* are. In addition, many other philosophers showed in their works the validity and effectiveness of these concepts").

18. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 62: "Commenter les poètes était aussi une tâche de grammairien." See also Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutic and Translation*, 9. The same scholar mentions the existence of a possible commentary of Vergil written by Victorinus (see discussion in Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 215–31).

19. In the fourth century Donatus dedicates the third part of his *Ars maior* to the study of correction (*vitia*) and ornamentation (*virtutes*). Late imperial grammarians Carisius, Sacerdos, and Diomedes include tropes and figures within the ornamental section. See E. Pérez Rodríguez, "Sobre las figuras en la gramática bajomedieval," in *Actas del I Congreso Nacional de Latín Medieval*, ed. Maurilio Pérez González (León: Universidad de León, 1995), 357–63.

20. Lopetegui, "Evolución de la teoría retórica," 43–45.

21. Synonyms were also called *polyonymoi* from the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition (Luhtala, *Grammar and Philosophy*, 68). According to Sacerdos, ambiguity is related to the homonymy of several grammatical forms—for example, formally iden-

one can distinguish the so-called *per distinctionem* type, an ambiguity produced in the sentence when the rection between different words in the same case is not clear. In general, one characteristic that differentiates grammarians and rhetoricians in this field is the former's interest in nonsyntactic ambiguity, as opposed to the latter, who dealt above all with syntactic ambiguity, since this *vitium* was a source of stylistic license. In general, rhetoricians dealt with the phenomenon of syntactic ambiguity, while grammarians dealt with ambiguity in a more technical way, primarily restricted to individual words. In the middle of the fourth century, ambiguity was still treated as a *vitium* by grammarians such as Diomedes and Charisius.[22] In this regard, Victorinus's comments are mostly based on the analysis of individual terms and their technical meaning—that is, he tried to delve deeper into polysemy, homonymy, and possible cases of *amphibolia*, as a grammarian would do.

3. Rhetorical Metalanguage and Procedures of Textual Analysis

As I pointed out in the previous section, the author's grammatical and rhetorical-dialectical training conditions the exegesis of the *De inventione*. In his dissection of the Ciceronian text, Victorinus uses concepts and resources taken fundamentally from grammar and dialectic as tools of analysis, thus offering an integrative perspective of the three branches of the trivium.[23] Bearing in mind that *On Invention* was part of the

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tical and functionally different casual terminations—or to their ambiguous syntactic position. See Diomedes, *Ars gram.* 2: "amphibolia est vitium conpositionis in ambiguo posita sententia, ut aio te, Aeacida, Romanos vincere posse; item certum est Antonium praecedere eloquentia Crassum" ("amphibolia is a syntactic error in a sentence constructed in an ambiguous way, e.g., *aio te, Aeacida, Romanos vincere posse*; and certainly, Anthony was more eloquent than Crassus"). For the critical text, see Diomedes, *Ars grammatica*, in *Grammatici Latini*, ed. Heinrich Keil (Leipzig: Teubner, 1875), 1:450.

22. In this sense, Sacerdos deals with homonyms and synonyms as tropes while ambiguity is considered as *vitium* (Luhtala, *Grammar and Philosophy*, 74).

23. Italo Mariotti maintains that the Ciceronian commentary had preserved a fragment of one of the lost parts of Victorinus's *Ars grammatica*, specifically the one that contains the definitions of the concepts *imago*, *collatio*, and *exemplum*. See Marius Victorinus, *Ars grammatica: Introduzione, testo critico e commento*, ed. Italo Mariotti (Florence: Le Monnier, 1967), 96, 246–47.

fourth-century school curriculum,[24] I note that the commentary could be considered an illustration of an *enarratio*, a detailed exposition, in which grammatical and rhetorical-dialectical concepts are complemented with examples, comparisons, and digressions in order to facilitate the interpretation of the text. Throughout the entire commentary, Victorinus consolidates the rhetorical metalanguage and endows it with a greater degree of precision and coherence.

Since the most strictly doctrinal content of *De inventione* begins with paragraph 1.8, I have focused the analysis of rhetorical metalanguage on Victorinus's treatment of the passages between that paragraph and the end of book 1 (*Inv.* 1.8–54).

3.1. Definitions and the Resolution of Ambiguities

To begin with, it must be recalled that in the opinion of Victorinus, language is ambiguous, and words either lack a unique meaning or are not known to listeners (*Def.* 1.12–16).[25] Given that ambiguity and obscurity are frequent *vitia* in the communicative act, definition is a fundamental type of discourse for the dialectician and for the orator (*Def.* 1.1–2), since both of them need this resource to carry out the *probatio* (the proof section of an speech), although they use it in different ways (*Def.* 3.20–24).[26]

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24. This is what Hadot affirms from Augustine's *Cur.* 11.13 ("rhetor Eulogius … cum rhetoricos Ciceronis libros discipulis suis traderet") and Victorinus's testimonies (Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 73). For the critical text, see Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda ad Paulinum episcopum liber unus*, in Augustine, *Augustinus, De fide et symbolo, De fide et operibus, De agone christiano, De continentia, De bono coniugali, De virginitate, De bono viduitatis, De adulterinis coniugiis, De mendacio, Contra mendacium, De opere monachorum, De divinatione daemonum, De cura pro mortuis gerenda, De patientia*, ed. Joseph Zycha, CSEL 41 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1900), 642.14–16.

25. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 331: "Etenim si verba aut nota omnibus extitissent aut unam significantiam sui semper tenerent et non ambiguo vel obscuro dicto audientes fallerent et loquentes sub diversa interpretatione deciperent, omnino definitio necessaria minime crederetur" ("In fact, if words were known to everyone, or if they always had a single meaning, and if they were not misleading to listeners due to the darkness or ambiguity of a phrase provoking different interpretations, the definition would really be very little necessary").

26. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 331: "Dicendi ac disputandi prima semper oratio est… quae dicitur definitio" ("The first type of speech used by the orator and the dialectician is that which is called definition"). Hadot, *Marius Victorinus:*

As stated above, Victorinus developed from the Ciceronian loci (*a toto*, *a partibus*, *a nota*) a theory of definition in which he gives precision to the different elements comprising it. In several passages of the commentary, the author recalls what the perfect definition should be like: "the optimal definition is that which starts from the genus, then specifies the species, and covers the particular traits (of an object or concept) in such a way that it excludes what it may have in common with others" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.14.20).[27] He considers some of the definitions offered by Cicero at *Inv.* 1.15.20 or by himself to be complete, among which are some of the definitions of the *partes orationis* ("sections of a speech"), in particular, the *exordium* or the *narratio* (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.20.28).[28] According to Victorinus, a large part of the definitions corresponding to the "attributes of persons and of actions" ("adtributa personae et negotio"), and to the different types of argumentation within the *confirmatio*,[29] could

Recherches, 333: "Omnis definitio aut probandae rei causa sumitur; aut augendae, si res in quaestione non versatur; aut confirmandae, si vel apud adversarium vel apud auditorem quemlibet iam nota res est.… Omnis definitio aut rhetorica est oratio aut dialectica" ("Every definition is proffered either to prove a fact or to amplify it, if such a fact is not in question, or to corroborate it if the fact is already known to the adversary or to the listener, whoever he may be.… Every definition is a rhetorical or a dialectical speech").

27. "Optima definitio est, quae a genere incipit, deinde descendit ad speciem, postremo ita propia complectitur, ut excludat omnino id quod cum aliis potest esse commune." See also *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.10.13 (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 60.80–82): "Verum definitio a genere transit in species, specierum vero definitio in genus transire non potest" ("The correct definition descends from the genus to the species, but the definition of the species cannot be applied to the genus").

28. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 88–89.22–26: "Oratio quae negotium explicat atque insinuat audienti narratio dicitur, explicans quid gestum sit aut per verum aut per veri simile, id est, aut per id quod gestum est aut per id quod geri potuit" ("The *narratio* is a passage of the speech that exposes the events and presents them to the listener by exposing what has been done through true or probable facts, that is, the facts that have occurred or are supposed to have occurred"). Cicero, *Inv.* 1.15.20: "Exordium est oratio animum auditoris idonee comparans ad reliquam dictionem." "The *exordium* is a passage of the speech that brings the mind of the auditor into a proper condition to receive the rest of the speech" (Hubbell, slightly altered).

29. The definitions of *victus* (manner of life), *habitus* (habit), *studium* (interests), and *adfectio* (feeling) meet the requirements of a *definitio plena* (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.25.35–36; Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 112–115). The same can be said of *negotium* ("fact"), *causa* ("case"), *tempus* ("time"), or *occasio* ("opportunity"; *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.26–27.37–40; Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 117–124). The definitions of the subtypes of the necessary argument (*complexio*,

also be considered *plenae definitiones* ("complete definitions"). However, most of the definitions are not the type that Victorinus considers optimal, that is, are not substantial definitions, but instead are ennoematic or notional definitions (*Def.* 17.19–20).[30] In fact, a considerable number of the subtypes that Victorinus distinguishes in *De definitionibus* could be considered, in his opinion, variants or specifications of the notional (*Def.* 17.6–8), because what the thing or concept consists of is explained without mentioning the genus to which it belongs (*Def.* 17.12–15).[31]

"dilemma"; *enumeration*, "enumeration") are based on the *substantia*. Moreover, the probable argument and most of its subtypes, in particular the so-called sign, believable, and judgment (*signum*, *credibile*, and *iudicatum*) should be considered as ennoematic definitions. See *Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.29.46 (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 141.157–160): "probabile autem per se ipsum non potest definiri neque in praeceptum quoddam exprimi, sed probabile erit argumentum pro moribus patriae, populi, temporis" ("the probable, however, cannot be defined by means of itself nor can it be communicated in a specific precept. Rather, a probable argument will be one based on the morals of a nation, of its people and its time"). See also *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.30.48 (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 145.50–51): "quod paulo ante dixi, signum esse in eo quod fere solet fieri" ("as stated, a sign is that which for the most part usually comes to pass"); and his following comment on Cicero's definition of *credibile*: "credibile est quod sine ullo teste auditoris opinione firmatu" (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 146.65–66; "the believable is what is affirmed without any witness, on the basis of the audience's opinion"). Further, he defines *commune*: "commune est quod ex more vulgi iusti auctoritatem tenet" (*Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 147.89–90; "the common is what has authority on the basis of a just populace"). The translations of *probabile* and *signum* are drawn from Stephen Cooper's contribution to this volume.

30. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 347–48: "Alia sunt apud Tullium in Rhetoricis multa ut 'honestum causae genus est cui statim sine oratione nostra favet auditoris animus'" ("There are many other definitions in Tullius's rhetorical works, e.g., 'the kind of case called *honestum* is that which has the audience's favor without our speech being necessary'").

31. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 347: "De prima definitione plenius in superioribus sermo confectus est cum substantialis quae sit definitio quibusque partibus compleatur ostendimus. Secunda est quae dicitur ennoematiké, quam notionem communi, non proprio nomine possumus dicere. In omnibus enim reliquis definitionibus notio rei profertur, non substantia explicatione declaratur" ("On the first type of definition we have offered a more complete explanation above when showing what a substantial definition is and what parts it consists of. The second type is the so-called ennoematic, which we can call a 'notion' using a common and nonspecific term. Indeed, in all the remaining definitions the notion is expressed, the essence is not explained by an explanation"). Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 347: "Verum

There are abundant examples of this subtype. Thus, at the very beginning of the exposition of key concepts of the theory of rhetorical "issue" or στάσις—translated by the Latin rhetoricians as *constitutio* or *status*—Victorinus follows Cicero and defines the term *constitutio* as "quaestionem ex qua causa nascitur" ("the question from which the case arises") (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.8.10).[32] In another passage, he defines it as "intentionis depulsio" ("the rebuttal of an accusation") (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.10.13).[33] In the same way, he explains what the *quaestio* consists of by defining it as "a term designating an accusation and its rebuttal [vox intentionis et negationis], i.e., 'you did it,' 'I did not,' or 'I did it justly'" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.8).[34] Here, in fact, Victorinus presents the names of all the issues or *constitutiones* as responding to a notional criterion that is specified in different subtypes of definition. The conjectural, the *finitiva* (i.e., definitive), the *generalis* or qualitative, and the translative are names based on an etymological explanation, as Victorinus makes clear in *Def.* 15.12–14.[35]

In regard to the first three issues, Victorinus resorts to an analogy (*formam similitudinis*) to facilitate understanding of the concept: "Omnis constitutio est ut aspectus" ("Every issue is like a view of the case") (*Comm.*

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haec quae secunda est hoc modo semper efficitur, cum, proposito eo quod definiendum est neque dicto eius genere, verbis in rei sensum ducentibus audientem quid illud sit de quo quaeritur explicatur" ("In fact, this second subtype is used whenever, in order to define something, it is explained to the listener what it is that is being discussed, through the words that lead to its meaning, without saying its gender").

32. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 47.26. Cicero treats the theory of rhetorical "issue" or στάσις in *Inv.* 1.8–14. For modern discussion, see Malcolm Heath, "The Substructure of Stasis-Theory from Hermagoras to Hermogenes," *ClQ* 44 (1994): 114–29.

33. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 61.109.

34. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 47.25–28.

35. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 49.81: "Quod res coniecturis quaeritur" ("because the issue is investigated from conjectures"); 49.81–89: "Quoniam facti vocabulum … nobis adposita definitione nudandum est" ("Since the denomination of a fact must be devoid of our assigned definition"); 50.105–7: "Quod de *negotii genere* vel qualitate quaeritur" ("Since the nature or the kind of a deed is under discussion"); 50.114: "De translatione actionis controversia est" ("the controversy consists on a transference of the judicial action"). Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 345: "Tertia definitio est quae a nota dicitur, cum vis verbi vel nominis quae in compositione sita est rem suam facta quadam separatione designat" ("The third type of definition is etymological when the nature of the word or the name of which it is composed indicates the designated object with a certain distance").

Cic. Rhet. 1.8.10).[36] In terms of the fifteen types of definitions he lists in his treatise on definitions, Victorinus uses the tenth subtype to explain what each of the issues consists of (*Def.* 26.7–11).[37] In the case of these three issues (the conjectural, the definitive, and the qualitative), the name is based on more than one criterion and relates to both etymology and analogy.[38] The Ciceronian definitions corresponding to the subdivisions of the qualitative issue (*status qualitatis*) also correspond to the "ennoematic" subtype (*Inv.* 1.11).[39]

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36. In this passage, Victorinus includes a *similitudo* for expounding the denominations of the four *constitutiones*: "Sed ut originem statuum melius nosse possimus formam similitudinis attendamus" (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 47.19–21; "In order better to grasp the etymology of the issues, let us focus on an analogy"). Riesenweber thinks the meaning of the term *originem* is unclear (*Kritischer Kommentar und Indices*, 66): "Schwierig zu sagen ist, was *originem* bedeuten soll.… Am ehesten wird man *originem* hier also als Hinweis auf die sukzessive Entfaltung der vier *status* aus dem ersten *status*, der *constitutio coniecturalis* verstehen müssen." In our opinion, Victorinus refers to the etymological ground of the denominations he is going to explain.

37. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 356: "Hanc 'veluti' diximus, ut si queratur quid sit 'animal', respondeatur 'ut homo' … rem enim quaesitam subiunctum declarat exemplum et hoc est proprium definitionis: quid sit illum quod quaeritur declarare" ("We call this the 'like' subtype, as if when asking 'what is an animal' the answer was 'like a man.'… The proffered example explains the required concept and this is the proper feature of every definition: to explain that which was in question").

38. Marius Victorinus uses an analogy to clarify the name of each status, but the analogy used is not suitable for explaining the translative issue. The term *aspectus* seems to designate the perception of a fact, that is, the subjective perspective taken in relation to a fact. In the translative status, however, the nomenclature is not related to the subjective way of envisioning a fact but to some aspect of the judicial action. Thus he says: "Cum, inquit talis fuerit controversia ut in hoc sit tota contentio, cum aut ab alio non accusari debere dicimus, aut non nos sed alios accusari, aut non apud hos sed illos, non hac lege se illa, non hoc crimine sed illo, non hac poena sed illa, quoniam in his omnibus de translatione actionis controversia est, constitutio translativa nominatur" (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 50.109–115; "When the discussion is such that the whole dispute consists of the following: that either we must be accused of another fact or not we but others are accused, or that we are accused not before these but before other judges, not according to this law but according to that other, not because of this crime but because of that other, not with this punishment but with that other, since in all these cases the controversy consists on a transference of the judicial action, it is called the translative issue").

39. Thus Cicero: "Iuridicialis est in qua aequi et recti natura et praemii aut poenae ratio quaeritur" ("A juridical issue is that in which the nature of what is just and lawful,

Sometimes the author intentionally underscores the diverse nature (substantial or notional) of definitions that Cicero attributes to related concepts. Thus, he qualifies the Ciceronian definition of narrative (*narratio*)—one of the parts of an oration (*partes orationis*)—as substantial or *plena*. However, one of the subtypes of the *narratio*, the "partition" (*partitio*), is explained through an ennoematic definition (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.22.31).[40] The same is true for the *confirmatio* (an alternate term for the *probatio* or proof section), the definition of which is based not on the "what is" (*quid sit*) but on the general notion that emerges from the way in which it is carried out (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.24.34).[41]

As can be seen from the examples cited above, Victorinus's contribution primarily consists of clarifying the meaning of the individual terms used by Cicero, interpreting their definitions, and analyzing the way in which they were elaborated and specifying their typology. He does all this through the use of precise metalanguage, accompanied by the insertion of comparisons and abundant examples to explain the notions outlined.

It should also be noted that commenting on Ciceronian definitions implies almost always offering a personal interpretation, through which Victorinus explains the contents underlying the original text. An illustration of this is *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.11, which attempts to clarify the parts of the "qualitative issue" (*status qualitatis*). The author differentiates between "factual issue" (*negotialis status*) and "juridical issue" (*iuridicialis status*),

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and the reason for awarding a prize or a punishment is discussed" [Hubbell]). Victorinus goes on to discuss Cicero's division of the juridical issue into two further subtypes in *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.11.15: "Itaque in absoluta qualitate aequi et recti natura quaeritur, in adsumptiva vere praemii et poenae ratio quaeritur" (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 66.60–62; "Thus in the 'absolute' qualitative issue, the nature of what is just and lawful is discussed; in the 'assumptive,' the reason for awarding a prize or a punishment is disputed").

40. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 97.6–8: "Verum hic hoc animadvertendum est, ut definitionem partitionis non ab eo 'quid sit,' sed ab eo 'quid faciat,' collegerit.… Narrationis porro definitionem ab eo, quid sit, scimus esse collectam: 'narratio est rerum gestarum aut ut gestarum expositio'" ("Indeed, here it must be noted that the definition of partition has not been taken from 'what it is' but from 'what it does.'… Now then, we know that the definition of narrative has been taken from that what it is: 'the narrative is an exposition of events that have occurred or are alleged to have occurred'").

41. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 105.3–4: "Definitio confirmationis non per id quod est, sed per id quod facit" ("The definition of the confirmation comes not from what it is, but from what it does").

provides the corresponding Ciceronian definitions, and adds an important nuance referring to the temporal reference of each: "as a summary of these issues we must take into account that the juridical issue is about a past event, the factual issue always about a future event; it seems evident that Cicero does not state anything explicit about the temporal reference of every issue" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.11.14).[42] The temporal correspondence between the juridical issue and the factual issue to the past and future respectively appears to be a precision added by Victorinus.[43]

In addition, interpretative clarifications often involve terminological remarks. In the passage discussed above, Victorinus relates Cicero's statement that the *iuridicialis constitutio* is that in which "the nature of what is just and lawful and the reason for awarding a prize or a punishment is discussed" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.11.14).[44] In the commentary following this definition, the author distinguishes between *ratio* and *ratiocinatio*, "motive, cause" and "reasoning" respectively, and makes them correspond to "juridical qualitative" (*qualitas iuridicialis*) in the former and "factual qualitative" (*qualitas negotialis*) in the latter. In several passages, the purpose of Victorinus's commentary is therefore to clarify the interpretation of Ciceronian statements and definitions, rendering explicit underlying utterances that he thinks are expressed with obscurity and confusion.

Another example of a confusing passage according to Victorinus is *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.14.20, which relates to the parts of a discourse and the *genera causarum* (the "kinds of cases").[45] After defining the *exordium*,

42. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 65.6–9: "Quarum partium hoc compendium tenere debemus, quod iuridicialis semper de praeterito est et negotialis semper de futuro, quae tempora in ipsarum partium definitione videtur Cicero non declarasse."

43. Riesenweber quotes a passage of Grillius's slightly later commentary on *De inventione* that posits the same relationship between *status iuridicialis* and the past (*de praeterito tempore*), and *status negotialis* and the future (de *futuro tempore*). See Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar und Indices*, 90; Grillius, *Commentum in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, ed. Rainer Jakobi, BSGRT (Munich: Saur, 2002), 69.47–50.

44. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 65.9–11, 20–33: "Aequi et recti natura et praemii aut poenae ratio quaeritur."

45. For the following discussion, see Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 70–94. The translation of *causa* in Cicero's use in *De inventione* is difficult. The translator of the Loeb edition, Hubbell, translates it here as "case" (41) but alternately elsewhere as "argument" (25) or "cause" (19). Here I have generally rendered *causa* as "case," but in the wide sense of that term rather than the narrow legal use, in accord

Cicero states that there are five *genera causarum*. This statement is confusing, because in the preceding paragraphs he has repeatedly stated that there are three kinds of cases. The correct interpretation must be based, in Victorinus's opinion, on the application of Aristotelian categories in order to develop precise definitions of concepts and establish the relations between them. As in many other passages, he uses an example to illustrate what he wants to prove: the same substance can admit different qualities; and in each instance, different classifications can be made. Thus if one considers the concept *causa* as a *substantia,* and a certain *qualitas* (the purpose) is applied to it, a threefold division results: *deliberativa*, *iudicialis*, and *demonstrativa*. But if another *qualitas* is applied to it (based on another criterion, such as the degree of defendibility), a quinary classification of the cases can be established: honorable (*honestum*), obscure (*obscurum*), admirable (*admirabile*), petty (*humile*), doubtful (*anceps*).

Another commentary procedure used by Victorinus to interpret the text is the refutation of false claims, which he states can be attributed to Greek rhetorical sources. In this sense, Victorinus highlights the erroneous interpretation of certain technical terms. Thus his comments on *Inv.* 1.10, where he fictitiously challenges Cicero for having insufficiently criticized Hermagoras (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.10.3).[46] The Greek rhetorician states that the *genus qualitatis*—or *constitutio generalis*—has four subdivisions, called factual, juridical, epideictic, and deliberative (*negotialis*, *iuridicialis*, *demonstrativa*, and *deliberativa*). Cicero, and above all Victorinus, considers this statement an error, *peccatum Hermagorae*.[47] It should be noted that

with the wider sense in which, e.g., Cicero made speeches to the Senate arguing the "case" for taking action against Catiline.

46. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 58.1–5: "Disputasti quidem supra, o Cicero, deliberationem et demonstrationem quia genera sunt, partes generis esse non posse. Non tamen ostendisti utrum constitutio pars generis sit or ipsum genus" ("You have argued, Cicero, that deliberative and demonstrative speeches are genera of speeches, that they cannot be parts of a genus. Nonetheless you have not shown whether the issue is a part of a genus or is a genus itself").

47. Victorinus states: "Quaestio haec est, quod non recte Hermagoras deliberationem et demonstrationem sub qualitate posuerit. Cicero ergo ait non recte deliberationem et demonstrationem sub qualitate positas, quia genera causarum sint" (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 53.30–33; "The question is that Hermagoras made a mistake in placing deliberative and demonstrative speeches within the qualitative issue. Therefore, Cicero says that deliberation and demonstration are not correctly placed within the qualitative issue").

Victorinus demonstrates a statement he considers to be false by means of the main argumentative resource of dialectic: the syllogism. Victorinus's commentary on Hermagoras's assertion consists of a demonstration of the veracity of the Ciceronian thesis: "If deliberation and demonstration are kinds of cases, they cannot rightly be considered parts of any kind of case" (*Inv.* 1.9.12).[48] First, he lists the most important Aristotelian categories for developing relevant arguments; more specifically, he refers to the distinction between substance (*substantia*) and accidents (*accidentia*). After establishing a parallel between *substantia*/*genus* and *accidens*/*pars* and developing a syllogistic reasoning, he proves the falsity of Hermagoras's assertion while demonstrating his ability to develop a dialectical analysis. In addition, Victorinus reaffirms the technical lexicon relating to syllogistic reasoning and to the doctrine of the *constitutiones*. Moreover, he does not limit himself to commenting on individual concepts but instead strives to establish interdependent relations between them and to offer a coherent interpretation: the kinds of cases (*genera causarum*) are broader categories than the issues of the case (*constitutiones causae*), and these, in turn, present a diverse casuistry.[49]

Another passage containing a critique of Cicero is his treatment of *Inv*. 1.19.27, where Victorinus first explains the definitions of the types of narrative external to the orator (*narratio extra oratorem*) and shows his disagreement with the definition of *fabula*, because of the contradiction he detects between the definition of the species (*fabula*) and that of the corresponding genus (*narratio*).[50] In this case, the refutation is based on the similarity that should exist between the categories of genus and species.

48. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 53.28–30: "Si deliberatio et demonstratio genera sunt causarum, non possunt recte partes alicuius generis causae putari."

49. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 58–59.19–23: "Prius enim causa cognoscatur necesse est, deinde constitutio. Plus autem causam esse quam constitutionem, sic etiam possumus cognoscere, quod in singulis causae generibus constitutiones variantur, causa autem omnium constitutionum capax est" ("In fact, it is necessary to know first the case, then the issue. Now, we can also understand that 'case' is a broader concept than 'issue' thus: because in each of the genera of cases [listed by Cicero in *Inv.* 1.9.12] there are different issues, but a single case can comprise all the issues").

50. He refers to the triple division between fable, history, and argument (*fabula*, *historia*, *argumentum*). Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 87.56–60: "Verum hic quaestio est, cum in definitione generali narrationis dixerit 'narratio est rerum gestarum aut ut gestarum expositio,' cur in fabulae definitione, quae utique, quoniam et ipsa narratio est, generi similis esse debuit, ait fabula est in qua nec verae

3.2. Tools of Dialectic and Rhetoric

In any case, the practice of textual analysis based on the use of the conceptual tools of dialectic gives Victorinus's interpretation the credibility inherent to logical-philosophical analysis. It is evident that the rhetorical theory of the *constitutiones* offers a suitable conceptual and doctrinal field to be outlined through a resource characteristic of dialectic, namely, syllogism. As Victorinus proves, rhetoric and dialectic can share the same technical metalanguage to analyze the conceptual structure of any discourse.

On the other hand, Victorinus's insistence on identifying syllogistic reasoning in certain Ciceronian statements does not solely aim to consolidate Latin technical terminology. Rather, it also seeks to show how to analyze argumentation in a doctrinal text. This analysis enables him to identify *quadripertiti* or even *quinquepertiti* syllogisms through Ciceronian theses, that is to say, complete logical argumentations, not mere rhetorical enthymemes. In order to prove the logical consistency of the Ciceronian statements, Victorinus explains to the reader the implicit arguments and the logical structure of the text, while also summarizing the Latin terminology: statement, assumption, granting of assumption, conclusion (*propositio*, *adsumptio*, *adprobatio adsumptionis*, *conclusio*). In this way, he shows Cicero's mastery of the use of dialectical language, since Victorinus analyzes not only the easily identifiable syllogistic structures but also those that are especially obscure and artificially elaborated.[51] To do so, he resorts to *similitudines*, just as he does in other passages of the doctrinal exposition (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.10.13).[52]

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nec veri similes res continentur?" ("In this passage the question is as follows: since in the general definition of narrative he has said it to be 'an exposition of facts which have occurred or are said to have occurred,' why in the definition of fable—which, being a narrative itself, has to be similar to its genus—does he say the fable is a narrative in which there are neither true nor verisimilar things?").

51. See Victorinus's detailed analysis in *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.10.13 of a very artificial type of syllogism used by Cicero: "Hoc loco animadvertere debemus genus syllogismi, quod obscuritate sui et artificio colligatum syllogismis fere omnibus antecellit" (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 62.119–121; "In this passage one must pay attention to a type of syllogism that surpasses almost all other syllogisms because of the indistinctness and artifice with which it has been constructed").

52. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 62.124–131: "Sed ut melius possit artificium Ciceronis intellegi, prius quaelibet similitudo facienda est. Ponamus

Thus the syllogistic analysis carried out in *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.9–10 offers the reader a sample of logical analysis of argumentation where rhetorical and dialectical concepts are fused in a unitary perspective that certain currents of argumentation theory are currently trying to revive.[53]

Two other interesting commentary procedures entail clarifying or explaining the meanings of polysemic terms that can be ambiguous and specifying the use of synonymic words based on their technical meaning in the Ciceronian work.

The desire to resolve the polysemy of certain words prompts Victorinus to introduce digressions around the meaning of important terms found not only in rhetorical doctrine but also in other fields of knowledge. The author distinguishes between the different significances of certain words and the technical meaning that Cicero or he himself attributes to them in order to develop an ad hoc definition in the field of rhetoric. An important

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itaque haec tria: 'Victorinus docet' unum sit, 'intellegis' aliud sit, 'spem habet' tertium sit. Itaque faciamus syllogismum a primo ad secundum, nunc a secundo ad tertium: 'if intellegis, spem habet,' deinde a primo ad tertium: 'Ergo si Victorinus docet, spem habet," etc. ("But in order to understand better Cicero's artifice, an illustration must first be made. Let us posit these three premises: 'Victorinus teaches' is one; 'you understand' is the other; 'he has hope' is the third. Thus, let us make a syllogism from the first premise to the second: 'if Victorinus teaches, you understand'; then from the second to the third: 'if you understand, Victorinus has hope'; and next from the first to the third: 'therefore if Victorinus teaches, he has hope'").

53. During the twentieth century, argumentation theory became an important area of research characterized "by the coexistence of a variety of approaches, differing considerably in conceptual breadth, scope of horizon and degree of theoretical refinement." See Frans H. van Eemeren et al., *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory: Handbook of Historical Backgrounds and Contemporary Developments* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1996), 24. However, argumentation theorists differ in the meaning they assign to the terms of rationality, reasonableness, and validity. For the most part, it is considered insufficient to limit the scope of valid argumentation to the strict field of formal logic. Practically all the modern theorists try to offer a general framework that surpasses the purely logical perspective, in order to study the interplay of rhetorical and pragmatic factors. See Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrecht-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989); Michael Leff, "Rhetoric and Dialectic in the Twenty-First Century," *Argumentation* 14.3 (2000): 241–54; and Franz H. van Eemeren, *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse: Extending the Pragma-dialectical Theory of Argumentation* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2010). In brief, they claim the union between dialectic and rhetoric that the rhetoricians of antiquity, such as Victorinus, developed through the procedures of textual analysis.

concept in which he distinguishes three main meanings is genus: "We have shown above when discussing the genre of rhetorical art that genus presents a triple meaning: genus is bloodline; genus is that which groups many similar elements; genus is also quality, that is to say, that which shows the quality of each object" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.8.10).[54] Similarly, in an earlier comment, Victorinus refers to the meaning of genus when defining the *ars rhetorica* with respect to other arts: "Indeed, if art is that genus under which grammatical art, dialectical art, and rhetorical art are included, all these arts must be placed within the genus understood as quality" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.5.6).[55] In another passage, the word's technical meaning can be different: "What a genus is has been made known: it is that under which there are many parts; and the parts are the realities that fall under a genus. Indeed, when we make an argument from the parts, we are making an argument based on things that have been added to the matter in question" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.28.42).[56] Here Victorinus, based on Aristotle, considers genus as a concept that groups diverse parts or species together. Within the proof section of the speech (*probatio*), both genus and species can be a source of arguments: "Whenever there is controversy in relation to the genus, argumentation should be developed from the species, when the controversy is in relation to an species, argumentation should be developed from the genus" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.28.42).[57]

This scientific perspective in the treatment of the lexicon and its desire to avoid polysemy are clearly manifested in this other passage relating to one of the attributes of persons, the *nomen*: "Before referring to the concept

54. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 50.96–108: "Et supra ostendimus, cum de genere artis rhetoricae disputaremus genus in triplici significatione consistere: esse genus sanguinem, esse genus sub quo similia multa teneantur, esse genus qualitatis, id est quo unius cuiusque rei qualitas indicetur."

55. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 33–34.12–14: "si enim ars genus est illud, sub quo genere [artis] ars grammatica, ars dialectica, ars rhetorica sit, istae omnes artes in genere qualitatis sunt ponendae." As Riesenweber points out, Cicero's argumentation proves that he "understands the word *genus* in the sense of *qualitas*" (*Kritischer Kommentar und Indices*, 45).

56. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 131.155–158: "Notum est quid sit genus, id est sub quo multae sunt partes; partes sunt autem eae quae sub genere sunt. Verum cum de his facimus argumentum, ex adiunctis negotio facimus argumentum."

57. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 131.158–160: "Quotiens autem de genere quaestio est ex specie faciendum est argumentum, quotiens de specie quaestio est ex genere faciendum est argumentum."

of name that we have to define, let us talk about the meaning of the word *nomen*. *Nomen*—as the word sounds—has four meanings … and so that we can know that this meaning of name corresponds to one of those four meanings, he presents it in such a way that he shows which name he is going to define" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.24.34).[58]

It is not uninteresting to outline the nuances that Victorinus appreciates in the meaning of another key term in rhetorical doctrine: *causa*. When referring to the motivation that can lead one to commit a punishable act, Victorinus differentiates the different meanings of the word *causa*:

> Certainly, there are many meanings for the term *causa*. For it is necessary that a cause come first, in order that all things that are in the world might come to be. Also a judicial matter about which there is a question is called a *causa* [a case]. This *causa* of a person [involved in a lawsuit] is twofold in regard to the deed [alleged]: either because of a matter mentally foreseen we do whatever (and the "cause" will be the one called "reasoning"), or we are pressed into suddenly doing something on account of a some necessity of the moment, and the "cause" will be the one called "an impulse." (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.26.37)[59]

The technical meaning of the term *causa* is also underscored by the author at the beginning of the doctrinal exposition (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.8), where he presents the word as a synonym for *quaestio*: "We must realize that Cicero uses both *causa* and *quaestio* with the same meaning, in a way that he puts down *causa* instead of *quaestio* and *quaestio* instead of *causa*" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.8.10).[60]

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58. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 106–107.58–79: "Antequam ad hoc nomen, quod definiendum est, ueniamus, prius de significantia nominis dicamus. Nomen—hoc quod sonat nomen—quattuor significantias habet … et ut sciamus unam de quattuor hanc esse significationem nominis, sic proposuit, ut ostenderet, quod nomen esset definiturus."

59. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 119.87–96: "Multae quidem causae sunt. Nam ut omnia nascantur quae in mundo sunt, necesse est causa praecedat; et hoc ipsum negotium de quo quaestio est causa dicitur. Verum haec causa hominis circa factum duplex est: aut enim propter rem aliquam iam ante animo provisam quodcumque facimus, et erit causa quae raciotinatio dicitur, aut subito necessitate aliqua prasentis temporis in factum aliquod praecipitamur, et erit causa quae impulsio dicitur."

60. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 47–48.30–33: "Hoc tamen tenere debemus, quod a Cicerone et causa et quaestio ad eandem significantiam proferatur, ut nunc causam pro quaestione, nunc quaestionem pro causa ponat."

The goal of presenting rhetorical metalanguage clearly and coherently explains Victorinus's attempts to clarify the meanings of quasi-synonyms or terms used as such. One example is the distinction made between the technical meanings of *res*, *factum*, *finis*, and *nomen*: "subject or matter of litigation," "specific act to be judged," "legal area to which the act being judged belongs," and "juridical denomination of the act." When referring to the definition of the definitive issue (*status definitivus*), the author clarifies the difference between *res* and *factum*:

> Between *factum* and *res* there is this difference: *res* is that which transmits for your knowledge a certain concept and the species to which it belongs … *factum* refers to something confusing and uncertain, the only thing certain is that I do not know what kind of fact it is. In the issue of definition, there is evidence of the fact but not of the matter being indicted. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.8.11)[61]

In this context, *res* seems to refer to the imputed matter. With respect to the term *factum*, he points out more precisely its meanings in the following passage:

> The term *factum* has three meanings: there is the *factum* of a life gone by, one which represents the person; there is also the *factum* which is premised, the very one expressed by saying "you killed him." A third meaning of the term is what is imputed as an argument for the event from which a judicial process has arisen, for example, "you shouted," "you went through (a place)," imputations with which the accusation "you killed him" is proved. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 2.4)[62]

This *tertium factum* is what Victorinus considers to be its technical significance in the field of rhetoric.

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61. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 52.166–171: "Inter factum enim et res hoc interest: res est certam sui formam et speciem circa cognitionem retinens … factum est confusum quiddam et incertum, hoc solo certum, quod nescio quid factum est. In fine itaque factum constat, sed res non constat."

62. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 183–84.33–37: "Nam factum tria significat: est factum vitae praeteritae, quod personam probat, est factum et illud quod intenditur, ipsum illud quod dicitur 'occidisti'; est factum tertium hoc quod tribuit argumentum ad factum illud unde iudicium est ut 'transisti, clamasti,' quibus probatur 'occidisti.'"

The desire to specify semantic nuances linked to certain linguistic uses, as well as the author's ability to differentiate quasi-synonymous concepts, is evident in the definition of what "oratorical narrative" is as opposed to the "extra-civil narrative" (*quae extra civiles causas est*), such as those employed by Sallust, whom Victorinus cites here (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.20.28).[63] In the expressions *in* ***actoris*** *commodum* ("for the benefit of the claimant"), *subtilitas* ***exponentis*** *aliquid* ("subtlety of the one who exposes something"), *optimus* ***patronus*** ("the best lawyer"), ***accusator*** ("accuser"), ***defensor*** ("defender"), or ***adversarius*** ("adversary"), the terms in bold refer to the orator from different perspectives, or more precisely, to the *causidicus*, or advocate who states the details of a *negotium* or judicial case before a judge.[64] Victorinus uses different terms, depending on the diverse roles an orator can play in a judicial process.

The same is true of the subtle distinction he makes between the apparently synonymous *partitio* and *divisio* and the expressions "initiate a case" (*causam aperire*) and "constitute a case" (*causam constituere*). Turning again to ennoematic definitions, Victorinus asserts that "the partition consists of establishing the parts of the entire court case, the division consists of the facts underlying the partition" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.22.3).[65] The former, therefore, consists of specifying the formal parts of the court case, while the latter alludes to establishing the contents underlying it. The author also differentiates between two quasi-synonymous legal formulas: *aperire causam* ("to initiate the process") and *constituere controversiam* ("to define the terms of the controversy").[66] Another example is found in a passage in which, explaining the places of argumentation, he highlights the difference between two terms often used as synonyms, *argumentum* and *argumentatio*:

> Now we are going to talk about the argument, but it should not confuse us that Cicero uses argument instead of argumentation. The ancients used the word argumentation to express the genus, but under [the genus] argumentation they meant both argument and argumentation. There-

63. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 88.12–22.

64. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 89.26–34.

65. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 97.2–6: "*Partitio* est totius causae per partes constitutio, divisio est rerum sub partitione iacentium."

66. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 97.15–25.

> fore, this word was used in a generic way, so that argumentation instead of argument would be more correctly said. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.29)[67]

Sometimes the terminological commentary consists of differentiating the *quid sit* (what a thing is) of a concept from the *qualis sit* (what sort of thing it is). In other words, for Victorinus rhetorical-dialectical metalanguage serves not only to establish a technical language but also to analyze the uses of language through loci or argumentative fields and thus rationalize communicative practice. An example illustrating this is Victorinus's comment on the term locus as "attribute of an action" (*adtributum negotii*). After defining the *vacuum* and the parts of the physical world as loci from the first meaning of the term—"the locus is examined as the place in which an event has happened" (Cicero, *Inv.* 1.26.37)[68]—Victorinus specifies the perspective from which the term is used in the realm of rhetorical argumentation:

> This concept locus is not to be considered by us based on what the term *locus* ["place"] actually means, but from a quality of this place, so that because of a given circumstance we can show that something has happened or could have happened in that place. Accordingly, let this be the teaching in regards to place: that we ought to examine and assess the quality of the place and the circumstance. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.26.38)[69]

The treatment of the *qualitates loci* (the "qualities of the place") is more important than specifying the generic or substantial definition of the concept, since such *qualitates* are the source of the arguments.

Something similar can be said about the term *tempus* ("time"), which he says "is hard to define generically" ("generaliter definire difficile est").

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67. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 136.14–19: "Nunc itaque dicturus est de argumento. Nec nos confundat quod pro argumento argumentatio ponit. Antiqui genus ponebant argumentationem, sub argumentatione vero argumentum et argumentationem. Itaque hoc verbo communiter utebantur, ut pro argumento recte argumentatio diceretur."

68. "Locus consideratur in quo res gesta sit."

69. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 120–121.138–143: "Qui locus nobis non ex eo quod locus est considerandus est, sed ex eo, qualis sit, ut ex opportunitate eius aliquid in eo aut fieri potuisse aut fieri non potuisse doceamus. Hoc itaque sit praceptum in loco, qualitatem eius atque opportunitatem nos inspicere atque aestimare debere."

For this reason, Victorinus specifies that in the field of rhetoric he will consider one aspect or *qualitas* of it, namely, the *longinquitas* or "length of time" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.26).[70] Both place and time can be conceived generically as *facultates* ("means"), but it is their consideration as *qualitates* that generates arguments: "In effect, also the 'place' is a possible means, but possible if it is considered in a general way. On the other hand, if one examines the circumstance [*opportunitas*] of it, then from the place it will be possible to extract arguments" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.27.41).[71] In the section on argumentation in *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.29.44, Victorinus clearly expresses the idea that *qualitates* and *opportunitates* ("circumstances") are the source of arguments.[72]

Even though, as we have seen, the commentary on the *De inventione* pays a great deal of attention to the definitions of different concepts, Victorinus's primary goal is to offer a global interpretation of the Ciceronian text. To do so, he often employs a fundamental dialectical tool: Aristotelian categories or *praedicamenta*. From the loci that these categories represent (where, how, why, etc.), he analyzes and classifies the contents of the text. The author's ultimate objective is to identify the logical framework underlying the original text. Victorinus links definitions with theoretical explanations and establishes a logical chain that is useful for understanding the Ciceronian sentences. One example among many is the passage *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.14.20. After explaining the definition of *exordium* (the opening of a speech), Victorinus states that Cicero does not limit himself to offering a *definitio plena* (a complete, i.e., *substantialis* definition) but also mentions its purpose and where and how it is applied. The loci "in what manner," "where," and "how" (*quemadmodum*, *ubi*, *quomodo*)

70. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 123.227–230: "Tempus esse diximus spatium quod in annis, mensibus, diebus, noctibus horisque versetur. In hoc, inquit, communiter tempore longinquitatem eius debemus inspicere."

71. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 126.88–90: "Ergo iam et locus facultas est, sed facultas, si generaliter consideretur; at si opportunitas eius fuerit inspecta, tunc ex loco argumenta sumentur."

72. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 136–37.27–28, 44–46: "Itaque omnia verba vel nomina habent res suas, habent et qualitates.… Semper itaque non res, sed qualitates rerum debemus adtendere atque conferre ut argumenta faciamus" ("Thus, all words and names have their referents and also have qualities.… Therefore, we must always pay attention not to the actions but to the qualities of the actions and put them together to formulate arguments").

are conceptual categories that serve to order the following contents.[73] It goes without saying that for Victorinus, the text of the *De inventione* is not merely technical writing: it is a doctrinal discourse whose formal and conceptual structure needs to be analyzed and understood. However, sometimes the attempt to classify the Ciceronian contents from the aforementioned loci shows the impossibility of subjecting all doctrinal contents to the framework imposed by these categories.

In a passage of his comments on *Inv.* 1.21.29, where Victorinus express a Ciceronian statement about one of the *virtutes* of *narratio*, the author identifies an allusion to each of the seven loci with the addition of an eighth: the opinion. But he warns that one of the seven has been omitted, the "how," or *quomodo*. This is because, according to Victorinus, the Ciceronian precepts make reference, albeit not explicitly, to the conjectural issue (*status coniecturae*), and in it the *narratio* exposes amplified actions (*facta*); therefore, it is not pertinent to explain these actions in an objective way.[74] This passage shows that the attempt to present the Ciceronian text

73. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 73–74.59–69: "Verum cum aliquid fieri volumus, primum definire debemus quid sit illud quod fieri volumus, ut hic de exordio definivit quid esset exordium.… Deinde debemus definire quid inde fiat ut hic feci.… Sed quia non bene aliquid facimus nisi prius sciamus ubi faciendum sit, prius ostendit ubi faciendum sit, postremo quemadmodum faciendum sit. Ait ergo tunc nos optime exordiri, si causarum genera cognoscamus, hoc est ubi faciendum sit" ("Indeed, when we want something to be done, we first have to define what it is that we want to be done, for example, here regarding the exordium he [Cicero] has defined what the exordium is.… Then we have to define what results from that as it has been done here.… But as we do not do something well if we do not know where it has to be done, first he shows where it has to be done, finally in what manner it has to be done. Thus, he says that we will start in an optimal way if we distinguish well the types of cases, that is to say, where something has to be done").

74. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 95.27–36: "Itaque narrationem probabilem esse dicit si in ea sint septem illa: quis, quid, cur, ubi, quando, quemadmodum, quibus adminiculis. Sed cum omnia hic posuerit, unum non posuit, id est modum.… Non enim in modo fides fit sed magis auxesis criminis. Et quoniam praecepta haec et ad coniecturam accomodanda erant, ubi factum negatur, merito modus esse non debuit quia modus non excutitur nisi factum conceditur" ("Thus Cicero says that a narration is credible if it uses the seven categories: who, what, why, where, when, in what manner, by what means. However, in laying out all these, he has omitted a category, namely, the mode.… For credibility is not achieved with the mode, rather it is more the amplification of the crime that is achieved with the mode. And since this was the rule and it had to be adapted to the conjectural issue, in which the fact is denied,

under the terminological framework of dialectic reveals sometimes the impossibility of subjecting all doctrinal content to logical categories.

3.3. The Role of Expository Digressions

Finally, the importance of certain digressions in shaping rhetorical metalanguage should also be noted. Some of them contain linguistic reflections, for example, the comments on *Inv.* 1.8.11, where the author deals with ambiguity. Victorinus comments on the relationship between signifier and signified and applies it to the terminological analysis of the issues (*constitutiones*). According to Victorinus, there can be no realities without a name that designates them, so if this name is ambiguous, there will also be confusion around the object alluded to.[75] This reflection serves to explain the nature and denomination of the "definitive issue" (*constitutio definitiva*) and to underline the importance of designating an action with one or another term.[76] In fact, behind the assertion that there can be no realities without a name lies the old controversy between *physis* and *nomos* and the defense of the conventional and semiotic nature of language. Augustine, one of the best-known defenders of that idea, expresses an opinion identical to that of Victorinus about the innate ambiguity of words. In his treatise *De dialectica*, Augustine states that, although every word is ambiguous, it is only ambiguous as an individual word, since ambiguity

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rightly the category of mode should not have been mentioned since the mode is not examined if the fact is not accepted").

75. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 51–52.161–166: "Verum cum de nomine ambigitur, et de re necesse est ambigatur: nomen enim rei est, res vero numquam sine nomine est, quare, cum de nomine dubitatio est, de re quoque dubitetur necesse est. Ergo definitivus status huiusmodi est, cum de facto constat et de re vel nomine controversia est" ("When there is ambiguity in relation to the name, there is also ambiguity in relation to the designated object: because there is a name for an object but in no way does the object exist without the name, so when there is a doubt about the name, there is necessarily also a doubt about the object. Therefore, the definitive issue is the one we have when there is evidence of an action but there is controversy in relation to the fact being judged or to its name").

76. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 52.178–179: "Quare definitionibus nostris nomen illi aliud quam adversarii volunt imponere debemus" ("Therefore, by means of our definitions, we must assign to a fact a name that differs from the one that the adversaries want to assign it").

disappears within the oral language or the written context (*Dial*. 9).[77] In the same vein, Victorinus tries to disambiguate individual words in many Ciceronian passages.

Other digressions deal with philosophical or doctrinal issues. Among the former, Victorinus's definitions of concepts such as *tempus* or *natura* (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.24)[78]—concepts listed within the attributes of persons and actions ("adtributa personae et negotii")—are worth mentioning. The author develops first a long digression about the philosophical definition of nature but next points out that the rhetor is concerned only with human nature: "Moreover, we must examine human nature from a threefold perspective: what is the nature of the soul, what is the nature of the body, what is extrinsic to it" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.24.35).[79] In the same way, Victorinus specifies the technical use of the term *tempus* after offering a digression about the corresponding philosophical definition (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.26.39).[80]

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77. "Quod enim dictum est omne verbum esse ambiguum de verbis singulis dictum est. Explicantur autem ambigua disputando et nemo utique verbis singulis disputat. Nemo igitur ambigua verba verbis ambiguis explicabit et tamen cum omne verbum ambiguum sit, nemo verborum ambiguitatem nisi verbis sed iam coniunctis quae ambigua non erunt explicabit.… Omne igitur ambiguum verbum non ambigua disputatione explicabitur." For translation, see Augustine, *De dialectica*, trans. Belford Darrell Jackson, ed. Jan Pinborg, SyHL 16 (Dordrecht: Reidl, 1975), 108: "For what has been stated that every word is ambiguous, has been said in relation to individual words. On the other hand, ambiguous words are clarified by discussion and nobody argues by means of isolated words. However, even if every word is ambiguous, nobody will clarify the ambiguity of the words if not with words, and these, once joined with others, will not be ambiguous.… Therefore, every ambiguous word will become clear by means of an unambiguous discussion").

78. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 108–109.120–39: "Si natura prior est, ergo deus natus est; atqui deus nasci non potuit.… Itaque natura difficilis definitio est. Denique sapientes quidam sic definiere naturam," etc. ("If nature existed first, then God has been born; but God could not have been born, so the definition of nature is difficult. In short, some wise men defined nature this way").

79. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 110.162–164: "Tripliciter autem debemus in homine inspicere atque explorare naturam: quae sit natura animi, quae corporis, quae extrinsecus."

80. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 121.160–197: "Tempus generaliter definire difficile est, quod tempus semper fuerit necesse est sive ante mundum sive cum mundo.… Sed iam tempus est ut ad rationem temporis revertamur; quod tempus, id est hoc quo nunc utimur, spatium accipiamus" ("It is difficult to define 'time' according to its genus because necessarily time must have always existed, either before the

On the other side, the explanations referring to grammatical or dialectical issues in which Victorinus reveals his teaching activity are abundant. As I explained above, he specifies all the semantic nuances or *significantiae* of a word and chooses the one that suits its technical definition.[81] Frequently, he takes advantage of the occasion offered by the mention of a concept to expound in detail on the doctrine concerning it, even repeatedly.[82] In addition, Victorinus makes constant use of partial summaries of the subject to be explained, of *figurae* or schemes that graphically express it, and he offers guidelines to future orators and *causidici* for its application.[83] This didactic aim is clearly observable in the passages expounding the *confirmatio* and in particular the deductive reasoning or doctrine of the syllogism.[84]

In several passages of his commentary, Victorinus refers to the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic and to the nature of the resources employed by both disciplines. In the section devoted to argument within the *confirmatio*, Victorinus differentiates *materia* and *argumentum* from the quasi-synonymous pair *argumentum* and *argumentatio*, as we have seen above.[85] Besides, he states that the theory concerning the latter

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world, or together with the world.… But it is time for us to take up again the explanation of the concept of time; we have to understand the time which we now use, as space").

81. Since the examples are very numerous in length and detail, I cite only the explanations in *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.5.6, 8.10, 5.7, 24.34 concerning, respectively, the terms *genus* (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 33.1–11; 50.96–103), *materia* (38.139–60), and *nomen* (106–107.58–79).

82. Thus it is not unusual to find the same terminological or dialectical explanations about key terms such as *genus*, *substantia*, *accidentia*, or *definitio plena* in several passages of the commentary.

83. For example, in relation to the identification of the different issues or *constitutiones*, see *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.8.10: "Itaque constitutio facile inveniri potest, si extremam partem thematis attendamus. In qua cum intentionem ex nostra persona proposuerimus, debemus attendere quid ad intentionem competenter responderi possit; tunc in responsione constitutionem necesse est inveniri" (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 48.33–37; "Thus the issue can be easily identified, if we direct our attention to the final part of the proposed case. We ought in this part to consider what might be fittingly responded when we will have laid out the accusation in our own person; and at this point it is necessary for the issue to be identified in relation to the response").

84. See *Comm. Cic. Rhet* 1.29–42 (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 136–62) and the *figurae* in 1.29 (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 140, 144).

85. Text cited at n. 67.

belongs to the *elocutio* and not to the *inventio*. He claims that Cicero took this device from dialectic to be applied in an incomplete way on the part of the rhetor or the orator. Curiously, Victorinus's comment does not develop this idea but only suggests it: Cicero took that device from dialectic and freed it from excessive logical technicality. The result, the enthymeme, must be considered an eloquent artifice for everyone who has mastery of the *ars bene dicendi*, and not—as one might think—a resource to develop the process of the discursive *inventio*: "argumentation is an artifice belonging not to invention but to speaking: it is made in two ways, by induction or by reasoning" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.31.51).[86] Although, as I have pointed out, Victorinus does not explain the reasons for his statement, elsewhere in the commentary he says that *elocutio* consists of the proper use of individual terms and sentences, that is, assertions conveniently arranged from the resources found in the invention process.[87] Therefore, in Victorinus's opinion, it seems that reasoning (*ratiocinatio*) should be considered as a part of the *elocutio*, the "delivery" of the points discovered in the *inventio*.

In general, digressions with more or less doctrinal or didactic content are a part of the commentary, and they become, as demonstrated, a lesson on the concept at issue. However, if the reflection moves away from philosophical or doctrinal concerns, Victorinus himself warns of this and once again takes up the central thread of the exposition.[88]

4. Conclusions

As we have seen throughout these pages, Victorinus developed his commentary on *De inventione* by means of the terminological, conceptual, and

86. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 149–150.6–8: "Argumentatio est itaque artificium non inveniendi sed dicendi; haec duobus modis fit, aut per inductionem aut per ratiocinationem."

87. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 45.20–24: "Elocutionem porro in duobus ponit, in idoneis verbis et in sententiis, scilicet ne in verbis singulis barbarismus sit, ne in pluribus soloecismus, deinde sive verba sive sententias ut competenter inventionibus dispositis adplicemus" ("[For Cicero] the elocution is based on two points, in using words and sentences with property, that is to say, without barbarisms in the individual words, nor solecisms in the grouped ones, besides in applying, both the words and the sentences found in the process of *inventio* with property").

88. For example, in *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.26: "Sed iam tempus est ut ad rationem temporis revertamur" (Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, 122.195–96; "But it is now time for us to go back to the explanation concerning the term 'time'").

methodological tools obtained from his profound knowledge of the arts of the trivium. He carried out his commentary through various procedures, most notably definitions, analysis of synonymic and polysemic terms, clarification of obscure or confusing passages, insertion of digressions of diverse content, examination of the logical structure of the text, and didactic summaries sometimes accompanied by *figurae* and *similitudines*. As I have noted, the broad field of ancient grammar included the study of *vitia* or faults of speech, namely, the ambiguity *in verbis singulis* and *in verbis coniunctis* (in individual terms and compound expression). In this light, Victorinus's rhetorical-grammatical and philosophical formation is evident in the way he uses the tools of terminological analysis offered by grammar as well as the argumentative procedures of dialectics in the service of rhetorical commentary. From a hermeneutical point of view, definition becomes, without a doubt, the fundamental resource. Grammarians linked definition to the doctrine of the *vitia* within the *verba singula*. In rhetorical theory, on the other hand, definition was useful for resolving broader syntagmatic ambiguities. Victorinus, in turn, employs this fundamental resource to dissect the Ciceronian text, to identify the technical meanings and the key concepts of rhetorical doctrine, and to accurately consolidate a rhetorical metalanguage. So important is definition as a procedure of textual analysis that his commentary on *De inventione* largely consists of underscoring Ciceronian definitions, offering his own definitions if some terms or ideas are not explicit in the text, and specifying the subtype to which they belong as well as their interpretation. The composition of an opuscule devoted to definitions is a clear indication of the importance Victorinus attached to this point in order to achieve a satisfactory interpretation of a text.

In addition, another fundamental procedure to ensure correct textual interpretation is logical-argumentative analysis. The application of the doctrine of syllogism is relevant to examine the argumentative reasoning underlying the text and to ensure its correct interpretation. Victorinus demonstrates that grammatical and dialectical resources, especially definition and logical-argumentative analysis, are essential to accurately interpreting any text, but especially a doctrinal text with a central place in the Latin rhetorical curriculum. The search for the correct interpretation also presupposes an understanding of the technical nuances of individual terms. For this reason, through his commentary, Victorinus manages to specify and consolidate a rhetorical metalanguage in Latin based on the grammatical and rhetorical-dialectical tradition.

Hidden Truth?
Philosophy and Rhetoric in Marius Victorinus's *Commenta in Ciceronis rhetorica*

Florian Zacher

1. The Problem of the Skeptical Passages

The commentary on Cicero's rhetorical handbook *De inventione* has raised various points of interest in the history of research into Marius Victorinus. One of the most discussed problems is the question of Victorinus's stance on Christianity while writing the commentary. Scholars have given a wide range of possible interpretations for two crucial passages mentioning Christianity. The spectrum ranges from viewing Victorinus as a polemical anti-Christian to considering him a tolerant skeptic. Besides this biographical question, many philosophical argumentations or digressions in the commentary have attracted the attention of researchers. Scholars have tried to reconstruct the philosophical influences on Victorinus and to delineate his stances on different philosophical problems. One of the major questions concerns the skeptical attitude displayed in the commentary, which is inextricably linked with the question of Victorinus's religious affiliation.[1]

1. *Skepticism* is a broad term encompassing rather different philosophical traditions in antiquity. The most important distinction is that between Pyrrhonism—named after Pyrrho of Elis—and the skepticism of the New Academy. The latter is a continuation of Plato's academy, with an emphasis on the skeptic attitude displayed by Socrates in Plato's dialogues. In this paper, the term *skeptic* refers to the traditions of the New Academy, represented most importantly by Arcesilaus and Carneades. On this distinction, and for a detailed portrayal of the different skeptic traditions and philosophers, see Woldemar Görler, "Fünftes Kapitel: Älterer Pyrrhonismus, Jüngere Akademie, Antiochos aus Askalon," in *Die Hellenistische Philosophie*, vol. 4.2 of *Philosophie der Antike*, ed. Hellmut Flashar, GGPh (Basel: Schwabe, 1994), 718–989.

In this paper I will argue against using the philosophical remarks in the commentary to reconstruct the whole *Weltanschauung* of Victorinus in his time as a professor of rhetoric. My aim is to show that Victorinus distinguished between philosophy and rhetoric as two different subject areas and that the philosophical remarks in the commentary usually serve a rhetorical purpose. In consequence, I will try to show that Victorinus could very well have been a Christian while writing the commentary.

1.1. Rhetoric and Philosophy in the Introduction of the Commentary

In the beginning of his commentary, Victorinus goes to great lengths to give a detailed explanation of Cicero's preface to *De inventione*. Following Cicero, Victorinus calls for the necessity of combining eloquence and wisdom, as wisdom without eloquence is of little use and eloquence without wisdom is even harmful to the state.[2] Therefore, the two fields of rhetoric and philosophy are first presented as two separate disciplines that have to be combined in a specific way to be of public use.[3] This distinction between the two areas will be of great importance for my argument that the philosophical parts of the commentary cannot simply be used to reconstruct Victorinus's own view on certain matters. In fact, Pierre Hadot already issued this methodical caveat in his groundbreaking monograph on Victorinus, when he notes, "Victorinus's commentary must obviously

2. See Marius Victorinus, *Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1 praef. 1–2: "Tractat autem in principiis quattuor thesis: unam talem, studendum esse sapientiae cum eloquentia; aliam, parum prodesse solam sapientiam, tamen prodesse; tertium, multum nocere eloquentiam, si sine sapientia sit. Et quia potest dici: Ergo eloquentiae studendum non est? Nam ubique sapientiam laudas, respondetur studendum esse eloquentiae, quia per eloquentiam vim suam sapientia exerit. Necessario quarta haec thesis, studendum esse eloquentiae, sed tamen quae sit mixta sapientiae" ("In the beginning he deals with four theses: the first is such that you have to strive after wisdom with eloquence; the second that wisdom alone is not useful enough, nonetheless useful; the third is that eloquence does much harm, when it is without wisdom. Because it could be said: 'Therefore, should one not strive after eloquence, as you praise wisdom everywhere?' the answer is given that you have to strive after eloquence, because wisdom shows its full power through eloquence. The fourth thesis necessarily is that you have to strive after eloquence, but so that it is mixed with wisdom"). For the critical text see Marius Victorinus, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, ed. Thomas Riesenweber, BSGRT (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 1.19–2.2. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

3. For this, see also Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), 79–81.

not be judged as an original theoretical work in which the author exposes his personal concepts."[4] However, there is one problem to be noted concerning Hadot's interpretation of the seeming skepticism of Victorinus: he does not analyze the skeptical argumentations together with the rest of the philosophical content of the commentary, but rather in his biographical section on Victorinus as a pagan teacher of rhetoric. There he uses them to reconstruct the Roman milieu in the mid-fourth century.[5]

By contrast, I will argue that the skeptical passages have to be dealt with in the same way as the rest of the philosophical remarks and not used to reconstruct Victorinus's personal beliefs.

1.2. The Most Important Skeptical Passage: Truth Is Hidden

The most important skeptical passage in the commentary concerns an explanation of the differences of necessary and probable arguments. Victorinus teaches the following:

> Furthermore, a necessary argument is such: if you bring forth something whose nature is such that it must necessarily happen this way, if you perhaps say, "If he was born, he will die. If she gives birth, she has slept with a man." These are necessary consequences; so if you necessarily must believe it, a necessary argument has been made. However, we must be aware of the fact that there are practically no necessary arguments, and that there are only probable arguments among men. In our opinion, a necessary argument certainly is based on the truth; because if a probable argument is based on what is similar to the truth, the necessary argument must be necessarily based on the truth. Nevertheless, truth is hidden among men and everything is done by means of conjecture. Therefore there can be no necessary argument. However, what impact can a necessary argument have among men? Only insofar as it is valid in people's opinion. Besides, in the Christians' opinion neither "If she gives birth, she has slept with a man" nor again "If he was born, he will die" are necessary arguments. Because to them it is manifest that he was born without a man and has not died. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.29.44)[6]

4. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 77–78.

5. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 27–58.

6. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 110.20–32: "Necessarium porro tale est argumentum, si ea proferas, quorum talis sit natura, ut sic fieri necesse sit, si dicas: Si natus est, morietur. Si peperit, cum viro concubuit. Haec necesse est ut se consequantur; quod si necesse habes credere, necessarium factum est argumentum.

The main point that Victorinus is trying to make is clear: an argument is necessary only in the case that it deals with naturally necessary consequences. It is absolutely necessary that a woman must have slept with a man in order to give birth to a child; it is absolutely necessary for everyone that has been born to die one day. Any other argument is only similar to the truth or probable and not necessarily true.

However, after explaining what a necessary argument could look like, Victorinus immediately denies the possibility of such arguments almost completely. He adduces an epistemological explanation for this thesis: necessary arguments are based on truth, but truth is hidden to humankind. Consequently, humankind can form only probable arguments that are valid only when they are in accord with people's opinions. As an example that even the most seemingly necessary arguments are not true in everyone's eyes, he uses the Christian beliefs in the virgin birth and the resurrection. Christians do not hold it necessarily true that in order to be born there must have been intercourse between man and woman, and that everybody who was born must die one day.

1.3. Hadot's Interpretation: Skeptical Tolerance in Accordance with Neoplatonic Thought

In his biographical analysis, Hadot recognizes the phrase *latet verum* ("the truth is hidden") as a quotation of Porphyry.[7] Macrobius cites in his

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Illud tamen scire debemus, argumentum necessarium paene non esse solumque esse inter homines probabile. Nempe nobis necessarium videtur ex vero constare; nam si probabile ex veri simili, ex vero necesse est necessarium. Inter homines autem verum latet totumque suspicionibus geritur. Ergo necessarium esse non potest argumentum. Sed quantum inter homines potest necessarium? Quantum secundum opinionem humanam valet! Alioqui secundum Christianorum opinionem non est necessarium argumentum: Si peperit, cum viro concubuit, neque hoc rursus: Si natus est, morietur. Nam apud eos manifestum est et sine viro natum et non mortuum." Riesenweber points to the problematic expression *non mortuum* and the difficulties of translating it. As a middle course between the free translation of Hadot "il est ressuscité" ("he is risen") and the dogmatically problematic "he has not died," one could consider translating *mortuus* as an adjective: "he is not dead." Then of course the parallelism with the preceding "If he was born, he will die" is lost. See Thomas Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar und Indices*, vol. 2 of *C. Marius Victorinus, Commenta in Ciceronis rhetorica*, UALG 120 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 184–85.

7. For discussion of the whole section, see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 47–58.

Commentary on the Dream of Scipio a passage from Porphyry's *Homeric Questions* where the same words appear:[8]

> All truth, he [sc. Porphyry] says, is hidden. Nevertheless, the soul, when it is liberated a bit from its duties towards the body during the body's sleep, sometimes gazes at truth; it sometimes focuses its sight, but never fully apprehends it. When it gazes at truth it never sees with clear and direct vision, but only through an interposed veil that covers the nexus of nature so it becomes obscure. (*In Somn*. 1.3.18)[9]

Hadot argues that the epistemological reasoning used by Victorinus stems from this fragment of Porphyry's work. He is then concerned to show how a certain amount of skepticism is compatible with Neoplatonic philosophy. To support his point he adduces a passage from Augustine's dialogue *Against the Academics*, which I will discuss later.[10] In Hadot's opinion, Victorinus was a traditional Roman in exhibiting a certain amount of skepticism and tolerance toward cults of any kind. He therefore adhered to the ancient cults but ascribed to them only an external value.[11] Hadot compares him with Symmachus and his tolerance rooted in a skepticism regarding knowledge of the divine.[12] One should be careful, though, not to forget the context of Symmachus's relation to the emperor Valentinian II. Symmachus was not arguing for tolerance from a position of power but from a position of inferiority. Symmachus realized that it was unlikely that paganism would become the leading religion of the empire again.

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8. For the identification of the *Homeric Questions* as the source of this passage see Pierre Courcelle, *Les lettres Grecques en occident: De Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris: de Boccard, 1948), 24, with n. 2.

9. For the critical text, see Macrobius, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis, in Macrobius, Opera*, 2nd ed., ed. Jacob Willis, BSGRT (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1994), 2:12.13–17. Porphyry, frag. 406F: "Latet, inquit [sc. Porphyrius], omne verum. Hoc tamen anima cum ab officiis corporis somno eius paululum libera est interdum aspicit, non numquam tendit aciem nec tamen pervenit, et cum aspicit tamen non libero et directo lumine videt sed interiecto velamine, quod nexus naturae caligantis obducit." For the critical text, see Porphyry, *Fragmenta*, ed. Andrew Smith and David Wasserstein, BSGRT (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993).

10. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 50–51.

11. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 58: "He remained for a long time loyal to the *mos maiorum*, which had for him only a purely external value, until the day when he tied himself definitely to the new 'way.'"

12. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 52–53.

Therefore, the best he could achieve was a peaceful coexistence between traditional cults and Christianity. That is why he had recourse to a skeptical epistemology regarding the divine, to argue for tolerance. His religious skepticism is primarily a rhetorical device to achieve a certain goal, not the sign of a typical Roman attitude toward religion.[13] By contrast, a certain degree of skepticism about the divine did not lead to a general tolerance for Cicero or Porphyry. Both argued that it was best to adhere to the traditional cults, as there was at least some empirical support for them. The ancestors worshiped the traditional gods, who in return made the city and the empire great.[14] Therefore, skepticism was not linked with religious tolerance in Greek and Roman thought but with conservatism, as the necessity of the right cult of the divine for the well-being of the state was generally agreed on.[15] Furthermore, Peter Van Nuffelen argues that the basis of the Greco-Roman discourse on religious tolerance was not really a skeptical epistemology, but rather the idea that there is a single objective truth that must be sought and can be attained. The authors engaging in those debates were not of the opinion that it is impossible to attain this truth but that it is difficult.[16]

Moreover, Hadot has associated another statement from Victorinus with the religious attitude of Porphyry. In this passage, Victorinus explains that it is not possible to give a general definition of a probable argument, as it depends on local ethnic and temporal conditions.[17] Hadot counts this as

13. See Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 38–39. Cameron rightly draws attention to the rhetoricity of the third *Relatio* and warns not to simply take the arguments for Symmachus's own conviction. However, it is not necessary to assume with Cameron that the philosophical arguments stemmed from other advisers.

14. See e.g., Porphyry, *Marc*. 18: οὗτος γὰρ μέγιστος καρπὸς εὐσεβείας τιμᾶν τὸ θεῖον κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ("This is the greatest fruit of piety: to honor the gods according to the customs of the country"). For the critical text, see Porphyry, *ΠΡΟΣ ΜΑΡΚΕΛΛΑΝ*, ed. and trans. Walter Pötscher, PhA 15 (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 22.25.

15. See, e.g., Arthur H. Armstrong, "The Way and the Ways: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in the Fourth Century A.D.," *VC* 38 (1984): 3.

16. For an assessment of some important Christian and pagan texts relevant to the debate on tolerance, see Peter Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance durant l'antiquité tardive*, CEPHE 10 (Paris: Cerf, 2018), 39–64, esp. 59–64.

17. See Marius Victorinus, *Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.29.46–47: "Probabile autem per se ipsum non potest definiri neque in praeceptum quoddam exprimi, sed probabile erit argumentum pro moribus patriae, populi, temporis. Neque enim omnibus unum atque idem probabile est; aliud enim iustum Romanis, aliud barbaris videtur"

another example of the "enlightened skepticism in religious matters which had always been traditional in Rome among the aristocracy and in a cultivated milieu."[18] He then parallels it with Porphyry's conclusion that it is best "to follow the opinion of the fellow citizens and observe the traditions of one's country."[19]

In contrast to Hadot's interpretation, I can see no indication that this statement should be expanded to include local traditions in cults and religions. It rather corresponds to Victorinus's restriction of the validity of an argument to its accord with people's opinion in the passage cited above. Even if it were meant to apply to religious questions, it would be a mere observation of facts, not to be mistaken with a philosophical precept. An orator has to take into account the opinions and traditions of the audience before which he speaks. The probability of the argument depends on its accord with the listener's opinion. This passage is not meant as a philosophical but as a rhetorical rule. My further examination, accordingly, will concentrate only on the first passage where Victorinus explicitly references Christianity.

1.4. Steinmann's Interpretation: A Skeptical Phase in the Life of Victorinus

Werner Steinmann followed Hadot's footsteps in his dissertation of 1990. Steinmann's study focuses on Victorinus's philosophical and theological comments on the soul. He compares the passages concerning the soul, its fall, and its liberation in the commentary to those in the dogmatic works and the commentaries on Paul's epistles. He concludes that as a professor of rhetoric Victorinus took a wholly Porphyrian stance on the soul, its fall, and its reversion to its original state. Steinmann supposes that Victorinus subsequently more and more doubted humankind's ability to save itself, and he thinks that this is the main reason for his conversion to Christianity. He sees the skeptical passages as evidence of a skeptical phase in the life of Victorinus. The commentary on Cicero shows in his opinion

(Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 113.7–10; "The probable, however, cannot be defined absolutely and cannot be formulated as a rule. In contrast, a probable argument has to be aligned with the respective customs of the country, of the people, and of the time. One and the same thing is not probable for everybody; one thing seems to be just in the eyes of Romans, another in the eyes of barbarians").

18. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 48.

19. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 51.

that Victorinus first converted from skepticism to Neoplatonism and with growing doubt to Christianity. In his interpretation, the different philosophical aspects of the commentary point to an existential crisis in the life of Victorinus. Steinmann thus parallels the philosophical development of Victorinus to Augustine's intellectual biography. He generalizes these developments in Victorinus and Augustine to conclude from them a typical biography of a fourth-century intellectual.[20]

Steinmann's analysis of Victorinus's view of the human soul and its reversion merits a detailed consideration, which I cannot give in this paper. Just to say this much on his method: Steinmann makes it his first choice to explain difficulties and seeming contradictions in the text externally, not internally. Instead of a close interpretation of the texts, he is rather interested in a reconstruction of the development of Victorinus's thought. Because of this priority, he sometimes appears to exaggerate certain remarks in order to make a clear distinction between the pagan professor and philosopher Victorinus and the theologian Victorinus.[21] By contrast, I will argue that the commentary cannot be used to reconstruct the personal beliefs of Victorinus.

1.5. *Latet verum* as a Skeptical, Not Porphyrian Argument

The first step necessary to my argumentation is a few remarks on the expression *latet verum* and its origins. Since Hadot's discovery of the Porphyrian parallel, it has become the *communis opinio* that Victorinus used a reminiscence of Porphyry's *Homeric Questions* in the aforementioned passage from Macrobius. Consequently, this consensus finds its expression

20. See Werner Steinmann, *Die Seelenmetaphysik des Marius Victorinus*, HamThSt 2 (Hamburg: Steinmann & Steinmann, 1990), 83–89, 122–24.

21. See especially the introductory and concluding remarks in Steinmann for his preference for a biographical interpretation of the texts, which is deduced from the exaggerated contrast between an optimistic view of humankind's ability in the preface of the commentary and a highly pessimistic view in the passages discussed in this paper (*Seelenmetaphysik des Marius Victorinus*, 3, 122–24). For his contrasting analysis, see Steinmann, *Seelenmetaphysik des Marius Victorinus*, 83–89. Steinmann does not try to explain the pessimistic passages contextually but simply states that it is not possible to do so. Accordingly, he concludes that the skeptic passages "stand for an intellectual attitude which cannot be simply removed or integrated in other contexts" (86).

in the excellent edition by Thomas Riesenweber, who refers to the passage in the apparatus.[22]

I challenge this general view and recommend eliminating the reference to Macrobius, as in my opinion it only gives rise to problematic conclusions. The only thing in common between Macrobius and Victorinus is that they use the two same words, *latet verum*, in an epistemological context. This is as far as the parallel goes, and nothing further. If this were a highly unusual expression, it would probably be enough to draw further conclusions. However, a quick search shows that there can be found enough similar expressions in similar contexts, of which I will give a few examples.

In his fragmentary work *On Academic Skepticism*, Cicero gives an outline of the doctrines of the New Academy. Cicero cites different authorities who agree on the skeptical position that nothing can be known for sure. One example from a Presocratic philosopher is Democritus, who "has said that truth is submerged, that everything is administered by opinions and habits, that nothing is left for truth, and that successively everything is surrounded by darkness" (*Acad. post*. 1.44).[23] By referencing these old philosophers, Cicero tries to prove that the position of the founder of the New Academy, Arcesilaus, was not an innovation, as he too "was of the opinion that everything is hidden in secrecy and that there is nothing, which could be discerned or comprehended" (*Acad. post*. 1.45).[24] Two examples from the fourth-century CE explicitly state that truth is hidden. Lactantius claims in the preface to book 3 of the *Divine Institutions* that "truth is still believed to be hidden in obscurity" (*Inst*. 3.1).[25] In his work *Against*

22. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 110.

23. "Et ut Democritus in profundo veritatem esse demersam, opinionibus et institutis omnia teneri, nihil veritati relinqui, deinceps omnia tenebris circumfusa esse dixerunt." For the critical text, see Cicero, *Academicorum Reliquiae cum Lucullo*, ed. Otto Plasberg, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1922). See also Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 9.72 = Democritus, frag. B117: ἐτεῇ δὲ οὐδὲν ἴδμεν· ἐν βυθῷ γὰρ ἡ ἀλήθεια ("In reality we know nothing, as truth lies in an abyss"). For the critical texts, see Diogenes Laertius, *Libri I–X*, vol. 1 of *Vitae philosophorum*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1999), 683.13; Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Griechisch und Deutsch*, ed. Walther Kranz, 3 vols., 6th ed. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1952).

24. Plasberg, *Academicorum Reliquiae cum Lucullo*, 19.11–13: "[Arcesilas] sic omnia latere censebat in occulto neque esse quicquam quod cerni aut intellegi posset."

25. "Quoniam veritas in obscuro latere adhuc existimatur." For the critical text, see Lactantius, *Divinarum institutionem libri septem, fasc. 2. libri III et IV*, ed. Eberhard Heck and Antonie Wlosok, BSGRT (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 201.5.

the Academics, Augustine cites the skeptical position that "truth is hidden, because it is buried or confused either by a certain darkness of nature or by the similarity of things" (*Acad*. 2.5.12).[26]

There are many other examples with similar expressions and content since the times of the Presocratics, which I will not quote excessively.[27] The point I want to make should be clear by these few examples: these expressions are in no way extraordinary or special, as very different philosophical schools can use them throughout the centuries. There is no cogent reason to conclude that Victorinus explicitly had a text by Porphyry in mind when he wrote this passage. To me the explanation seems to be different and, as I think, much simpler. The expression that truth itself or objects of thought and sense perception are hidden to people is a commonplace among different philosophical traditions, but especially a commonplace of academic skepticism. Both Victorinus and Porphyry draw on this common tradition. There is no direct literary dependency between them. There already are century-old patterns one could use when in need of a more skeptical epistemology.

1.6. Digression on Augustine's *Against the Academics*

I could stop my line of argument here, but things are more complicated. It has been argued that not only Victorinus but also Augustine drew not on academic skepticism in his *Contra Academicos* but on a specifically Porphyrian approach to skepticism. In this line of interpretation, the antagonist in Augustine's early dialogue is not the New Academy but Porphyry. One of the major arguments of Michele Cutino has been the parallel between the passage in Macrobius and Augustine. In Cutino's opinion the *latet verum* argument is specifically Porphyrian in nature; and Augustine's use of it shows that he is attacking Porphyry, not the New Academy.[28]

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26. "Veritas autem sive propter naturae tenebras quasdam sive propter similitudinem rerum vel obruta vel confusa latitaret." For the critical text, see Augustine, *Contra Academicos; De beata vita; De ordine*, ed. Therese Fuhrer and Simone Adam, BSGRT (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 33.12–14.

27. See for example, Heraclitus, frag. B123: φύσις δὲ καθ' Ἡράκλειτον κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ (Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*; "According to Heraclitus, nature likes to hide itself"). [Editors' note: See the magisterial reception history of this saying by Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).]

28. See Michele Cutino, "Scetticismo e anticristianesimo nei Dialoghi di Agostino," *Orpheus* 15 (1994): 46–75, esp. 58–59; and Cutino, "I Dialogi di Agostino dinanzi

Cutino assumes that the reasons they give why truth is hidden are typically Neoplatonic. In contrast, I have already shown that it is very common to argue that the objects of knowledge lie in darkness. This seems to have been nearly proverbial by the fourth century CE. The second part of Augustine's reasoning is also typically skeptical. It is the ἀπαραλλαξία argument (argument from indistinguishability) against the Stoic concept of the καταληπτικὴ φαντασία (the comprehensible impression) as the criterion to judge truth and as a secure source of knowledge. Against the very foundation of Stoic epistemology, the skeptics affirm that our senses cannot be an apt criterion, as they often deceive us. This is the case because many sensory impressions are indiscernibly similar to each other, for example, a set of twins or two eggs that look confusingly similar.[29]

This short digression on Augustine supports my point that the *latet verum* argument is in all cases best explained as a commonplace of a broader skeptical tradition. It gives no room to assume any direct dependencies. If one still wants to venture a hypothesis of a common source for Lactantius, Augustine, and Victorinus, one would more likely assume that Cicero had used a similar expression in the lost parts of his *Academica*.[30]

2. Against the Construct of a Porphyrian Pessimism

In addition, there are also conceptual reasons that lead me to doubt Porphyry's influence on Victorinus in this passage. If Victorinus really had alluded to Porphyry here, he would have misunderstood him. Furthermore, the notion of a Porphyrian pessimism, as coined by Nello Cipriani, also misses the point of Porphyry's epistemology. Cipriani follows the interpretation of Cutino and characterizes Porphyry's epistemology as a skepticism with two aspects. The first aspect denies the possibility of certain insight into truth during earthly life; the second aspect admits

al de regressu animae di Porfirio," *RechAug* 27 (1994): 41–74, esp. 50 n. 48. See also Nello Cipriani, "Il rifiuto del pessimismo porfiriano nei primi scritti di S. Agostino," *Aug* 37 (1997): 113–46.

29. On Arcesilaus's criticism of Stoic epistemology, see Görler, "Fünftes Kapitel," 796–801. The examples of the eggs and the twins are mentioned, e.g., in Cicero, *Acad. post.* 54–57.

30. However, see Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, "Lactantius, Porphyry, and the Debate over Religious Toleration," *JRS* 88 (1998): 129–46. She argues that Lactantius too might have read Porphyry. I cannot discuss the interesting case she makes here, but it seems unlikely to me.

this possibility after death only to a happy few who prepared themselves adequately by a philosophical lifestyle. Furthermore, Cipriani argues that the ascription of wisdom to god alone is a special attribute of Porphyrian skepticism.[31] However, these are not special characteristics of Porphyrian philosophy but belong to all Platonic schools throughout antiquity. The difference between god, who alone knows everything, and humanity, who can never achieve full insight, is a continuous postulate of Platonic philosophy.[32] The idea of a possible attainment of truth after the immortal soul has left the body is also attested for a skeptic such as Cicero.[33] Therefore, the very notion of Porphyrian pessimism is misleading. This form of skepticism is neither especially Porphyrian nor very pessimistic. As Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic has rightly pointed out, Porphyry clearly admits the possibility of an asymptotic approximation to truth.[34] This

31. Cipriani, "Rifiuto del pessimismo porfiriano," 114–17. Giovanni Catapano does not explicitly weigh into this debate. However, he concludes that Augustine is attacking a form of skepticism that leads to resignation, to defend a form of skepticism that is still looking for truth. See Catapano, "Quale scetticismo viene criticato da Agostino nel Contra Academicos?," *Quaestio* 6 (2006): 1–13.

32. See Hans Joachim Krämer, *Platonismus und hellenistische Philosophie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972), 52–53, with many references in n. 209. See above all Arcesilaus (frag. F15 = Carneades, frag. F8c): Ἀρκεσίλαος ἔφασκε τῷ θεῷ ἐφικτὸν εἶναι μόνῳ τὸ ἀληθές, ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ οὔ. Καρνεάδης τὰ αὐτὰ τῷ Ἀρκεσιλάῳ ἐδόξασεν ("Arcesilaus said that truth is attainable only by god, but not by man. Carneades was of the same opinion as Arcesilaus"). For the critical text of Arcesilaus and Carneades, see Hans Joachim Mette, *Weitere Akademiker heute (Fortsetzung von Lustr 26,7–94): Von Lakydes bis Kleitomachos*, Lustrum 27 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985). Karin Schlappbach interprets the last quotation as a Christian interpretation by Epiphanius. See Schlappbach, *Augustin, Contra Academicos (vel de Academicis) Buch 1: Einleitung und Kommentar*, PTS 58 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 111. However, many similar references show that it is a perfectly Platonic idea, which gives evidence to some continuity between the Old and New Academy. In Plato, the same opposition between god and people can be found for example in *Phaedr*. 287d.

33. See in general Cicero, *Tusc*. 1; *Rep*. 6.

34. See Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic, "Deux interprétations du scepticisme: Marius Victorinus et Augustin," *EPh* 101 (2012): 224–25. See for this for example Porphyry, *Marc*. 11: λέγει δὲ ὁ λόγος πάντῃ μὲν καὶ πάντως παρεῖναι τὸ θεῖον, νεὼν δὲ τούτῳ παρ' ἀνθρώποις καθιερῶσθαι τὴν διάνοιαν τοῦ σοφοῦ μόνην, τιμήν τε προσήκουσαν ἀπονέμεσθαι τῷ θεῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ μάλιστα τὸν θεὸν ἐγνωκότος (Pötscher, *ΠΡΟΣ ΜΑΡΚΕΛΛΑΝ*, 16, 26–29; "Reason tells us that the divine is present everywhere and in every way, but that among men only the mind of the wise man is dedicated as its temple, and that god is appropriately honored by the man who knows god best").

means that during this life a philosopher can get closer and closer to truth without ever fully apprehending it.

In contrast, Victorinus's argument seems prima facie to fit much more in the category of pessimism. He argues that there is an irreconcilable difference between true and probable arguments and denies the possibility of a true and necessary argument completely. An argument is probable, if the listeners believe it. It is probable, if it fits the listeners' own opinion on the subject. This definition of a probable or verisimilar argument does not fit in with a Neoplatonic conception of truth and probability at all.[35]

It is instructive to compare Augustine's utterly Platonic attack against the skeptics' concept of probable or verisimilar arguments. Near the end of *Contra Academicos* he adduces Plato's authority on the matter:

> It is enough for my purpose that Plato thought that there were two worlds, one intelligible, where truth itself resided, and this sensible world, which we apprehend by sight and touch, as is manifest. Therefore, the first is true, the second verisimilar and made to its image, and so from the intelligible world truth is polished and made bright in the soul that knows itself, whereas from the sensible world not knowledge, but only opinion is generated in the souls of the foolish. (*Acad*. 3.17.37)[36]

Hadot maintains that this passage in Augustine supports his interpretation of Victorinus and Porphyry.[37] He takes it as an example how Neoplatonism left room for a skeptical epistemology as far as the sensible world is

35. For a brief overview of Neoplatonic epistemology, see Lloyd P. Gerson, "Neoplatonic Epistemology: Knowledge, Truth and Intellection," in *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism*, ed. Pauliina Remes and Svetla Slaveva-Griffin (London: Routledge, 2014), 266–79. For a more detailed presentation of Plotinus's view see Kjalar E. Eyjólfur, "Cognition and Its Object," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 217–49.

36. Fuhrer and Adam, *Contra Academicos; De beata vita; De ordine*, 78.21–79.1: "Sat est enim ad id, quod volo, Platonem sensisse duos esse mundos, unum intellegibilem, in quo ipsa veritas habitaret, istum autem sensibilem, quem manifestum est nos visu tactuque sentire; itaque illum verum, hunc veri similem et ad illius imaginem factum, et ideo de illo in ea quae se cognosceret anima velut expoliri et quasi serenari veritatem, de hoc autem in stultorum animis non scientiam sed opinionem posse generari." For commentary, see Therese Fuhrer, *Augustin, Contra Academicos (vel de Academicis) Bücher 2 und 3, Einleitung und Kommentar*, PTS 46 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 411–18.

37. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 50 n. 12.

concerned. However, a review of the evidence shows that this parallelization misses the point of the argument of Victorinus and Augustine. Here, Augustine is concerned to shake the very foundations of academic skepticism. Skeptics have to defend themselves against the ἀπραξία argument, the accusation that their teachings inevitably lead to the inability to act. If one does not know what is right and therefore abstains from all judgment, one cannot act at all. The opponents accuse skepticism of having no effective practical criterion. Against this charge, the skeptics bring forward their orientation on plausible or verisimilar assumptions in the field of practical questions.[38] In contrast, Augustine makes the very Platonic point that one can never talk about something that is probable or similar to the truth without knowing what is true.[39] Platonism separates the intelligible and the sensible world but combines them at the same time, as the latter is an ontological image of the former. The probable is alike to truth because it is an image of it. In order to know what is like truth, one must first know truth itself. This necessary ontological nexus between truth and probability is already central to Plato's critique of rhetoric in his dialogue *Phaedrus*: "Some time ago … we were saying that the people because of its likeness to truth accepted this probability; and we just stated that he who knows the truth is always best able to discover likenesses" (*Phaedr.* 273d.2–6 [Fowler, altered]).[40]

Furthermore, Porphyry expands on his own epistemology in his commentary on Ptolemy's *Harmonics*.[41] He shows that sense perception alone

38. See Görler, "Fünftes Kapitel," 807–11.

39. Cf. the similar argument by Antiochus of Ascalon reported by Cicero, *Acad. pr.* (Lucullus) 32–33: "Volunt enim … probabile aliquid esse et quasi veri simile, eaque se uti regula et in agenda vita et in quaerendo ac disserendo. Quae ista regula est veri et falsi, si notionem veri et falsi propterea quod ea non possunt internosci nullam habemus?" (Plasberg, *Academicorum Reliquiae cum Lucullo*, 43.20–26; "They want … there to be the probable and so to say verisimilar, and this they want to use as a criterion for ethics, for searching, and discussing. What should this criterion of truth and falsehood be, if we do not have a knowledge of truth and falsehood, as they are not distinguishable?").

40. πάλαι ἡμεῖς ... τυγχάνομεν λέγοντες ὡς ἄρα τοῦτο τὸ εἰκὸς τοῖς πολλοῖς δι' ὁμοιότητα τοῦ ἀληθοῦς τυγχάνει ἐγγιγνομένον· τὰς δὲ ὁμοιότητας ἄρτι διήλθομεν ὅτι πανταχοῦ ὁ τὴν ἀλήθειαν εἰδὼς κάλλιστα ἐπίσταται εὑρίσκειν. See Therese Fuhrer, "Der Begriff *veri simile* bei Cicero und Augustin," *MH* 50 (1993): 107–25.

41. See Michael Chase, "Porphyry on the Cognitive Process," *AncPhil* 30 (2010): 383–405.

is no valid source for true knowledge. It is always in need of reason to abstract the inherent forms, to discern them, to judge what is wrong and what is right. Through reason alone it is that truth could be apprehended. This is because reason participates in truth and is akin to truth, as he relates in his commentary:

> This is why reason participates in truth and discovers what is accurate. For truth is something simple and pure, while falsehood is the opposite. Truth, in addition, is something secure, consistent, and single in form, whereas falsehood is inconsistent, insecure, and takes many guises. Reason is something secure, consistent, and single in form, while perception is the opposite. Reason, then, is akin to truth, while perception participates in falsehood. (*Comm. harm*. 1.1)[42]

Such an epistemology is completely alien to the cited passage by Victorinus. Victorinus denies any link between truth and probability. Truth is completely inaccessible and has no relevance for an orator. A good speaker does not need to know what is true to liken his arguments to this truth. He needs to know what his listeners think to be true of the relevant subject.

The differences between Victorinus's statement and Neoplatonic concepts become even clearer when he concludes a few pages later as follows:

> So, as we have said, a probable argument is constructed out of these things, that are based on opinion, if you say that there is a lower world or not, that there are gods or not, that the world is generated or not. These opinions are called δόγματα; δοκῶ is the Greek word for "to opine" and δόγμα for "opinion." It is fully manifest that about everything that takes place in the world can only be convincingly argued by means of probable arguments, since even the philosophers' declarations get their

42. Porphyry, *Commentary on Ptolemy's Harmonics: A Greek Text and Annotated Translation*, ed. and trans. Andrew Barker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 100, 18–28. Διὸ καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ὁ λόγος μέτοχος καὶ τοῦ ἀκριβοῦς εὑρετικός. Ἁπλοῦν γὰρ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ καθαρόν, τὸ δὲ ψεῦδος τοὐναντίον. Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἡ μὲν ἀλήθεια βέβαιον καὶ ὅμοιον καὶ μονοειδές, τὸ δὲ ψεῦδος ἀνόμοιον καὶ ἀβέβαιον καὶ πολυφάνταστον, ὁ δὲ λόγος βέβαιόν τε καὶ ὅμοιον καὶ μονοειδές, ἡ δ' αἴσθησις τὰ ἐναντία. Ὁ μὲν ἄρα τῇ ἀληθείᾳ συγγενής, ἡ δὲ τοῦ ψεύδους μέτοχος. For the critical edition, see Porphyry, *Commentarius in Claudii Ptolemaei Harmonica*, ed. Massimo Raffa and Andrew Barker, BSGRT (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016).

> name from "opinion," so that they are called δόγματα. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.29.46–47)[43]

No Neoplatonic philosopher would have left these crucial questions to the realm of probable argumentation. None would have accepted that their core doctrines are mere opinion, especially because these doctrines do not belong to the realm of the sensible world but to the intelligible world, of which knowledge can be attained through reason.

3. The Difference between Philosophy and Rhetoric in Victorinus's Thought

So what is one to make with this seeming relativism of the rhetor Victorinus? In my analysis, these skeptical statements by Victorinus are best explained through carefully distinguishing philosophy and rhetoric as two different academic fields. The commentary on Cicero's *De inventione* is in its intentions not a philosophical work but a rhetorical one. Its purpose is to introduce young students into the basics of rhetoric. Statements that relativize the vigor of philosophy, or arguments that employ a seemingly skeptical epistemology, are made by the teacher of rhetoric, not the philosopher Victorinus. An orator cannot rely on arguments he thinks are true. He always has to consider what people are convinced of to be true. To drive this point home Victorinus uses the strongest possible explanation there is. He denies the accessibility of truth for humans altogether. He proves his point by showing that not everyone believes even the most basic facts about nature, as evidenced by the Christian belief in a virgin birth and resurrection. When preparing a speech, students should take their time to elaborate their arguments and to adapt them to their audience. It does not matter whether they themselves believe a statement to be true. It is necessary that the audience believe in the speaker's statements as facts.

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43. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 114.22–28: "Ergo, ut diximus, et ex his, quae in opinione sunt posita, probabile colligitur argumentum, si dicas inferos esse vel non esse, deos esse vel non esse, mundum natum, mundum non esse natum. Istae opiniones δόγματα dicuntur; δοκῶ enim Graece opinor et δόγμα opinio nuncupatur. Adeo manifestum est omnia, quae in mundo aguntur, argumentis probabilibus persuaderi, quando etiam philosophorum professionibus ex opinione nomen impositum est, ut δόγματα dicantur." It is worth noticing that Cicero translates δόγμα as *decretum* (*Acad. post.* 29). Victorinus deliberately chose his translation to drive his point home.

Victorinus makes a clear distinction between philosophy and rhetoric. We should not mistake his call for a union between wisdom and eloquence for a confusion of the two disciplines of philosophy and rhetoric, as *sapientia* is not identical with philosophy.[44] On different occasions throughout the commentary, he clearly distinguishes the two subjects. They have different goals and different methods to reach their goals. For example, moral goodness (*honestum*) is a relevant category in both philosophy and rhetoric, but in a characteristically different way:

> Cicero teaches that moral goodness is twofold, one kind is bare and pure; the other so, that it is combined with utility. But this bare moral goodness is only found with few people, those, of course, who reach for bare glory and do nothing to their own utility, who decree everything generally by considering the good and the bad, not by taking in account the acknowledgment of others who are engaged in the same matters. However, the other moral goodness combined with utility is called moral goodness, because everything that is combined and twofold gets its name from the more important part. The first one is the moral goodness of philosophers, the second of those wise men who pursue politics, who are engaged in civic affairs. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.2.2)[45]

This example shows that philosophy and rhetoric aim for different things in different ways. The philosopher is only interested in the bare and pure good, whereas a man of public affairs, an orator, always has to take utilitarian considerations into account.

Another passage from Victorinus's *De definitionibus* shows the distinction between the two fields even more clearly:

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44. Rightly pointed out by Karlhermann Bergner, *Der Sapientia-Begriff im Kommentar des Marius Victorinus zu Ciceros Jugendwerk De inventione*, StKPh 87 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1994), 40. Contra Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 83.

45. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 11.19–26: "Cicero duplex esse honestum docet, unum illud solum atque purum; aliud, quod cum utili iunctum sit. Sed solum illud apud paucos est, eos scilicet, qui soli gloriae student nihilque ad sui utilitatem gerunt, qui quidquid sanciunt consideratione boni malique generatim sanciunt, non gratia in eodem versantium personarum. Honestum vero illud cum utili ideo honestum vocatur, quia id, quod iunctum ac duplex est, ab eo, quod maius est, nomen accipit. Verum illud honestum philosophorum est, hoc illorum sapientium, qui rei publicae student, qui in civitate versantur."

> An orator can express correctly all the things that the philosophers say. For an orator uses also true arguments, which is characteristic of philosophers: an orator even uses necessary arguments. The philosopher on the other hand disdains everything rhetorical in his own argumentation: he never uses presumptive evidence or so called "credible" evidence, and he dismisses everything merely "probable" from the perfection of his discourse. (*Def.* 6.28–33)[46]

In this logical work, Victorinus argues that an orator can use arguments that are philosophically true and necessary, but need not do so. By contrast, a philosopher must never employ the slightest hint of a probable argument but must always strive for the truth. From this passage, it is clear that Victorinus is convinced that a philosopher can gain insight in truth and must try to do so. The orator, on the other hand, can use every possible philosophical argument that fits his purpose.

Another passage of the commentary shows that Victorinus holds it not impossible to attain complete philosophy, but that it is the task of the philosopher, not the orator: "He [Cicero] shows, what complete wisdom is. A wise man is one who knows divine and humane things best.… In these words lies complete philosophy, which no orator can ever fully attain. Therefore, he demonstrates that we must at least strive for it" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.1.1).[47] Perfect knowledge of philosophy is not impossible to everyone, but only to the orator. This is an important distinction made by Victorinus. The orator cannot be a perfect philosopher, because he is concerned with too many other things. Nevertheless, he must at least study philosophy and strive for knowledge. This leaves open the possibility that someone who devotes his life completely to philosophy can attain *plena sapientia*.

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46. "Omnia enim recte orator exprimit quae sunt in dicendo philosophorum: nam et vero utitur argumento, quod est philosophis proprium: utitur etiam necessario. At contra philosophus in disputationibus propriis rhetorum cuncta condemnat: neque enim adiungit aliquando signum neque quod credibile dicitur, et omne probabile penitus a virtute sui sermonis excludit." The critical text of *De definitionibus* is that of Theodor Stangl, ed., *Tulliana et Mario Victoriniana*, reprinted in Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 331–62, with Stangl's page and line numbers.

47. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 7.19–20, 23–24: "Ostendit quid sit plena sapientia. Sapiens est enim, qui divina atque humana optime novit.… In his enim nominibus perfecta philosophia est, quam quia nullus orator plene potest assequi, ideo nobis horum vel studium habendum esse demonstrat."

Victorinus's selective use of philosophical argumentation is exactly the approach Cicero commends in his dialogue *De oratore* (3.64–67). In the third book of this dialogue, the speaker Crassus warns aspiring speakers against philosophical dogmatism. Neither an Epicurean nor a Stoic dogmatist could be a convincing speaker. An Epicurean who thinks it is best to abstain from all public affairs cannot hold a convincing public speech. A Stoic thinks all but the wise are morons and has a different set of morals from normal people, as he is indifferent to things such as health, wealth, power, or honor, and last he is apathetic, so neither does he show emotions himself, nor does he elicit them in his audience. In sum, the orator is not concerned with any kind of philosophical truths but only with the common sense.[48] He takes what people think to be true and forms his arguments on that basis for his specific purposes. Victorinus follows Cicero here in supposing that even the existence of the lower world or the nature of the gods are potential matters of debate for an orator.

This point can best be illustrated by the speeches of Caesar and Cato in Sallust's *Conspiracy of Catiline*. Sallust relates how Caesar wanted to dissuade the senate from condemning the conspirators to death, so he employed a seemingly Epicurean argument that after death there is no trouble and nothing to be feared, as a lower world does not exist. If the senate condemned the conspirators to death, they would not suffer any punishment but would be released from life's troubles.[49] In contrast, Cato wanted them punished by death. Consequently, he argues that there is an afterlife in which the bad are punished and the good rewarded.[50] The Epicurean argument does not necessarily reflect Caesar's own

48. See Cicero, *De or*. 3.64–67.

49. See Sallust, *Bell. Cat*. 51.20: "De poena possum equidem dicere, id quod res habet, in luctu atque miseriis mortem aerumnarum requiem, non cruciatum esse, eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere, ultra neque curae neque gaudio locum esse" ("Concerning the penalty I could say correctly that in distress and misery death is a relief from hardship and not a punishment, that it ends all of the mortals' mischief and that beyond it there is no room for worry or joy"). For the critical text, see Sallust, *Catilina*, *Iughurta*; *Historiarum fragmenta selecta*; *Appendix Sallustiana*, ed. Leighton D. Reynolds, OCT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 40.3–7.

50. See Sallust, *Bell. Cat*. 52.13: "Bene et composite C. Caesar paulo ante in hoc ordine de vita et morte disseruit, credo falsa existumans ea quae de inferis memorantur, divorso itinere malos a bonis loca taetra inculta, foeda atque formidulosa habere" (Reynolds, *Catilina*, *Iughurta*, 43.23–26; "Nicely and well-ordered has Gaius Caesar just spoken before this body about life and death, considering as false, I suppose, what

philosophical view. Rather, Sallust presents him as making clever use of philosophical attitudes in a rhetorical context; Victorinus surely knew this text when writing his commentary, as he sometimes cites examples from Sallust's works.[51]

When Victorinus uses a skeptical epistemology, then, for his didactic purposes, he is doing exactly the same. He does not necessarily believe this certain philosophical position to be true, but he deems it fit to support his point. We are dealing here with an example of rhetorical skepticism, which is underlined by a philosophical argumentation fitting the context.[52] Other passages of the commentary present much the same picture, where Victorinus has no problem with calling an argument necessary, or certain statements true. Two examples should suffice. In the first passage, Victorinus assumes that it is possible to form a necessary argument that cannot be refuted:

> He [Cicero] moves on from the probable to the necessary argument. This necessary argument, if it really is necessary as proven by the facts themselves, can in no way be refuted. However, if it does not have the factual content, but only the mode and form of a necessary argumentation, it can be refuted. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.45.83–84)[53]

In this section, Victorinus distinguishes between the actual content and the simple form of an argument. If an argument just has the formal appearance of a necessary argument, it will be easy to refute it, as one just has to show that the content of the argument is not really a necessary conclusion. However, Victorinus deems it possible here that the content of the argument can be necessary. If that is the case, it will not be possible to refute it. In this context, Victorinus even uses the example "If he was born, he will

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is reported about the lower world that the wicked take a different path from the good and stay in uncultivated, repulsive, and terrible places").

51. Quotations of Sallust's *Bellum catalinae* are found in Marius Victorinus, *Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.2.2; 1.20.28–29.

52. See also Cutino, "Scetticismo e anticristianesimo," 54. He rightly acknowledges the rhetorical use of the skeptical argument. Contra Bouton-Touboulic, "Deux interprétations du scepticisme," 230.

53. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 139.13–16: "Transit a probabili ad necessarium argumentum. Quod necessarium argumentum, si vere necessarium rebus ipsis fuerit, nulla ratione poterit reprehendi; sin autem non rem, sed modum ac formam necessariae argumentationis habuerit, reprehendetur."

die" to demonstrate a necessary simple conclusion. There is no trace of his former criticism of this argument in this passage.[54]

In the second example, Victorinus references the story of Simon Magus's flight as a true story:[55]

> This is the difference between false [*falsum*] and unbelievable [*incredibile*]: What is false cannot be believable [*credibile*]; then again, what is unbelievable [*incredibile*] can be true. However, truth is twofold: sometimes it means what has really happened, sometimes it means what has been proven by certain arguments to have really happened. Therefore, what is true often is unbelievable, because it cannot be false: for it is true that Simon flew, nevertheless it is unbelievable. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.43.80)[56]

In this section, Victorinus explains an old insight of rhetorical teaching: not everything that is true is believable, and not everything that is

54. See Marius Victorinus, *Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.44.86: "Haec [sc. simplex conclusio] quoque si ex utroque, quo constat, id est, si ex proposito et adiuncto erit necessaria, reprehendi omnino non poterit; est autem huiusmodi: Si dies est, lucet. Si natus est, morietur. Utique hoc ita necessarium est, ut frangi omnino non possit" (Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 140.27–30; "This simple conclusion cannot be refuted at all, if it is necessary from both parts, of which it consists, that is the premise and the conclusion; for example, like this: 'If it is day, there will be light. If he is born, he will die'").

55. This story can be found in the Actus Petri: having lost a battle of miracles against Peter, Simon announces that he will fly back to God. However, Peter's prayer to Christ brings Simon's initially successful attempt of flying to an end and leaves Simon with broken legs. See the Latin version in the Actus Vercellenses Acts Pet. 32 and the Greek version in the Athos codex Mart. Pet. 3. See "Acta Petri," in *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ed. Richard A. Lipsius (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1959), 45–103; "Martyrium Petri," in Lipsius, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, 1:78–102. For a treatment of different accounts and their possible relationship, see Otto Zwierlein, *Petrus in Rom: Die literarischen Zeugnisse: Mit einer kritischen Edition der Martyrien des Petrus und Paulus auf neuer handschriftlicher Grundlage*, 2nd ed., UALG 96 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 59–74.

56. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 134.13–18: "Inter falsum et incredibile hoc interest: quod falsum est, credibile esse potest; deinde quod incredibile est verum esse potest. Sed verum duplex est, nunc id, quod vere gestum est, nunc id, quod vere gestum quibusdam rationibus approbatur. Itaque saepe quod verum est, quia falsum esse non potest, incredibile est: verum est enim, quod Simon volavit, sed tamen incredibile est."

believable is necessarily true. Sometimes what is true seems too absurd to believe, while a convincing lie can easily be believed. He illustrates this with the example of Simon's flight: although it seems impossible and thus unbelievable that Simon flew, it is nevertheless true. This shows that in other contexts Victorinus naturally accepts true and necessary arguments. This is no sign of philosophical inconsistency in the author, but it shows the contextual use of philosophical argumentation. Only where Victorinus tries to teach his students to orient themselves to the audience does he deny the possibility of stating a true argument. In other contexts, as we have seen, he apparently had no problem calling an argument necessary or an unbelievable story true.

4. Victorinus and Christianity

Accepting this careful distinction between philosophy and rhetoric made by Victorinus will have consequences for the reconstruction of his intellectual biography. The commentary on Cicero is not a philosophical but a rhetorical work and therefore cannot be used to reconstruct the philosophical beliefs of Victorinus. This methodical premise will have consequences for the interpretation of many passages in commentary. One example, on which I cannot expand in this paper, is Victorinus's remarks on the soul in the beginning of the commentary. If seen in a rhetorical context, they will get a new and more useful meaning, too.

However, I want to take a new look on the question of Victorinus's attitude toward Christianity based on my understanding of the commentary. In my opinion, Hadot has rightly shown that the mention of the Christian beliefs of virgin birth and resurrection bears no trace of polemics or aggression toward Christianity.[57] The picture Augustine paints in his *Confessions* perhaps influenced these interpretations, as he portrays the pagan Victorinus as an aggressive apologist of paganism (*Conf.* 7.2.3, 7.4.9). This is obviously a literary strategy rooted in Augustine's theology to exaggerate the difference between the arrogant pagan and the humble Christian. In the aforementioned passage, there is no trace of aggression or mockery. By contrast, the very context makes it necessary that Victorinus adduces the Christian beliefs as something to be taken seriously. He

57. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 48. The opposing view has been defended by Pierre Courcelle, "Du nouveau sur la vie et les oeuvres de Marius Victorinus," *REAug* 64 (1962): 127–35.

wants to show his students that they should not thoughtlessly use even the most seemingly necessary arguments. As the orator's job is to consider his audience's beliefs when forming his arguments, he has to take these Christian opinions seriously. Additionally, Riesenweber points to the fact that Victorinus omits the name of Jesus in his example and takes the story of Simon's flight as common knowledge. This leads to the conclusion that Victorinus thinks his examples to be understandable by the information he gives.[58] This shows that his audience must have a basic idea of Christian beliefs, too.

However, based on the distinction between philosophy and rhetoric, I would even go further and argue that Victorinus had some sympathy for Christianity while writing the commentary. The most striking passage is the mention of Simon's flight, where there is no way to explain why an uncompromising or even a neutral pagan should think this story to be true. The competition between Peter and Simon Magus belonged to the founding legends of the Roman church. When Victorinus shows that he not only knows the story but also regards it to be absolutely true, he seems to have accepted a story central to the Christian community in Rome. Why should he have done so, if he were not particularly interested in its beliefs?[59]

The main argument against assuming a strong inclination of Victorinus toward Christianity has been his language in the first crucial passage. There he speaks of the Christians in third person, as though he is distancing himself from their beliefs. One would expect a wording such as *apud nos* ("with us") if the author identified himself with these opinions.[60] From these observations, Riesenweber draws the conclusion that Victorinus wrote the commentary before his ultimate conversion to Christianity, but at a time when he had already begun to occupy himself with Christian literature.[61]

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58. See Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 185.

59. Riesenweber cautiously puts the Simon passage in double brackets, as he suspects it to be a later addition by Victorinus himself. However, there is no valid evidence to assume a later insertion. See Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 219–20.

60. See Thomas Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of *C. Marius Victorinus, Commenta in Ciceronis rhetorica*, UALG 120 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 12 n. 2.

61. See Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, 11–12. This conforms to Simplician's account of the conversion of Victorinus given by Augustine; see Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.4: "Legebat, sicut ait Simplicianus, sanctam scripturam omnesque christianas litteras investigabat studiosissime et perscrutabatur et dicebat Simpliciano non palam, sed secretius et familiarius: noveris me iam esse Christianum" ("He used to read the holy Scripture,

It is worth noticing, though, that Victorinus uses a comparable distancing expression when introducing the philosophical view that humankind is composed of body and soul: "As we have said before, the philosophers say that man consists of two things, soul and body" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.2.2).[62] His further explanations show that he obviously approves of this philosophical concept. Therefore his manner of reference to the philosophers who hold this opinion is no sign that Victorinus is distancing himself from these theories. The only way to explain this is his sharp distinction between rhetoric and philosophy. He cites the insight into humankind's nature as an opinion of the philosophical experts. Perhaps he does the same when referencing Christian beliefs, a sign neither of ironic distance nor of skeptical tolerance, but of a sharp distinction between philosophy and rhetoric. He does not comment further on the Christian beliefs, because it is not his affair as a teacher of rhetoric.

My literary analysis of the commentary conforms to recent sociological studies on Christian and pagan identity in antiquity that try to dissolve the traditional dichotomy between the two groups. For this purpose, Alan Cameron develops "five overlapping categories" with two extremes: the committed pagans and committed Christians, then the moderate and compromising groups of center-pagans and center-Christians, and a large middle-group of people not strictly classifiable as either. Cameron's goal is to show that there is a broad spectrum of group identities instead of two monolithic blocks.[63] On the other hand, Éric Rebillard uses the sociological concept of groupness to grasp of this problem. He defines groupness as a "contingent event" that is not stable over time. Certain social and temporal circumstances activate the feeling of belonging to a group. But this groupness does not define all aspects of a person's life. In addition, the concept of internal plurality shows that an individual has no single, coherent identity, but the identity varies depending on different social contexts.

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as Simplicianus related, he used to examine and scrutinize all the Christian writings most zealously, and he often said to Simplicianus not openly, but secretly and privately: 'You should know that I am already a Christian'"). For the critical text, see Augustine, *Les Confessions I–VII*, *Oeuvres de saint Augustin*, trans. Eugène Tréhorel and André Bouissou, ed. Martin Skutella, BAug 2.13 (Paris: de Brouwer, 1962), 155.21–25.

62. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 8.23–24: "Ut supra diximus, aiunt philosophi ex duobus hominem constare, anima et corpore."

63. See Cameron, *Last Pagans of Rome*, 176–77.

Therefore, one can belong to very different groups and identify very differently depending on time and context.[64]

No matter which approach is preferred, both support my interpretation in their way. One can, for example, categorize Victorinus with Cameron's model as a center-Christian or at least as a center-pagan. On the other hand, one could draw attention to the fact that in the process of teaching rhetoric the important groupness is not the feeling of being Christian or pagan, but the feeling of belonging to the cultural elite of the empire or the feeling of belonging to a relationship of teacher and students. Rhetorical lessons are not a matter of religion; therefore, the religious identity is not strongly evoked in this context. One should be careful not blindly to follow the clear dichotomous distinction made by Augustine between Victorinus before and after his baptism and between Christians and pagans in general. The committed Christian Augustine portrays Victorinus as having a hierarchical arrangement of his different group affiliations: the life of the pagan Victorinus is dominated by his religious membership, just as the life of the Christian Victorinus. In contrast, it is more realistic, even from Augustine's own report of the conversion of Victorinus, that Victorinus is best described as having a lateral arrangement of his different memberships. The domination of one aspect depended heavily on the social and temporal contexts.[65]

5. Conclusions

I have tried to show that the putative skeptical passages in the *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica* are rhetorical devices, not philosophical deliberations. Not every philosophical statement in a rhetorical handbook reflects the author's own stance on the issues. There is no need either to integrate disparate positions into a complete philosophical system, as Hadot has tended to do, or to attribute them to different phases in the author's biography, as Steinmann has done. A skeptical epistemology does not constitute the philosophical worldview of the teacher Victorinus. There is no need to see him either as quasi-schizophrenic who is a skeptic at one moment and then a Neoplatonist at another, or to try to harmonize those contradictions. In contrast, I have shown that Victorinus as a professor of

64. See Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity: North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 1–5.

65. Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities*, 4–5.

rhetoric selects different philosophical views depending on what his argument requires. This analysis leads to different conclusions.

First, there are consequences for the study of Porphyry. I have shown that the *latet-verum* argument has wrongly helped to construct a Porphyrian pessimism. When this misconstrued connection between Porphyry and Victorinus is dissolved, it no longer distorts our understanding of Porphyry's epistemology. The total denial of the possible attainment of truth by humanity is only a didactic twist added by Victorinus to a skeptic epistemology. It is not a representation of Porphyry's thought, with his typical Neoplatonic epistemology. He holds sense perception for no adequate criterion, but has no doubt that humanity can at least approximately apprehend truth through reason. There is no deep pessimism in his epistemology.

This leads, second, to consequences in the study of Augustine's *Contra Academicos*. His *veritas latet* argument is a realistic representation of the argumentations of the New Academy. The antagonist in this early dialogue is not yet Porphyry, but the New Academy.

Third, and in our case most importantly, there are consequences in the study of Victorinus himself. It will no longer be as easy to compare the opinions stated in the commentary with those in his Christian writings. The positions expressed in the commentary, I have argued, are not necessarily indicative of Victorinus's personal convictions. Most importantly, it has to be noted that the commentary is a rhetorical work, and that the interpretation of philosophical positions needs to take the rhetorical background and the context of every argument in consideration. This leaves open the possibility that Victorinus might well have already been a Christian when writing the commentary. My approach opens the way for a different interpretation for several philosophical passages in the commentary. It will especially lead to a different interpretation of the explanations regarding soul in the beginning in a more rhetorical context, which I leave for a different occasion.

Christianity in Marius Victorinus's Commentary on Cicero's *De inventione*

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Addressing the question of Marius Victorinus's attitude toward Christianity before his conversion puts one between the proverbial rock and a hard place, between the two great authorities on the topic, Pierre Courcelle and Pierre Hadot,[1] who offer different reconstructions of Victorinus's pre-Christian religious profile. The evidence is slim and ambiguous. On the one hand, there is Victorinus's reference to Christian beliefs in virgin birth and eternal life in his commentary on Cicero's *De inventione*, a work tied to his profession as *rhetor urbis Romae*, professor of rhetoric.[2] Then there is Augustine's striking account in *Confessions*, which states that Victorinus had not only "been a worshipper of idols and took part in sacrilegious rites" but had also "defended these cults for many years with a voice terrifying [*ore terricrepo*] to opponents" (*Conf.* 8.2.3).[3] This last claim says rather more than can be inferred from Victorinus's brief mention of Christians

1. Pierre Courcelle, "Du nouveau sur la vie et les oeuvres de Marius Victorinus," *REAug* 64 (1962): 127–35. Hadot treats Victorinus's *vita* in his introduction to Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques sur la trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, 2 vols., SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960), as well as his monograph, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), ch. 3.

2. On Victorinus's professional activity, see the introduction to this volume. Full discussion of Victorinus's *vita* in Stephen Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), ch. 2.

3. Unless otherwise noted, in the following I cite Henry Chadwick's translation of Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), here 135. The Latin text of *Confessions* I cite is that of James J. O'Donnell, ed., 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), here 1:89.

in his commentary on *De inventione*,[4] a remark made in his elucidation of Cicero's distinction between "necessary" and "probable" arguments (*Inv.* 1.29.44). Prior to Hadot's work, scholars generally took the remark as hostile to Christianity and accordingly as a confirmation of Augustine's account. Considered in isolation, however, the passage is sufficiently ambiguous for Hadot to render its sense otherwise, in a way that does not support the conclusion that Victorinus had been hostile to Christianity before his conversion. More than a few scholars have adopted his interpretation, to the point that, fifty years after Hadot's suggestion, the history of scholarly discussion illuminates the slipperiness of the interpretative process and the precariousness of historical reconstructions based on limited evidence.

The moment for a reinvestigation of the matter is fortunate in having two new critical editions of Victorinus's commentary on Cicero at our disposal, as well as a two-volume introduction by the editor of the recent Teubner edition, Thomas Riesenweber.[5] Riesenweber, moreover, has on

4. I cite the critical edition of Thomas Riesenweber, ed., *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, BSGRT (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), here 110.18–111.6 (translated in §2.2.1 below): "'Necessarium est,' inquit, 'quod aliter ac dicitur nec fieri nec probari potest.' Necessarium argumentum ad fidem cogit ac trahit, probabile autem inrepit atque persuadet. Necessarium porro tale est argumentum, si ea proferas, quorum talis sit natura, ut sic fieri necesse sit, si dicas: Si natus est, morietur, Si peperit, cum viro concubuit. Haec necesse est ut se consequantur; quod si necesse habes credere, necessarium factum est argumentum. Illud tamen scire debemus, argumentum necessarium paene non esse solumque esse inter homines probabile. Nempe nobis necessarium videtur ex vero constare; nam si probabile ex veri simili, ex vero necesse est necessarium. Inter homines autem verum latet totumque suspicionibus geritur; ergo necessarium esse non potest argumentum. Sed quantum inter homines potest necessarium? Quantum secundum opinionem humanam valet! Alioqui secundum Christianorum opinionem non est necessarium argumentum: Si peperit, cum viro concubuit, neque hoc rursus: Si natus est, morietur. Nam apud eos manifestum est <et> sine viro natum et non mortuum. Ergo necessarium argumentum illud est, quod iam opinione persuasum est. Atque ut scias hoc necessarium non esse omnino necessarium, ostendit Cicero etiam hoc hominibus persuaderi, cum ait: 'Necessarie demonstrantur ea, quae aliter ac dicuntur nec fieri nec probari possunt.' Ergo si probantur, iam non erunt necessaria; quidquid enim probatur, potuit et non credi. Itaque necessarium argumentum teneamus illud, quod facile populo persuadet orator." For full introduction to the text and the manuscript tradition with commentary, see Thomas Riesenweber, *C. Marius Victorinus*, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, vol. 1, *Prolegomena*, vol. 2, *Kritischer Kommentar und Indices*, UALG 120 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015).

5. See the previous note for Riesenweber's works on the text. The slightly earlier edition of Antonella Ippolito superseded the long-standard edition of Carolus Halm.

substantial grounds accepted a textual variant in one of the key sentences of the controverted passage.[6] This adds a new factor to the discussion, the previous development of which I will sketch in a first section below. Next we examine the passage in question, which I will present in translation with analysis of the full literary context. A third section draws on recent research into Porphyry's philosophy of religion, which Hadot had already correlated with a number of Victorinus's utterances in his commentary.[7] In conclusion, I argue that when the passage in question is read in its immediate context and in light of Platonist teachings in the preface and elsewhere in the text, the passage reads as an unsubtle jab at Christians.

1. *Status Quaestionis*

Marius Victorinus's commentary on Cicero's *De inventione* was the standard textbook from the medieval to the early modern period,[8] and its reception over the centuries provides a valuable index of reader responses. The earliest evidence that his remark on Christian beliefs could be read as hostile to the faith comes from the eleventh century, when students of dialectic drew on his exposition of Cicero's discussion of probable and necessary arguments to pose questions alarming to more traditional scholars wary of the free-ranging use of reason in theology.[9] During the Renaissance, a couple of scholars left marginal comments revealing their sense of the rhetor Victorinus's distance from the faith. No lesser light than Petrarch congratulated Victorinus in light of his eventual conversion: "Happy old man! You later understood this matter better." An anonymous humanist also drew a similar

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See Marius Victorinus, *Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*, ed. Antonella Ippolito, CCSL 132 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); Marius Victorinus, *Explanationum in rhetoricam M. Tullii Ciceronis libri duo*, in *Rhetores latini minores*, ed. Carolus Halm, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1863), 153–304.

6. See the appendix of this present chapter for full details.

7. Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:13.

8. Thus Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter, *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 68. See also the essay on the history of Victorinus's commentary through the sixteenth century in Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*, xi–xxiv.

9. See Joseph de Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XIIe siècle*, 2nd ed. (Bruges: de Tempel, 1948), 289–93. In reporting on this, de Ghellinck writes of Victorinus's "attaques syllogistiques contre la naissance virginale du Sauveur et sa résurrection" (289).

conclusion: "Victorinus, you were not a Christian yet."[10] It may well be that these premodern scholars read his commentary on Cicero in light of what Augustine said about him as a defender of paganism.

Early twentieth-century scholars similarly read Victorinus's remark. This was the conclusion of Paul Monceaux, whose excellent 1905 literary history of Christianity in Roman Africa treated the full range of Victorinus's writings: "he made fun [*il a raillé*] of two doctrines of the church even in a rhetorical work."[11] We find this interpretation in reference works, in standard treatments of patristic authors,[12] and in the important monograph of Pierre de Labriolle on the anti-Christian pagan reaction. Labriolle heard in Victorinus's remark "un coup de boutoir"—a verbal gut punch—against the new religion.[13] But does this add up to Victorinus having been a "fervid and convinced opponent of Christianity," as the *Enciclopedia Italiana* has it?[14] Courcelle, whom no one would accuse of being an uncritical or literalist reader of the *Confessions*,[15] accepted Augustine's statement on the point as historically accurate:

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10. Petrarch: "Fortunate senex! Melius intellexisti hoc negotium postea"; unknown humanist: "Nundum eras christianus, Victorine" (cited in Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, 12; all translations are my own unless otherwise noted). Marginal comments in the manuscript tradition of Victorinus's commentaries on Paul similarly reveal readers' concerns about the orthodoxy of some of his exegeses. See Albrecht Locher, "Dogmatische Interpolationen in einer vatikanischen Handschrift aus Hohenemser Besitz," *Montfort* 36 (1984): 149–65.

11. Paul Monceaux, *Le IVe siècle, d'Arnobe à Victorin*, vol. 3 of *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne* (Paris: Leroux, 1905), 395.

12. E.g., Martin Schanz, *Die römische Literatur von Constantin bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian: Die Literatur des vierten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 4.1 of *Geschichte der römischen Literatur bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian*, 2nd. ed. (Munich: Beck, 1914), 160 n. 2. Thus Joseph Tixeront, *Précis de Patrologie*, 6th ed. (Paris: LeCoffre, 1923), 305: "Païën, il attaquait alors le christianisme; mais, l'ayant étudié pour le mieux connaître et le mieux réfuter, il y fut gagné et se convertit (vers 355)."

13. Pierre de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne: Étude sur la polémique antichrétienne du Ier au VIe siècle*, 9th ed. (Paris: L'Artisan du Livre, 1948), 360–61.

14. "Fervido e convinto oppositore del cristianesimo": thus Mario Niccoli, "Vittorino, Mario detto anche l'Africano o il Retore," in *Enciclopedia Italiana*, 35 vols. (Rome: Treccani, 1929–1937), https://tinyurl.com/SBL4214a.

15. See, e.g., his famous interpretation of the voice in the *tolle-lege* scene (Augustine, *Conf.* 8.12.29) as purely symbolic in Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, 2nd ed. (Paris: de Boccard, 1969), 188–202.

> The phrase *ore terricrepo* is principally applied to the aggressive, incisive, and anti-Christian value of the teaching and arguments of Marius Victorinus put into the service of the aristocratic reaction against Christianity, as other expressions of Augustine clarify ("doctor tot nobilium senatorum; praeclari magistrii; Victorini lingua, quo telo grandi et acuto multos peremerat").[16] It must have to do particularly with pedagogical and dialectical attributes (of Victorinus's teaching).[17]

Courcelle has hardly mistaken the implications of Augustine's marvelous vignette, which presents Victorinus as a sharp-tongued and learned scholar, whose conversion evokes a surprise and joy inversely proportional to the old professor of rhetoric's former stance against the new faith (*Conf.* 8.3.5–8.4.9). But can we take Augustine's account at face value, as historical evidence that Victorinus actually engaged in anti-Christian polemics?

Hadot, who likely regarded himself as following Courcelle's critical approach to the *Confessions*,[18] came to disagree with his former colleague at the École Pratique des Hautes Études on this question. As regards Victorinus's reference to Christianity in his commentary on *De inventione*, Hadot found no trace of anti-Christian polemics. He saw the passage rather as revealing a Neoplatonic worldview that held certain knowledge to be achievable only in relation to intelligible realities; everything in the sensible world, including religious views, was a matter of opinion.[19] Courcelle agreed on the "Neoplatonic content" in the passage, but he faulted Hadot for not putting it "in relation to anti-Christian propaganda," particularly since the two points that Victorinus mentions—virgin birth and human immortality—were central to the objections leveled by Porphyry and others against the faith.[20]

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16. These phrases are found in *Conf.* 8.2.3: "tutor to numerous noble senators … the distinguished quality of his teaching"; and 8.4.9: "Victorinus's *tongue* [Courcelle's emphasis] which the devil had used as a mighty and sharp dart to destroy many" (slightly altered).

17. Courcelle, "Nouveau sur la vie et les oeuvres," 129. See also Pierre Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire*: *Antécédents et postérité* (Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1963), 70–72.

18. See Hadot's account of what "almost caused a scandal" in Courcelle's researches on Augustine in Pierre Hadot, "Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse in Ancient Philosophy," *CInq* 16 (1990): 485–86.

19. Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:12–13.

20. Courcelle, "Nouveau sur la vie et les oeuvres," 130–31: "mais comment ne pas mettre cette vue néo-platonisante en rapport avec le propagande antichrétienne?" For

Hadot subsequently developed his position in his monograph on Victorinus. Granting that Augustine's account as it stands is "altogether possible,"[21] he submitted an alternative plausible scenario casting its value as historical evidence into doubt. At the time of writing *Confessions*, the bishop of Hippo retrojected the tense situation between Christians and pagans in Rome under Theodosius in the latter part of the fourth century into the rather different context of Victorinus's conversion over three decades earlier. This would have colored Augustine's account to the point that he represented Victorinus as having been a militantly anti-Christian spokesperson of the pagan aristocracy.[22]

Hadot's revised suggestion adds further features to the reconstruction: Victorinus had absorbed Cicero's academic (Platonic) skepticism into the framework of his Neoplatonism, and in this way he maintained "the enlightened skepticism in matters of religion which was always traditional at Rome among the aristocracy and learned circles."[23] A tolerant "probabilism" was a fit epistemology for the human world, "the proper domain of opinion and the probable," as Hadot puts it.[24] This recognition of the conventional nature of morality, along with Victorinus's apparent disinclination to condemn Christianity outright when mentioning it, leads Hadot to suppose that Victorinus's paganism "was only a political-social conformism."[25] Further, Victorinus's probabilism had another side that was reflected in his discussion of *credibile* and *incredibile* arguments, where he relates the apocryphal story (Acts Pet. 32) of Simon Magus flying in Rome as something that is "true" even if "unbelievable" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.43.80).[26] "Strange thing!" exclaims Hadot, observing that Victo-

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the anti-Christian objections, Pierre Courcelle refers to his article, "Propos antichrétiens rapportés par St. Augustin," *RechAug* 1 (1958): 149–86, esp. 156–57, 160–62.

21. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 249: "tout à fait possible."

22. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 48. Prior to 357, Hadot maintains, such tensions between pagans and Christians at Rome were minimal (58).

23. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 48.

24. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 50.

25. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 58.

26. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 134.17–18. Riesenweber has bracketed this whole passage as a later insertion, possibly by Victorinus himself. He suspects the passage because the opening phrase (l. 13: "Inter falsum et incredibile hoc interest") is a practically verbatim repeat of an earlier line (l. 8: "Et hoc intererit inter falsum et incredibile"). For discussion of textual variants and editorial conjectures in the passage see Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 220–21. Hadot finds the passage

rinus's apparent admission of the veracity of the incident would put him at odds with Porphyry, who rejected such violations of the natural order.[27] A similar objection against miracles was part of Sossianus Hierocles's work against the Christians, as one can gather from Eusebius's refutation of that treatise (Eusebius, *Hier.* 6.2–5).[28] Yet Porphyry seems also to have believed that miracles can be performed by magic, according to a passage in Jerome's commentary on Ps 81 (*Commentarioli in Psalmos*).[29] It is not clear whether Victorinus knew the story about Simon Magus from reading apocryphal Christian writings or the apologetic work of Arnobius.[30] At

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peculiar, since Victorinus refers to the story of Simon flying as if his readers must know about it and provides no explanation why it cannot be false (*Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 52 n. 127). For translation, see "Acts of Peter," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. Robert Mcl. Wilson, ed. Edgar Henecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 2:313. A version of the story is also found in the Pseudo-Clementine *Hom.* 2.32 and Const. ap. 6.9. For discussion, see Otto Zwierlein, *Petrus in Rom: Die literarischen Zeugnisse, mit einer kritischen Edition der Martyrien des Petrus und Paulus auf neuer handschriftlicher Grundlage*, 2nd ed., UALG 96 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 59–70.

27. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 51–52 ("Chose curieuse"), citing Porphyry, *Christ*. frags. 35.1–31 = Macarius Magnes, *Apoc.* 4.2. For the critical texts, see Porphyry, *Contra Christianos*: *Kritik des Neuen Testaments*, ed. and trans. Adolf von Harnack (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911), 61–62; Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus*, ed. Charles Blondel (Paris: Typographia Publica, 1876), 159–60.

28. On Hierocles's work, see Timothy D. Barnes, "Sossianus Hierocles and the Antecedents of the 'Great Persecution,'" *HSCP* 80 (1976): 239–52.

29. "Hoc enim dicit Porphyrius: Homines rusticani et pauperes, quoniam nihil habebant, magicis artibus operati sunt quaedam signa. Non est autem grande facere signa. Nam fecerunt signa et in Aegypto magi contra Moysen. Fecit et Apollonius, fecit et Apuleius: et infinita signa fecerunt" ("This is what Porphyry says: 'Because country people and the poor do not possess anything [by way of learning], they have performed some miracles by magic arts. Now, it is no big thing to perform miracles. For the magicians in Egypt performed miracles, and they did so in opposition to Moses. Apollonius too performed miracles, Apuleius did too, and they performed innumerable miracles'"). For the critical text, see Jerome, *Tractatus sive homiliae in psalmos*; *In Marci evangelium*; *Alia varia argumenta*, ed. Germain Morin, Bernard Capelle, and Johannes Fraipont, CCSL 78 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1958), 89–90.

30. Courcelle has observed how both Arnobius (*Adv. nat.* 2.12) and Ambrosiaster (*In Rom.* 8:39.2) invoke Simon's flying by way of contrast with Christ's miracles and to defend the possibility of his resurrection. See Pierre Courcelle, "Critiques exégétiques et arguments antichrétiens rapportés par Ambrosiaster," *VC* 13 (1959): 136–38. See Arnobius, *Adv. nat.* 2.13: "audetis ridere nos, quod mortuorum dicamus resurrectionem futuram, quam quidem nos dicere confitemur sed a vobis aliter quam sentiamus audiri?"

any rate, the notion that Victorinus could have accepted that Simon flew through the air in Rome would lend some support to the idea that he may also have found Christian beliefs in virgin birth and bodily resurrection as not totally improbable.[31]

The profile of Victorinus's probabilism depends in part on Hadot's interpretation of the Porphyrian phrase he saw in Victorinus's remark about Christianity. Two words in this passage—*verum latet*: "what is true lies hidden"—open a longer quotation in Macrobius (*In Somn.* 1.3.18), who attributes it to a commentary by Porphyry on Homer (probably his *Quaestiones Homericae*).[32] The reference to Christian beliefs follows

("Do you dare to laugh at us, because we say there will be a resurrection of the dead? And this indeed we confess that we say, but maintain that it is understood by you otherwise than we hold it" [*ANF* 6:439]). For the critical text, see Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, ed. August Reifferscheid, CSEL 4 (Vienna: Gerold, 1875), 57.9–14.

31. One might cite as a possible parallel for a levitation miracle the account Eunapius includes in his *Lives of the Philosophers* (*Vit. soph.* 458) of how Iamblichus's students recounted to him a rumor started by his slaves: that when the great man prayed, he rose and hovered fifteen feet from the ground. But the very fact that this was a rumor of slaves already marks it as something believed by the uneducated. If one does not incline to think Victorinus possessed of such credulity—"eine enorme Leichtglaübigkeit," as Riesenweber has put it—the other possibility would be to suppose Victorinus's endorsement of the "truth" of Simon Magus's flight to be a piece of humor about Christian readiness to believe all sorts of things that violate what is known of nature (Hierocles's treatise against Christianity alleged such objections; see n. 28 above; Riesenweber, *Prologomena*, 12). The Acts of Peter contains the kind of miraculous tales parodied by Lucian in *Verae historiae* (see *Ver. hist.* 1.2). One would like to know whether Victorinus differed in this matter from Cicero, who in *Rep*. 2.18 observes that "ancient times accepted stories that were often crude inventions, but this cultivated age generally ridicules and rejects everything that is impossible." See Cicero, *On the Commonwealth and On the Laws*, ed. and trans. James E. G. Zetzel, CTHPT (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). But Platonism had developed a great deal in the three centuries separating Victorinus from Cicero; hence it may be wrong to attribute the latter's rationalism to Victorinus, particularly when influential Platonists such as Iamblichus thought that one of the possible bodily effects of divine possession was indeed levitation (*Myst.* 3.5).

32. Pierre Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en Occident: De Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris: de Boccard, 1948), 24. See also Courcelle, "Verissima Philosophia," in *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 653–91. Porphyry is commenting on Homer, *Od.* 19.562–569, about the two gates, of horn and ivory, through which pass, respectively, true and deceptive dreams. Macrobius, *In Somn.* 1.3.17–18 = Porphyry, frag. 406F: "auctore Porphyrio … latet, inquit, omne verum." For the critical text, see Macrobius, *Com-*

shortly, as an example to illustrate a point Victorinus is making about Cicero's teaching. Given the hiddenness of truth in the world, a diversity of opinion is completely normal. Hadot has interpreted Victorinus's comments accordingly:

> Victorinus does not intend to say that Christian beliefs are absurd. Christians profess, it is true, a different opinion from the general one. But it is no more absurd than the common opinion itself. The only consequence is that an argument that would be considered irrefutable in common opinion is not considered irrefutable for a Christian.[33]

This portrait of the pagan Victorinus as having found Christian beliefs different but no more inherently absurd than other elements of popular opinion is not implausible,[34] but is it sufficiently grounded in the meaning and implications of the passage in its literary context?

Arthur H. Armstrong expressed some doubt about this aspect of Hadot's reconstruction in a review.[35] Other notable authorities, however, have affirmed it, for instance, Robert Markus and Alan Cameron, and they are not alone.[36] But there is no consensus. Ramsey MacMullen,

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mentarii in Somnium Scipionis, in *Macrobius, Opera*, 2nd ed., ed. Jacob Willis, BSGRT (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1994), 2:49–17.23; Porphyry, *Fragmenta*, ed. Andrew Smith and David Wasserstein, BSGRT (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993). For translation, see Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio by Macrobius*, trans. William H. Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 92. See also Macrobius, *In Somn.* 1.12.9, quoted and discussed in §4.1.

33. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 48: "Victorinus ne veut pas dire que les croyances chrétiennes sont absurdes. Les chrétiens professent, il est vrai, une opinion différente de l'opinion générale. Mais, il ne pas plus absurde que l'opinion générale elle-même. Il s'ensuit seulement qu'un argument qui, pour le opinion générale, devrait être nécessaire, ne sera pas nécessaire pour un chrétien."

34. This reconstruction is developed primarily in Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 46–58.

35. Note what Armstrong admits is on his part "a minor, and possibility overdeveloped, criticism" amid an otherwise very favorable review of Hadot's *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*: "So Victorinus, without any necessary unfaithfulness to the spirit of Porphyry (or even of Cicero) might have been moved to employ all his oratorical resources in defense of pagan rites, as Augustine explicitly says." See Arthur H. Armstrong, review of *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, by Pierre Hadot, *JTS* 23 (1972): 508.

36. Robert Markus, "Paganism, Christianity and the Latin Classics in the Fourth Century," in *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century*, ed. James W. Binns

for instance, holds to Augustine's account, seeing the pre-Christian Victorinus as "a deeply religious man, even an evangelist for the cult of the gods."[37] In my 2005 study and translation of Victorinus's *Commentary on Galatians*,[38] I split the difference between Courcelle and Hadot on these questions. With Courcelle I concurred there were compelling reasons to regard it as probable that Victorinus had opposed Christianity, but mostly because I was—and remain—reluctant to dismiss Augustine's testimony as a retrospective fictionalizing.[39] Following Hadot, however, I found no discernable hostility to Christianity in Victorinus's remarks about it in the commentary on Cicero.[40] Further study of this text, however, has led me to read the remark more comprehensively in light of the Platonist teachings on the soul laid out in Victorinus's preface to the commentary and in other passages. In that context, the reference to Christians looks strongly like

(London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 1–21. Elsewhere Markus has more fully articulated Hadot's rationale for reading between the lines of Augustine's account of Victorinus's attitude toward Christianity before his conversion: "Augustine, retelling it, was unable to comprehend the ease with which the pagan rhetor had passed into the ranks of the Christians. His incomprehension made him represent Victorinus's paganism, anachronistically, in militantly anti-Christian terms, and his conversion to Christianity as a dramatic renunciation of his pagan past and a painful break with the circle of his aristocratic friends. This picture turns the realities of the 350s into a fiction which reflects the realities of the 390s." See Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 29. Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 219–20. See also Werner Steinmann, *Die Seelenmetaphysik des Marius Victorinus*, HamThSt 2 (Hamburg: Steinmann & Steinmann, 1990), 83–89. Steinmann agrees with Hadot in finding no hostility toward Christianity in the commentary on Cicero, and he suggests that the Neoplatonist conception of the soul combined with this probabilism entailed an openness to other sources of revelation and thus eventually to Christianity.

37. Ramsey MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 69. See also Eric Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13. He also expresses concern about regarding the *Confessions* as a fabrication on this point.

38. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians*, 22–26.

39. Likewise Michele Cutino, "Scetticismo e anticristianesimo nei Dialoghi di Agostino," *Orpheus* 15 (1994): 57 n. 44.

40. I had previously expressed the same position in Stephen Cooper, *Metaphysics and Morals in Marius Victorinus' Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians: A Contribution to the History of Neoplatonism and Christianity*, AUS 5.155 (New York: Lang, 1995), 8–9.

an illustration of the rule of opinion in a world where truth is hidden due to the restricted capacities of embodied souls. Here I concur with Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic, who has argued against the aspect of Hadot's reconstruction that depicts Victorinus as having held a tolerant attitude in matters of religion on account of having adopted a putative Porphyrian skepticism about such matters.[41]

The Porphyrian origin of the phrase *verum latet*, while not uncontested, is supported—as Courcelle has shown[42]—by other lexical and conceptual elements in the passage of Victorinus, as well as in other authors who drew on the same vein of thought in Porphyry. If, in his commentary on Cicero, Victorinus really drew on not just generic Platonism but teachings specific to Porphyry, this would seem to increase the likelihood of Victorinus having been in Porphyry's camp as regards the latter's hostility to Christianity, most manifest in his treatise *Against the Christians* (if indeed this was the title).[43] If Victorinus's remark on Christianity has no polemical or hostile tone, however, the suggestion loses force and Hadot's reconstruction should stand as the most probable.

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41. Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic, "Deux interprétations du scepticisme: Marius Victorinus et Augustin," *EPh* 101 (2012): 217–32, esp. 220, 222 (and her conclusion, 232). After noting my own point of criticism (in Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians*, 25), she writes: "l'idée même d'un 'scepticisme' tolérant à l'égard du christianisme, car indifférent aux matières religieuses, nous semble poser problème. En réalité, cette indifférence aux questions religieuses, eu égard à la découverté de la vérité, se double souvent d'une loyauté ou d'un conformisme affiché à l'égard de la religion traditionnelle … qui peut être hostile au christianisme, lequel rompt avec le *mos maiorum*" (Bouton-Touboulic, "Deux interprétations du scepticisme," 220). Her objection to a pessimistic strain of skepticism is a response to Cutino, "Scetticismo e anticristianesimo," and Nello Cipriani, "Il rifiuto del pessimismo porfiriano nei primi scritti di S. Agostino," *Aug* 37 (1997): 113–46.

42. Courcelle, "Verissima Philosophia," 653–54 nn. 2–5. See the robust rebuttal of this identification in Florian Zacher's contribution to this volume.

43. For recent discussion of this see Matthias Becker in the introduction to his critical edition of the remains of Porphyry's work against Christianity, *Porphyrios, "Contra Christianos": Neue Sammlung der Fragmente, Testimonien und Dubia mit Einleitung, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen*, TK 52 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 32–85. On Porphyry as a religious thinker, see Aaron P. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Michael Simmons, *Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity: Porphyry of Tyre and the Pagan-Christian Debate*, OSLA (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

2. The *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*

Victorinus's commentary on Cicero's work *De inventione* is the earliest extant treatment of this textbook of rhetoric and the longest of his surviving works. It is perhaps also the latest of his professional writing, as it refers to his *Ars grammatica* and perhaps contains allusions to his *De definitionibus* as well.[44] Given the importance of Cicero's *De inventione* to the late antique and medieval curriculum, Victorinus's commentary became a standard text, and some manuscripts contain both works.[45]

While treating *De inventione* fully in two books, Victorinus does not supply the complete underlying text in his lemmata—a notable contrast to his commentaries on the Pauline epistles—but his comments include additional quotations of the text in the course of discussing its various elements.[46] He also refers to Cicero's other works, mostly his speeches, to illustrate points—apparently from memory and therefore often inexactly.[47] We may suppose that his production of the commentary on *De inventione* had some relation to his teaching: although the work is not just a collection of lecture notes, it bears a number of features deriving from his oral instruction, such as first-person addresses and examples along with explanatory diagrams.[48] Of great interest to the present inquiry is that Victorinus chose to include a significant amount of philosophical material—Platonist and Aristotelian—in the work, both in its preface and in portions of the textual commentary. This element has rightly been regarded as an important clue to an aspect of his pedagogical intentions that is above and beyond instruction in rhetoric and aimed to provide basic elements of Neoplatonist anthropology and soteriology.[49]

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44. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, 382. Riesenweber is not convinced that the references to definitions are to the treatise *De definitionibus* (*Prolegomena*, 10–11).

45. John O. Ward, "From Antiquity to the Renaissance: Glosses and Commentaries on Cicero's Rhetorica," in *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 25–67.

46. On his technique of lemmatization, see Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, 35–38. See also Volker Henning Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:112–17.

47. Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, 39–40.

48. Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, 21–24, 41–54.

49. See the discussion of Karlhermann Bergner, *Der Sapientia-Begriff im Kommentar des Marius Victorinus zu Ciceros Jugendwerk De inventione*, StKP 87 (Frankfurt am

2.1. Cicero on Necessary and Probable Arguments

The section where Victorinus mentions Christians and their beliefs comes in his comments to *Inv.* 1.29.44, where Cicero discusses the nature of necessary arguments (§45 provides further elaboration that is unnecessary to treat for the present question). Here I quote Harry M. Hubbell's translation (slightly modified) of this portion of the Ciceronian text:[50]

> All argumentation [*argumentatio*] drawn from these topics which we have mentioned will have to be either probable [*probabilis*] or necessary [*necessaria*]. For, to define it briefly, an argument [*argumentatio*] seems to be a device of some sort to demonstrate with probability or prove necessarily [*aut probabiliter ostendens aut necessarie demonstrans*]. Those things are proved [*demonstrantur*] necessarily which cannot happen or be proved [*probari*] otherwise than as stated; for example, "If she has had a child, she has lain with a man." This style of argument which is used for a necessary proof [*in necessaria demonstratione*], generally in speaking takes the form of a dilemma, or of an enumeration or of a simple inference. (Cicero, *Inv.* 1.29.44)

I also quote the section that follows shortly thereafter (*Inv.* 1.29.46), because in his discussion of probable arguments Cicero adduces examples of religious opinion, which may have given Victorinus the occasion to refer to Christian beliefs. Here Cicero articulates three kinds of probable argument, and in every case he implicitly or explicitly includes the possibility that a probable argument may actually represent the truth (see the

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Main: Lang, 1994), 22, 193–94. Also see Guadalupe Lopetegui Semperena, "El comentario de Mario Victorino al *De Inventione* de Cicerón," *Logo* 7 (2004): 43–62. Note also her conclusion about how Victorinus's importation of philosophical material—"the Neoplatonist vision"—works to shift Cicero's concern about the role of eloquence and civic life to a specifically Platonist framing: "If in Cicero the moral degradation he discussed is presented with political implications as a dissociation between eloquence and wisdom, centered on the existence or non-existence of *orator sapiens*, in Victorinus the dissociation is rather more of an interior process that on the part of human beings involves the forgetfulness of the true essence of the human being, the soul" (62).

50. The significant modification I have made of Hubbell's translation concerns *necessaria* and *necessarie*, which he renders as "irrefutable" and "irrefutably" and I render as "necessary" and "necessarily."

place of "right opinion" in Plato),[51] although the argument itself lacks the binding quality of the necessary sort. Thus Cicero:

> That is probable which for the most part usually comes to pass, or which has been established in opinion [*quod in opinione positum est*], or which contains in itself some resemblance [*similitudinem*] to these things, whether such resemblance be true or false. In the class of things that for the most part usually come to pass are probabilities of this sort: "If she is his mother, she loves him." "If he is avaricious, he disregards his oath." Under the head of what has been established in opinion come probabilities of this sort: "Punishment awaits the wicked in the next world," "Those who apply themselves to philosophy do not think that the gods exist" [*qui philosophiae dent operam non arbitrari deos esse*].[52] (Cicero, *Inv.* 1.29.46 [Hubbell, slightly modified])

2.2. Marius Victorinus on Necessary and Probable Arguments

The passage in question commences with a quotation of the opening sentence of the section, where Cicero elucidates his distinction between necessary and probable arguments. The relevant section does not constitute the entirety of Victorinus's comments on *Inv.* 1.29.44, which include a brief discussion of Aristotle's categories, which he previously introduced and enumerated (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.9.12).[53]

2.2.1. Victorinus on Necessary Arguments: Translation

I translate Riesenweber's Teubner edition of the passage,[54] which I have divided into three sections (the paragraph breaks are my own):

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51. Chiefly in *Meno* and *Theatetus*. The literature is enormous, but for a recent treatment of the theme, see Franco Trabattoni, *Essays on Plato's Epistemology*, AMP 1.53 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2016).

52. Hubbell's translation of this last phrase, "qui philosophiae dent operam" (which I have altered above)—"Philosophers are atheists"—is loose, but it captures the offense taken by some in Rome at philosophy. For Cicero's attempt in *De natura deorum* to manage his love for philosophy in the face of this prevalent sentiment, see Arina Bragova, "Cicero on the Gods and Roman Religious Practices," *SAAr* 23 (2017): 303–13.

53. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 42.2–8.

54. The Latin of this passage is cited at n. 4 above.

"A necessary argument," says Cicero, "concerns what cannot happen or be proven otherwise than as stated." A necessary argument compels conviction and drags one to it [*ad fidem cogit ac trahit*], but a probable argument worms its way in and persuades [*inrepit atque persuadet*]. Moreover, if you cite matters whose nature is such that it is necessary for them to happen thus, it is a necessary argument. If you should say, "if he was born, he will die" or "if she has had a child, she has lain with a man." It is necessary that these things follow each other; if you have necessarily to believe it [*quod si necesse habes credere*], a necessary argument has been made.

Yet we should know that this kind of argument—the necessary argument—hardly exists, and that the only kind of argument that exists among human beings is the probable argument. To be sure, a necessary argument appears to us [*nobis necessarium videtur*] to be based on what is true [*ex vero constare*]: for if a probable argument is based on what is similar to the true [*ex veri simili*], a necessary argument is necessarily based on what is true. But among human beings, what is true lies hidden and everything is done on the basis of conjectures [*verum latet totumque suspicionibus geritur*]. Therefore, there can be no necessary argument. To what extent [*quantum*],[55] however, can there be a necessary argument among human beings? To the extent [*quantum*] that it prevails according to human opinion! According to the opinion of Christians, moreover, the argument "if she has had a child, she has lain with a man" is not a necessary one, nor again is this one a necessary argument: "if he was born, he will die." For among them it is obvious [*apud eos manifestum est*] that he was both born without any man involved and that he did not die. A necessary argument, therefore, is one that has already been made persuasive by an opinion.

Furthermore, so that you would know this "necessary argument" is not in every respect necessary, Cicero has shown that the necessary argument is also a matter of human persuasion, when he says: "Things that cannot happen or be proven otherwise than as stated are necessarily demonstrated." Therefore, if they are being proven, they will not be necessary; for whatever is proven could also not be believed. So let us take a "necessary argument" to mean an argument that an orator can easily make persuasive to the audience. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet* 1.29.44)[56]

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55. Here Riesenweber follows the oldest and best manuscript (D), against the reading *tantum* found in later manuscripts and printed by Halm (*Explanationum in rhetoricam*, 232.40) and Ippolito (*Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*, 137.64). For defense of Riesenweber's editorial decision, see appendix below.

56. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 110.18–111.6.

2.2.2. Victorinus on Necessary Arguments: Analysis

Victorinus begins with a summary of the commented text through a paraphrase laced with quotation of key phrases and terms, much the same procedure one observes in his commentaries on the Pauline epistles.[57] After a quotation of Cicero's definition of the necessary argument, his remarks proceed by contrasting necessary arguments as those that compel conviction ("ad fidem cogit ac trahit") with arguments that are merely probable. These latter work through more subtle forms of persuasion ("inrepit atque persuadet"), as they lack the compulsory component of the necessary argument.

This distinction represents Cicero's adaption of material from Aristotle's *Topics*, which treats philosophical and rhetorical types of reasoning (συλλογισμός).[58] Philosophical reasoning (ἀπόδειξις) proceeds from "premises which are true and primary"—and premises that derive from them—and deals with things that "commend belief through themselves and not through anything else" (Aristotle, *Top.* 1.1, 100a). The other

57. Full discussion of his exegetical techniques on the Ciceronian and Pauline texts in Giacomo Raspanti, *Mario Vittorino esegeta di S. Paolo* (Palermo: L'Epos, 1996); Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians*; and Stephen A. Cooper, "Marius Victorinus: The First Latin Commentary on Paul," in *La concezione della Scrittura da Origene a Lorenzo Valla*, ed. Maria Valeria Ingegno (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming). On *De inventione* in particular, see Lopetegui Semperena, "Comentario de Mario Victorino," as well as her chapter in the present volume.

58. For an introduction to this work, see Paul Slomkowsky, *Aristotle's Topics*, PhA 74 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), esp. ch. 1. I am guided here by Lucia Calboli Montefusco, "Omnis autem argumentatio … aut probabilis aut necessaria esse debebit (Cic. Inv. 1.44)," *Rhetorica* 16 (1998): 1–24, esp. 7–13. The Aristotelian background is not a remote consideration in light of a couple factors, most importantly, that Victorinus was engaged with Aristotle's *Organon* both through his translation of Porphyry's *Isagoge* and the lengthy commentary he composed on Cicero's *Topics*, a book that bears a definite although obscure relation to Aristotle's work of that same title (see Montefusco's discussion). Victorinus's own integration of aspects of Aristotle's dialectic into rhetoric has been well documented by Hadot (*Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 179–96); and at all events Victorinus likes to refer to him, doing so in the commentary on Cicero more frequently than he does Plato (whom he never quotes but whose ideas he references, likely from Neoplatonic sources) and more far more exactly (Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, 128–32). Victorinus may also have translated Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation*, if Cassiodorus's attribution is reliable, which Hadot thinks is not (*Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 105–11).

sort of reasoning Aristotle calls "dialectical," which argues from "generally accepted opinions [ἐξ ἐνδόξων]" (*Top.* 1.1, 100b [Foster]). These opinions concern τὰ δοκοῦντα, things that seem to be the case but are accordingly not matters of science (ἐπιστήμη), which deals with things that are necessarily what they are, rather than contingent realities.[59] But even when dealing with contingent realities, there is a difference in the kinds of proofs. Thus in *Art of Rhetoric* (*Rhet.* 1.2.1357a30–31), Aristotle observes that rhetorical syllogisms can be either "necessary" (ἀναγκαῖα) or "likely" (ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ),[60] depending on the level of certainty that attaches to the conclusion drawn from the fact. This conception of the necessary argument seems to be what Cicero intended to illustrate with the example "if she has had a child, she has lain with a man." Since rhetoric deals almost entirely with contingent human events and takes opinions as the premises of the rhetorical syllogism (or enthymeme), Aristotle subdivides opinions into those accepted by everybody, by most people, or by the wise, with preference for the latter unless the majority holds a different view (*Top.* 1.1 100b).

To Cicero's example of a necessary proof—a woman's pregnancy as a sure sign of sex with a man (*Inv.* 1.29.44)—Victorinus subjoins a similar one: the birth of a human being will mean the eventual death of that human being. Both examples fit Cicero's definition of a necessary argument: "what cannot happen or be proven otherwise than as stated." What imparts this high level of necessity? For Victorinus, the *natura* of realities in question is the determining factor. These examples involve "matters whose nature is such [quorum talis sit natura] that it is necessary they happen [fieri necesse] thus." One thing necessarily follows upon the other ("haec necesse est ut se consequantur"), hence the argument compels you to accept it ("quod si necesse habes credere"). When you adduce matters of this sort, he concludes, "a necessary argument has been made."

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59. Montefusco, referring to Aristotle (*An. post.* 88b30–89a3) and the distinction "between ἐπιστήμη (knowledge) and δόξα (opinion) and their objects" as a version of Plato's basic ontological distinction between things that are eternal (and cannot be otherwise) and those that are changeable ("Omnis autem argumentatio," 9).

60. It seems that Victorinus was familiar with this part of Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*, since he cites the Greek terms ἐπαγωγὴ and συλλογισμός from *Rhet.* 1.2. (1356a35–1356b5) for Cicero's terms *inductio* and *ratiocinatio* (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.31.51; Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 121.21–122.1).

No sooner having said this, Victorinus proceeds to undermine this hard distinction between necessary and probable arguments by claiming that we ought to know ("scire debemus") "that this kind of argument—the necessary argument—hardly exists [paene non esse], and that the only kind of argument that exists among human beings is the probable argument." Necessary arguments "seem to us" ("nobis … videtur") to be based on what is true (*ex vero*), since probable arguments are based on something similar to the true ("ex veri simili"). After this he introduces—in the same sly manner he places the opening sentence of Plotinus's *Enn.* 5.2 in *Adv. Ar.* 4.22[61]—the Porphyrian tag: "among human beings … what is true lies hidden [verum latet], and everything is done on the basis of conjectures [suspicionibus]. Therefore, there can be no necessary argument."

In what follows it becomes clear how he intended his more moderate prior formulation that the necessary argument "hardly exists" ("necessarium argumentum paene non esse"). This is evident from the sentence that Riesenweber, in my view, has rightly punctuated as a question: "Sed quantum inter homines potest necessarium?" ("To what extent, however, can there be a necessary argument amongst human beings?") and then lets the answer follow, perhaps emphatically: "To the extent that it prevails according to human opinion."[62] And it is with this slight ironic[63] twist that he cites the example of Christian beliefs to demonstrate how human opinion is the decisive factor in persuasion, rather than any allegedly compelling power of an argument in itself. Moreover, the phrases *secundum Christianorum opinionem* and *apud eos* seem to mark a distance from Victorinus's first-person *nobis*—"to us a necessary argument seems based on what is true"—found in the sentence just before the one with *verum latet*. These turns of phrase present Christians as people who are othered precisely in Victorinus's distinguishing their beliefs as idiosyncratic and contrary to the norm expressed by "us," *nobis*. The *verum latet* sentence, followed immediately by the citation of an *opinio* of the Christians, appears to supply the readers with a suggestion of how such an opinion is conceivable. It is as

61. First noted by Paul Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident: Firmicus Maternus, Marius Victorinus, Saint Augustin et Macrobe*, SSL 15 (Leuven: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Bureaux, 1934), 49.

62. Riesenweber subsequently retracted his exclamation point (*Kritischer Kommentar*, 184).

63. Ironic, in that Victorinus just finished saying that the necessity of necessary arguments lies in the nature of the things themselves.

if Victorinus is saying, "When you live in a world where truth is hidden, people can believe all sorts of stuff—look at the Christians!" The example serves to prove his point (against Cicero) that a necessary argument "is one that has already been made persuasive by an opinion" ("iam opinione persuasum est").

My reading of the passage is interpretive in supplying a line of thought that is not explicitly expressed, but Hadot's interpretation does the same, in requiring the reader to surmise behind Victorinus's overt statement an assumption that in a world where truth is hidden and all is a matter of conjecture, one opinion is just as good as another. Hadot's interpretation (see §1 above) is weaker, I maintain, given the fuller context and particularly the sequence of Victorinus's comments here. To explain why he dissents from Cicero's account of the necessary argument, Victorinus gives a sweeping and critical statement about the conditions of the possibility of knowledge—truth is hidden, as if to say *caveat orator*!—and then goes on to present an example of the consequences of this general situation, namely, Christians and their beliefs. The statement that what is true is hidden is thus illustrated by this example of an opinion that—he appears to imply—many if not most people would consider ridiculous. While some estimates of the Christian population of the Roman Empire place it over the 50 percent mark by the mid-fourth century, the proportion of the Christian population of Rome was not yet this great,[64] so perhaps there is sense to the way Victorinus presents Christian beliefs as a minority position in his commentary, much as he may well have done in his lectures.

2.2.3. Victorinus on Probable Arguments: Translation and Analysis

Victorinus began his discussion of necessary arguments with a preliminary definition of probable arguments: "A probable argument is one that creates conviction [fidem facit] by its resemblance to what is true [veri similitudine]." He picks up the discussion of probable arguments after treating necessary ones and, contrary to Cicero, claiming that "the necessary argument, hardly exists, and the only kind of argument that exists

64. Historians are wary of estimating the percentage of Christians given the inadequate data. For estimates, see Frank Tromley, "Overview: The Geographical Spread of Christianity," in *Origins to Constantine*, vol. 1 of *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 306.

among human beings is the probable argument." Victorinus has therefore not denied the *theoretical* perspective behind Cicero's distinction—that the necessary argument is based on what is true (*ex vero*)—but has simply argued that for all *practical* purposes the distinction is irrelevant, since what is true is hidden in human society ("inter homines autem verum latet"). Hence his conclusion after citing what—*ex hypothesi mea*—he presented as the eccentric *opinio* of Christians, that "a necessary argument, therefore, is one that has already prevailed through the force of opinion." For orators, then, knowledge of the audience's opinion is paramount, as this is the field on which any rhetorical strategy must hope to conquer.

In concluding his discussion of *Inv.* 1.44 (see the final paragraph of the translation at §2.2.1 above), Victorinus attributes to Cicero his own relativizing of the distinction between probable and necessary arguments, with the statement that "things that cannot happen or be proven otherwise than as stated are necessarily demonstrated." Cicero's word *probari* ("be proven") Victorinus takes as an indication that nothing can be considered self-evident if it requires persuasion; thus, any such claims must be the object of a probable argument. Hence anything arguable is by definition not necessary; no one argues whether two plus two equals four. But of the matters that require some sort of persuasion, Victorinus expresses his willingness to bestow the title of necessary argument on any point where popular opinion will predispose the audience *ad fidem*, toward accepting it. Hence he concludes that a necessary argument means simply "an argument that an orator easily makes persuasive to the audience [facile populo persuadet]." The necessity of the necessary argument lies in the prior convictions of the audience—their *opinio*—and not in the realities treated by the argument.

Hadot inferred from this aspect of Victorinus's exposition of rhetoric that he also possessed a more general epistemology of probabilism that operated within "the proper domain of opinion and the probable."[65] Thus rhetoric, from the standpoint of Platonist metaphysics, is entirely at home in the shifting world of the senses, the realm of opinion where no objection of persuasion can escape the demand that to be probable—that is, prove-able—it must be in accord with prevailing opinion. Victorinus clarifies this in commenting on *Inv.* 1.29.46 (see the translation of the relevant section of Cicero's text above in §2.1):

65. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 50.

> "That is probable that for the most part usually comes to pass." There has been discussion [*dictum est*] about the necessary argument and about its modes, namely, three modes.[66] Now let us talk about the probable argument, in which alone is contained the power of every conviction [*virtus omnis fidei*]. As we said above, there is no necessary argument amongst human beings, especially because a necessary argument itself is even subject to proof [*etiam ipsum probetur*]. All conviction rests on probable argument alone, indeed, so much so that the Greeks have defined an orator's duty and aim thus: πειστικῶς εἰπεῖν, that is, to speak persuasively to produce conviction [*probabiliter ad fidem dicere*]. Now, the probable cannot be defined through itself [*per se ipsum*], nor can it be expressed through a specific teaching [*praeceptum quoddam*], rather a probable argument will be one made in light of the morals [*pro moribus*] of the country, the people, or the time. For it is not the case that one and the same thing is probable to all: one thing seems right to Romans, something else to people of foreign cultures [*barbaris*]. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.29.46)[67]

Although Victorinus follows Cicero in stating that there are "three modes" of necessary arguments, he immediately reinforces his previous conclusion that there is no absolutely necessary argument and that whatever conviction ("omnis fides") orators can produce is the result of a probable argument.

He moves on to exposit Cicero on the point, noting that "the probable argument is divided into three": "what for the most part usually comes to pass; what has been established in opinion, and that which has some resemblance to these things" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.29.46).[68] Of particular interest is his treatment of the examples supplied by Cicero of probable arguments based on preexisting opinion ("quod in opinione positum est"), as they are matters of religion. Victorinus restates the examples slightly in a second-person form: "if you would say [dicas] an underworld exists and that there are punishments in the underworld for the impious; if you would say that those who philosophize act against the gods." He notably rejects this last popular sentiment with a first-person example of himself as a philosopher

66. This was the concluding part of *Inv.* 1.44, which I have not discussed above. Victorinus devoted several paragraphs to it, introducing these remarks by saying, "Cicero teaches, accordingly, that a necessary argument is made through 'a dilemma, an enumeration, or a simple inference'" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.29.44).

67. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 113.1–10.

68. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 114.3–5.

accused of such impiety. His defense is that "God wanted me to be such (a person); and when people criticize me, they are doing so in defiance of the gods" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.29.44).[69] The argument depends on the conceit that the gods have willed that Victorinus should philosophize. His alternation of "god" in the singular and "gods" in the plural fits Augustine's profile of him as a philosophical pagan. The notion that God wanted him to be such and approves his philosophizing, despite what people may say, recalls Socrates's defense of himself at trial, where one also observes this alternation between singular and plural for the divine (Plato, *Apol.* 28e–29a). The first-person example with the peculiar justification suggests an intentional self-presentation on the part of Victorinus as a teacher of rhetoric who understood his philosophizing to be religiously sanctioned.

But how do probable arguments actually work? Victorinus emphasizes the role of opinion here too (the bracketed sentence has been marked by Riesenweber as a probable gloss) and returns to the question of philosophy and philosophers:[70]

> As we were saying, then, a probable argument is put together based on established matters of opinion, whether you would say that Hades [*inferos*] exists or not, whether the gods exist or not, whether the world was born or not. [Such opinions are called δόγματα, for δοκῶ means "I am of the opinion" and δόγμα means "opinion."] Indeed, it is obvious that all things done in the world are argued for with probable arguments, when even [*etiam*] the things philosophers profess have had a name drawn from (the Greek term for) opinion (δόξα) imposed upon them, such that they are called δόγματα ("dogmas"). (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.29.46)[71]

69. The full passage that I have translated portions of here runs as follows: "Si dicas inferos esse et impiis apud inferos poenas; si dicas omnes qui philosophentur contra deos facere. Multi enim credunt quod philosophi contra deos faciant; etenim si deos adserunt et me forte stultum esse dicunt: quoniam me talem deus esse voluit, contra deos faciunt, cum me reprehendunt. Deinde in re publica cum bella aut pax ex dei voluntate contingant, ipsi autem multa cupiant persuadere, contra deos faciunt, si id non agendum adserunt, quod deorum voluntate contingit" (Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 114.16–17).

70. Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 191–92. The sentence is lacking in one manuscript; and as Riesenweber points out, it looks like a gloss in its summative anticipation of the point of the following sentence.

71. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 114.22–28.

The kinds of teachings he adduces as examples of possible matters of probable arguments are of two sorts. The first has to do with the examples from Cicero—religious matters that many people would have an opinion about—as well as issues hotly debated by Platonists and Aristotelians since the Hellenistic period, like the eternity of the world.[72] But what is the import of his note that "even" (*etiam*) the teachings of philosophers are considered on the level of opinion, insofar as they are referred to as *dogmata*?[73] Above (§2.2.2) I cited the passage in Aristotle's *Topics* that distinguishes between opinions accepted by everybody, by most people, and by the wise (*Top.* 1.1.100b); Victorinus appears to have followed this distinction with his description of the nature of discourse in a world where the truth is hidden, to the point where all assertions, even the most exact ones of the philosophers, are practically speaking just matters of opinion. This is appropriate instruction for students of rhetoric, whose goal is to speak persuasively, that is, in terms audiences are likely to accept based on their worldviews. When Victorinus says, "All things done in the world are argued for with probable arguments," he is expressing the key idea of the second part of the *verum latet* sentence: "totumque suspicionibus geritur" ("and everything is done on the basis of conjectures").

Independent of his views on rhetorical efficacy is the matter of Victorinus's judgment on these conditions of worldly discourse. This can be more fully apprised in light of some of the philosophical passages of his commentary. On the basis of these, I suggest that Victorinus thought the mundane conditions of discourse to be in some sense pathological—that is, based on damaged capacities of the soul for knowledge. Such perspective would be in line with a general Platonist suspicion of *opinio*; and in the following section I will argue that the audience is prepared to draw this conclusion through the elements of Platonism that Victorinus introduces in his preface as well as other passages of the commentary on *De inventione*.[74]

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72. See Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), part 3.

73. The terminology was not derogatory but just meant "teachings," as in Cicero's use of the term in *Acad. post* 1.36.106 ("Epicuri dogmata") or *Acad. pr.* 2.43.133 ("quod mihi tecum est dogma commune").

74. For translation and discussion of the material in the preface and other philosophical passages of this work, see Stephen Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: The Latin Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986),

3. *Verum latet* and Victorinus's Platonist Anthropology

It is not only Victorinus's translation of the *libri Platonicorum* or the familiarity with Platonist school-commentaries evident in his later Trinitarian works that permits us to infer that he was a partisan of this particular philosophical tradition. Numerous aspects of the commentary on Cicero suggest the same. The distinction between the true and the verisimilar, for example, is a central part of the terrain of Platonist epistemology, more specifically, Plato's concern to distinguish knowledge from opinion or even true opinion (treated variously in *Meno*, *Theatetus*, and *Republic*). Opinion, in the line of thought followed in the last-named dialogue, is very different from knowledge in having a different kind of object (*Resp.* 477a–478e); and there are also problems in having opinions even about the proper objects of knowledge (*Resp.* 505a–506c). We need not claim direct acquaintance with Plato's dialogues[75] on Victorinus's part to see that he was working in an intellectual context of basic Platonist conceptions. His assertion that the force of the necessary argument depends on the comprehension of the nature of the realities, although it functions as part of his rhetorical teaching, fits within the conceptual world of Platonism, particularly, as we will see, when the reader has been prepared by his prefatory remarks. It will become apparent that Victorinus was committed to teaching an art of rhetoric that was more than sophistic:[76] what he taught was a moral, if not positively moralizing, rhetoric that took as its first principle the difference between the really true and the only apparently true.

In his preface Victorinus emphasizes one of the "four theses" he finds Cicero elaborating in the opening of *De inventione*: that eloquence without

2:719–27. On the few mentions of Plato in the commentary on *De inventione*, see Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, 27–28.

75. Nonetheless it would be hazardous to assume a total lack of acquaintance with them on the part of a man who was comfortable reading Greek. Plato's dialogues were clearly read in Plotinus's school in Rome; and the reports about the *viri novi* in Arnobius suggest that Roman Africa in the fourth century also had circles of Greek-reading Platonists. Thus Pierre Courcelle, "Les sages de Porphyre et les 'viri novi' d'Arnobe," *REL* 31 (1953): 257–71. See also Ruth Majercik, who connects certain Porphyrian motifs in Arnobius, Victorinus, and Augustine with their African provenance. Majercik, "Porphyry and Gnosticism," *ClQ* 55 (2005): 292.

76. Such as taught by Gorgias, whose rhetorical teaching was aimed solely at persuasion and whose definition of virtue as the ability to rule other people Plato has Socrates sharply oppose in *Meno* 73a, 95b–c.

wisdom can cause great harm (*Comm. in Cic. Rhet.*, praef.).[77] He particularly elaborates the difficulty of attaining wisdom and virtue, reiterating themes that Cicero himself developed in his own exordium and that are highly relevant to Victorinus's elucidation of Cicero's discussion of necessary and probable arguments.

These prefatory remarks begin with Victorinus quoting a definition of virtue—"the condition of the soul consistent with reason in regard to the mode of its nature"—slightly reworded from Cicero's definition at *Inv.* 2.159.[78] He then lays down basic elements of Platonist anthropology:

> The soul is immortal. If it is immortal, it has descended from divine realities [*a divinis*]; if it has descended from divine realities, it is perfect. But the acuity of the soul, howsoever perfect it be [*acies quamvis perfectae animae*], is ensnared and mired in some sort of thick coat of the body [*quodam crasso corporis tegmine*], with the result that the soul suffers a kind of forgetfulness of itself. However, once it has begun by exertion and training [*studio ac disciplinae*] to cleanse itself [*detergeri*],[79] as it were, and be stripped naked, then the condition of the mind [*animi habitus*] is returned and recalled to the mode of its own nature. Plato says on one occasion that this virtue comes about by applied knowledge [*arte*], at another that it is innate [*nasci*] in human beings, at another that it is produced by practice [*exercitatione*], and at another time that it is given by God [*a deo dari*]. This virtue is the same thing as what wisdom is asserted to be by Cicero in his *Rhetoric*. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* praef.)[80]

77. For this, see Bergner, *Der Sapientia-Begriff*, 34–41; Cooper, *Metaphysics and Morals*, 10–14.

78. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 2.10–11: "Virtus est animi habitus, in naturae modum rationi consentaneus"; 2.12–18: "Nam virtus est animi habitus naturae modo atque rationi consentaneus": "Virtue may be defined as a habit of mind in harmony with reason and the order of nature" (trans. Hubbell). The slight reformulation may reflect the influence of a lost philosophical source (perhaps Neoplatonist), according to Thomas Riesenweber, "Eine Stoische Tugenddefinition: Zur Überlieferung von Cic. Inv. 2,159-167," *RhM* 152 (2009): 274–79; see also Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 6–7.

79. I accept the conjecture of *detergeri* (in place of *detegeri* in D or of *detegi*, which Halm prints following the majority of the manuscripts), proposed by Theodor Stangl. See Stangl, *Tullliana et Mario Victoriniana*, repr. in Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*; upheld by Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 6–8.

80. For discussion of this passage, see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 79–88; Steinmann, *Seelenmetaphysik des Marius Victorinus*, 71–82; Riesenweber, *Kritischer*

Victorinus presents this motif of cleansing and recovery under the heading of *virtus*, and he identifies "virtue"—perhaps better translated here as "power"—with the *sapientia* Cicero sought to combine with rhetoric, an ideal that Victorinus takes up and modifies in his commentary in line with more recent forms of Platonist thought than the academic skepticism Cicero had exposited.

Three of the four ways in which Victorinus claims Plato asserts virtue to be attainable overlap with the factors that Meno lists at the opening of the dialogue bearing his name: διδακτὸν … ἀσκητὸν … φύσει (*Meno* 70a); and the notion that virtue might rather be given "by a divine dispensation" (θείᾳ μοίρᾳ) is suggested at the end of that dialogue (*Meno* 99e).[81] The note about the soul's "forgetfulness of itself" ("quandam oblivionem") recalls Plato's account (*Phaedr*. 248c) of the soul's mishap of "forgetfulness" (λήθη), which in turn causes its heaviness and the loss of its wings. More specifically, however, the language of this passage—Hadot has maintained—reflects Porphyry's presentation of this complex of ideas, as comparison with Firmicus Maternus shows (*Math*. 1.4.1–3).[82] While both Victorinus and Firmicus Maternus display concern for the epistemological damage incurred by the soul due to its association with the body, they also appear confident about the process of recovery: Maternus in his optimistic appraisal of the mind's capacity to obtain the truths of his beloved astrological science (*Math*. 1.4.3–5); Victorinus in his enumeration of the various ways in which Plato thought the soul could recover its capacity for knowledge despite its encasement in the body.

Kommentar, 7–9. See also the translation of the passage by Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism*, 2:723–26.

81. *Meno* 70a: "Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue can be taught, or is acquired by practice, not teaching? Or if neither by practice nor by learning, whether it comes to mankind by nature or in some other way?" (Lamb).

82. Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, CEAug 33 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968), 1:84 n. 4. Firmicus's knowledge of Porphyry's anti-Christian works is certain, based on his citation of the Greek title of *De philosophia ex oraculis* at *Err. prof. rel*. 13.4–4 (his reference to Porphyry in *Math*. 7.1.1 is likely to the latter's commentary on Ptolemy). On his use of, and response to, Porphyry's philosophy of religion, see Aude Busine, "De Porphyre à Franz Cumont: La construction des 'religions orientales' de Firmicus Maternus," in *Les "religions orientales" dans le monde grec et romain: cent ans après Cumont (1906–2006)*, ed. Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge and Corine Bonnet (Brussels: Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome, 2009), 413–26.

It is not only in Victorinus's preface that we find remarks helpful for establishing the intellectual context of his *verum latet* statement. One can gather from his remarks on Cicero's "great man" (*Inv*. 1.2.2) theory of the birth of civilization[83] how Victorinus thought that at least some individuals were capable of true knowledge and action on that basis. Note his repetition of elements of the Platonist anthropology:

> As we stated above, philosophers say that the human being consists of two things, body and soul; the soul is indeed perfect but it is impeded by the thickness of the body [*crassitudine corporis*], on account of which the soul reveals itself in such a way that it is less than what it is by nature [*quo minus se talem exerat, qualis est per naturam*]. When the world was established, therefore, human beings were certainly impeded by the body, and among those people the soul's power was buried and oppressed.… But because (the soul's) nature does not distribute itself equally throughout all people, there arose at some point one man, the kind of person who understood himself well, one who could see the divine soul within human beings that contains in itself many useful applications, if it could be lured out by someone and brought forth from its particular hiding-places [*latebris quibusdam*]. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.2.2)[84]

A number of points are important to grasp here. First, the repetition of the Platonist anthropology and its application to a specific element of the Ciceronian text highlight the way the philosophical elements, often considered digressive, are rather essential to the goals of the commentator in laying out the "thematic platform" on which the individual elements of the commented text are to be understood (Giacomo Raspanti has demonstrated this at length in regard to Victorinus's treatment of both Cicero and

83. Cicero, envisioning a time before religion, law, and marriage, imagines how the transition to a civil state took place: "At this juncture a man—great and wise I am sure—became aware of the power latent in man [*quae materia esset*] and the wide field offered by his mind for great achievements if one could develop this power and improve it by instruction. Men were scattered in the fields and hidden in sylvan retreats when he gathered and assembled them in accordance with a plan; he introduced them to every useful and honorable occupation, though they cried out against it at first because of its novelty, and then when through reason and eloquence they had listened with greater attention, he transformed them from wild savages [*ex feris et immanibus*] into a kind and gentle folk" (Hubbell).

84. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 8.23–9.1.

Paul).[85] In the second place, this passage suggests that the Platonist theory he is applying to elucidate Cicero has something of an optimistic perspective, insofar as it explicitly presents a theory where some individuals[86] can not only recover the soul's natural capacity but are also able to bring other people along in their train through eloquence. Victorinus's note here that the soul is impeded *crassitudine corporis*—language that echoes a phrase of the previously quoted passage from the preface: "crasso corporis tegmine"—matches precisely an image from Porphyry, who in his work *On the Styx* speaks of "the thickness [τὴν παχύτητα] of the body."[87] This impediment notwithstanding, a "magnus vir et sapiens" is the sort of person "in whom the soul retained its nature, one who understood that all human beings have in themselves something divine [quiddam divinum], but that it is suppressed and ruined by the weakness of the body" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.2).[88] Victorinus explicitly rejects the claim of "many people" who want to identify such exceptions with particular historical figures: "Saturn, Plato, Aristotle, and others, but they are wrong." Rather, Victorinus thinks Cicero intends "virum magnum atque sapientem quemcumque" ("whatsoever great and wise man") (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.2. 2).[89] This philosophical ideal—realized in the "wise" who have this *virtus* through exerting themselves in purgative and contemplative *exercitatio*—is the kind of pride denounced

85. Raspanti, *Mario Vittorino esegeta*, 50–51, 97–98, 126. See also the works cited in n. 57.

86. So also Bergner: "The underlying portrait of the human being is optimistic and demanding [*optimistisch-anspruchsvoll*]. The negative side of human existence can be overcome and corrected in a constructive manner through the will, which is in principle free although inhibited in the exercise of its freedom through the body's materiality" (*Sapientia-Begriff*, 187). One observes a parallel view about theological knowledge, in his comments on Eph 1:18, where he states that "among certain people there is (the capacity) to receive by revelation something exceptional and great and nigh unto the truth, so to speak" ("Est quidem apud quosdam praecipium et magnum et quasi vero vicinum revelatione aliquid percipere"). For the critical text, see Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior: Opera exegetica*, ed. Franco Gori, CSEL 83.2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986), 21.32–33.

87. Porphyry, *Fragmenta*, 378, 458.25. Porphyry is commenting on Homer, *Il.* 100–101. See the translation of this fragment from *On the Styx* by Johnson: "With respect to mortal things, therefore, they are shades because of their being incorporeal and lacking memory, so that perhaps the soul, in comparison to the thickness of the body is likened to smoke" (*Religion and Identity*, 337).

88. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 10.7–8.

89. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 10.31–111.2.

by Arnobius and Augustine, both of whom were writing in opposition to Porphyry and his followers.[90]

How can this Platonist perspective inform our reading of Victorinus's specifically rhetorical teaching? Because such great individuals are exceptional, the art of rhetoric must develop its theory in relation to the common run of humankind, people without an intact or recovered nature. In these circumstances, it would be folly to expect that even the most obvious points of truth would command universal assent. Here is where the reference to Christian teachings comes in handy. Cicero's examples of necessary arguments—that pregnancy presupposes sex, and that birth is inevitably followed by death—are not considered by Victorinus to be absolutely binding arguments, since they contradict Christians' central convictions—their *opinio*—about Jesus. Hence his conclusion that "a necessary argument is therefore one that has already been made persuasive by an opinion." Arguments have a high degree of plausibility[91] only when aligned with the opinions of the audience.

Victorinus's teachings on this point notably coincide with the analysis supplied by modern sociology of knowledge, specifically with the notion of the symbolic universe, defined by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann as "the matrix of *all* socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings."[92] The theory states that the "plausibility structure" of communities will

90. See Arnobius, *Adv. nat.* 2.15 (cited at n. 114) and Augustine, *Trin.* 4.15.20: "However, there are some people who think they can purify themselves for contemplating God and cleaving to him by their own power and strength of character [*virtute propria posse purgari*], which means in fact that they are thoroughly defiled by pride [*superbia*].… Their reason for assuring themselves of do-it-yourself purification [*sibi purgationem isti virtute propria pollicentur*] is that some of them have been able to direct the keen gaze of their intellects [*aciem mentis*] beyond everything created and to attain, in however small a measure, the light of unchanging truth; and they ridicule those many Christians who have been unable to do this and who 'live' meanwhile 'out of faith' (Rom. 1:17) alone." Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City, 1991), 167.

91. It is useful to distinguish between common and technical meanings of this and related terms. See Ruud van der Helm, "Towards a Clarification of Probability, Possibility and Plausibility: How Semantics Could Help Futures Practice to Improve," *Foresight* 8 (2006): 17–27, doi:10.1108/14636680610668045.

92. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1967), 114. Without denying the importance of Weber and Durkheim, I note that Karl Manheim's *Ideologie und Utopie* is the foundational text of the discipline. See Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia*:

govern the "subjective reality" of what individuals within these communities will consider true or untrue.[93] In this way "socially objectivated knowledge" is the determining factor of the horizons of the possible, the probable, and the necessary for any society or subculture.[94] Victorinus, in his denial that *absolutely* necessary arguments—which is what Cicero meant by "necessary arguments"—exist, is simply noting that any speaker who seeks to persuade must attend to the worldview of the audience. This was perhaps more apparent to him than to Cicero, as the mid-fourth century Rome was religiously diverse in a way that was significantly different from its religious diversity before the rise of Christianity. Now an aggressively monotheistic religion had been taken up and promoted by recent emperors, a religion whose priests insisted that traditional Greco-Roman worship was an affront to God and therefore a danger to the state. Victorinus had witnessed this whole change in his lifetime, but he had no reason to think it was a fait accompli, any more than did the emperor Julian not long after the old rhetor joined the church, likely to the surprise and grief of his pagan patrons and students (Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.4).

4. Porphyry's Religious Thought

Our understanding of Porphyry's religious thought has now the benefit of two comprehensive studies of the topic, those of Aaron Johnson and Michael Simmons, as well as the more historically oriented monograph of Elizabeth DePalma Digeser on the role of Platonists in the Great Persecution.[95] Both Johnson and Simmons reject the old paradigm of Joseph Bidez, according to which Porphyry moved away from a youthful period of composition, reflecting his fascination with the cultic aspects of pagan religion, to a period of maturity, when he produced works that revealed his commitment to Plotinus's philosophical, contemplative approach to the

An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1954).

93. Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 174.

94. Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 45.

95. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Pagans, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012). On Porphyry's religious thought, see also Giuseppe Girgenti, introduction to *Porfirio, Filosofia revelata dagli oracoli*, ed. Giuseppe Girgenti and Giuseppe Muscolino (Milan: Bompiano, 2011), ix–cxv.

divine.[96] Johnson and Simmons likewise share an understanding of the centrality of religion in Porphyry's thought and accept that his defense of at least certain aspects of Greco-Roman religion was a prominent feature in his oeuvre, and that his anti-Christian stance was also an essential element of his religious thought.[97] Porphyry's philosophy of religion included criticism of certain ritual aspects of pagan practice, including but not limited to his rejection of animal sacrifice in *De abstinentia* (*Abst.* 2).[98] Yet Porphyry also found features of traditional Greco-Roman religions to be complementary, though not equal, to the goal of philosophy, specifically in regard to their soteriological significance.[99]

Porphyry's philosophical approach to matters of religion and the ascent to the divine can be seen in both interpretive and prescriptive modes in his *Cave of the Nymphs* and *Letter to Marcella*. The former work shows him interpreting details of the passage from Homer in line with Neoplatonist theology; and he concludes by stating that "this sort of exegesis should not be considered forced, nor should it be equated with the sort of thing fanciful interpreters try to render plausible" (*Antr. nymph.* 36).[100] The *Letter to Marcella* makes it clear that the true way to the gods

96. Joseph Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre, le philosophe néo-platonicien* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913). See Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 13; Simmons, *Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity*, 9. For the revision of Bidez's portrait, see Andrew Smith, "Porphyrian Studies Since 1913," *ANRW* 36.2:717–73.

97. Simmons is very clear on both points (*Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity*, ch. 12; see also p. x: "The Neoplatonic philosopher was the last and greatest anti-Christian writer to vehemently attack the Church before the Constantinian Revolution"). Johnson admits as much, despite his concern to move away from Bidez's portrait of Porphyry as a "defender of paganism," arguing for a broader framing of Porphyry as a "defender of Hellenism," on the ground that religious identity is never shorn of other aspects of cultural identity (*Religion and Identity*, 4–9, 47). But whoever claimed that it could be?

98. For this aspect of Porphyry's treatise, see the introduction to Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, trans. Gillian Clark, ACA (London: Bloomsbury, 2000); Heidi Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century CE* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), ch. 1. On Porphyry's critiques of various aspects of paganism, see Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, ch. 3.

99. For Porphyry's "comprehensive soteriological paradigm," see Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, ch. 2, "Contextualizing a Porphyrian Soteriology."

100. Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, trans. Robert Lamberton (Barryton, NY: Station Hill, 1983), 40.

is through philosophical study and informed ascetic and moral practice (*Marc.* 26–30). Sacred rites should be performed, but they do not substitute for purity of mind (*Marc.* 23). Ritual practice is legitimate, but it does not provide for the purification of the intellectual part of the soul. Porphyry differed from Iamblichus in denying that philosophers had any use for divination,[101] but they agreed in seeing that many aspects of traditional religious practices and thought could be integrated with philosophy—particularly the contemplative ascent to the divine—through the notion that these features of religion contained hints of the divine reality and its accessibility to some people.

4.1. *Verum latet* and *Suspicio* in Porphyry's Philosophy of Religion

The Porphyrian origin of the phrase *verum latet*, while not uncontested, is supported by other lexical and conceptual elements in the passage of Victorinus and in other authors who drew on Porphyry.[102] The passage in Macrobius (*In. Somn.* 1.3.17–18) containing the quotation of the phrase *verum latet* concerns, as mentioned above, the question of true and false dreams. More informative about the role of this idea in Porphyry's understanding of religion is another passage in Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, where he is likely drawing on Porphyry's commentary on Plato's *Phaedo*.[103] Although Macrobius does not cite the phrase *verbum latet* in this latter passage, he closely paraphrases it in discussing a related complex of ideas:

> Now if souls were to bring with them to their bodies a memory of the divine order of which they were conscious in the sky, there would be no disagreement among men in regard to divinity; but, indeed, all of them in their descent drink of forgetfulness, some more, some less. Consequently, although the truth is not evident to all on earth [*in terris verum cum non omnibus liqueat*], all nevertheless have an opinion [*tamen*

101. Thus Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 113–19.

102. See esp. Courcelle, "Verissima Philosophia," 653–54 nn. 2–5. See the rejection of this identification by Florian Zacher in ch. 2 of the present volume. Zacher is right in claiming that the "skeptical" view expressed by the phrase *verum latet* is a philosophical commonplace, but I think the evidence discussed here weighs in favor of Victorinus's use of it being not just the employment of a philosophical commonplace but a covert citation of Porphyry (as both Hadot and Courcelle agree).

103. Thus Courcelle, *Lettres grecques en Occident*, 31 n. 4.

> *opinantur omnes*], since opinion is born of failure of the memory. (Macrobius, *In Somn.* 1.12.9)[104]

Note the role of *opinio* in this line of thought: the diversity of religious practices is accounted for by the soul's forgetfulness of its divine origins and the consequent slip into a variety of opinions. The claim from Porphyry, cited previously by Macrobius in *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* 1.3 ("latet, inquit, omne verum") is paraphrased here by the saying that "the truth" (*verum*) is not apparent to all "in terris," which also corresponds closely to Victorinus's statement that "inter homines autem verum latet." The truth is hidden because of the soul's primal loss of memory. The second half of the sentence in Victorinus where the phrase *verum latet* occurs—"totumque suspicionibus geritur"—contains another key term likewise identified as Porphyrian. Courcelle came to this conclusion from the use of *suspicio* in similar conceptual contexts, in Arnobius's *Adversus nationes* and in Ambrose's *Ep.* 73 to Valentinian, which was written to oppose Symmachus, who had just submitted his famous *Relatio* to the emperor to plead for the restoration of the Altar of Victory.[105]

The Greek term underlying *suspicio* in the *verum latet* passage in Victorinus is probably στοχασμός. I infer this from the literary exchange between Porphyry and Iamblichus constituted by the former's epistolary treatise *Letter to Anebo* (now fragmentary) and the latter's *De mysteriis*, which preserves much of Porphyry's lines of questioning.[106] The opening of *Letter to Anebo* lays out Porphyry's view that Greek philosophers "for the most part derived the substance of their belief [πίστεως] from conjecture [ἐκ στοχασμοῦ]" (*Aneb.*, frag. 1).[107] Johnson interprets this passage as "a strikingly overt attack on Greek superiority in the area of

104. Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 134.

105. Courcelle, "Verissima Philosophia," 653–54. On Arnobius's use of Porphyry, see Michael B. Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 11–13 *et passim*. For this incident, see Cristiana Sogno, *Q. Aurelius Symmachus: A Political Biography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 45–51.

106. For discussion of the exchange, see the introduction to Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, trans. Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell, WGRW 4 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), xxix–xxxii; and Porphyry *Lettre à Anébon l'égyptien*, ed. and trans. Henri Dominique Saffrey and Alain-Philippe Segonds, Budé 492 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982), xix–xxxviii.

107. Saffrey and Segonds, *Porphyre, Lettre à Anébon*, 1–2.

theological wisdom."[108] More convincing, in my view, is Richard Goulet's reading of this admission as part of Porphyry's program to ensure the hegemony of his philosophical approach. Thus it functions as a key element in his missive to "Anebo" (= Iamblichus), where he defends a purely philosophical way to salvation and attacks the latter's advocacy of a theurgical, more ritually mediated mode of accessing the divine.[109] Likewise the most recent editors of *Letter to Anebo*, following Augustine (*Civ.* 10.11.1–3), have interpreted this opening as a strategically humble theoretical stance to disguise the sustained criticism of Iamblichus's positions implicit in Porphyry's many questions.[110] Thus Porphyry's admission about the conjectural origins of Greek discourse on the gods may have aimed to extract that same admission from his interlocutor as regards the knowledge of the divine possessed by the ritual experts, that is, to push Iamblichus to admit that objects of conjecture fall short of exact knowledge—a point made by a cognate of the term στοχασμός in *Phileb.* 55e.[111] Indeed, στοχασμός occurs in Iamblichus's *On the Mysteries* (3.15), where he grants that divination is "accomplished by human skill [διὰ τέχνης ἀνθρωπίνης]" and "partakes largely of guessing and supposition [στοχασμοῦ και οἰήσεως]." For Iamblichus this was not a problem, because the gods provide signs whereby the human divinatory skill "somehow draws conclusions and guesses [στοχάζεται] at the divination,

108. Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 247 (see his whole discussion, 244–47).

109. Richard Goulet, "Augustin et le *De regressu animae* de Porphyre," in *Augustin Philosophe et Prédicateur: Hommage à Goulven Madec*, ed. Isabelle Bochet (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 2012), 96: "Le recours dans ces trois ouvrages [*Epistula ad Anebo*, *De philosophia ex oraculis*, *De regressu animae*] à une mise en scène littéraire qui autorise à dissocier l'auteur du locuteur principal invite à mettre en perspective les points de vue différents adoptés par Porphyre et à voir dans ces différents traités non pas des tentatives d'intégration de pratiques religieuses, traditionnelles ou théurgiques, dans la démarche philosophique, mais bien plutôt une habile invalidation par l'intérieur de ces rites au profit d'un idéal philosophique de caractère purement intellectuel et moral."

110. Saffrey and Segonds, *Porphyre, Lettre à Anébon*, xlviii–liii.

111. Plato, *Phileb.* 55e: "*Soc*. I mean to say, that if arithmetic, measuring, and weighing be taken away from any art, that which remains will not be much. *Pro*. Not much, certainly. *Soc*. The rest will be only inference [εἰκάζειν], and the better use of the senses which is given by experience and practice, in addition to a certain power of guessing [ταῖς τῆς στοχαστικῆς … δυνάμεσιν], which is commonly called art, and is perfected by attention and pains." See Plato, *Philebus*, in vol. 4 of *Plato, The Dialogues of Plato*, 3rd ed., trans. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892).

inferring it from certain probabilities" (*Myst.* 3.15).[112] Porphyry seems to have been less willing to invest hopes for salvation in a process that was external to the capacities of the human mind and its transformation in light of the higher realities contemplated in philosophical ascent.

4.2. *Suspiciones* in Arnobius and Ambrose

For Christian polemicists acquainted with Porphyry's work, his admission that Greek discourse on the divine was largely conjectural was eminently exploitable. This is richly illustrated in Arnobius's *Against the Pagans*. Simmons has argued that some of the underlying Porphyrian material is evident from Arnobius's counterarguments, on the ground that the latter's mode of polemical writing—"literary retorsion"—involves the use of opponents' language and texts against them, just as Porphyry had done with Christian scripture in *Against the Christians.*[113] Arnobius identifies his opponents as *novi viri* ("new men") (*Adv. nat.* 2.15), who have gotten carried away by their "opinion" about the kinship of their soul to the divine.[114] His polemics against them begin in *Adv. nat.* 2.6 and continue in the following section, where he describes his opponents as a school of philosophy with much internal disagreement: "if you ever discuss obscure subjects, and seek to lay bare the mysteries of nature, on the one hand you do not know the very things which you speak of … and each one defends with obstinate resistance his own conjectures [*suspiciones suas*] as though they were proved and ascertained" (*Adv. nat*. 2.7 [*ANF* 6:435–36, slightly altered]).

As an example of a contested doctrine, Arnobius refers to the question—one that arose for Platonists apropos of *Tim*. 42—about the reason the creator sent souls into the world:

112. Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell, *De mysteriis*, 156–57.

113. Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 18, 52–63, citing the history of research and dealing thoroughly with recent objections.

114. *Adv. nat.* 2.15: "Wherefore there is no reason that that should mislead us, should hold out vain hopes to us, which is said by some men till now unheard of [*a novis quibusdam dicitur viris*], and carried away by an extravagant opinion of themselves [*immoderata sui opinione sublatis*], that souls are immortal, next in point of rank to the God and ruler of the world, descended from that parent and sire, divine, wise, learned, and not within reach of the body by contact" (*ANF* 6:440).

> Was it for this he sent souls, that they which in their own abodes had been of one mind, equals in intellect and knowledge, after that they put on mortal forms, should be divided by differences of opinion [*opinionum discriminentibus*] … that, in seeking to know the truth of things, they should be hindered by their obscurity; and, as if bereft of eyesight, should see nothing clearly [*nihil certum*], and, wandering in error, should be led through the ambiguous paths of conjectures [*per ancipites semitas suspicionum*]? (*Adv. nat.* 2.39 [*ANF* 6:449, slightly altered])

The mention of "differences of opinion" repeats a theme Arnobius announces in *Adv. nat.* 2.15, where he points to Christian unity as a notable contrast to the views of the philosophers, whose range of opinions reveals the weakness inherent in the claim to religious knowledge based on conjecture. Among the passages cited by Courcelle in this connection (*Adv. nat.* 2.19, 2.39, 2.51), the last is of particular interest for its vocabulary:

> For you surmise [*conicitis*], you do not know; you conjecture [*suspicamini*], you do not hold firmly; for if to know is to retain in the mind that which you have yourself seen or known, not one of those things which you affirm can you say that you have ever seen—that is, that souls descend from the abodes and regions above. You are therefore making use of conjecture [*suspicione*], not of a conviction born of a clear idea [*cognitionis expressae fide*]. But what is conjecture [*suspicio*], except a doubtful supposition about things [*opinatio rerum incerta*], and directing of the mind upon nothing accessible? He, then, who conjectures [*suspicatur*], does not comprehend, nor does he walk in the light of knowledge. But if this is true and certain in the view of proper and very wise judges, even this conjecture of yours [*ista vestra … suspicio*], in which you trust, must be regarded as ignorance. (Arnobius, *Adv. nat.* 2.51 [*ANF* 6:453, altered])

Arnobius takes advantage of Porphyry's humble stance on human religious knowledge by equating *suspicio* with *opinatio*, a synonymn of *opinio*—a dubious commodity in any case for Platonists.

A similar conceptual schema, which Hadot has traced to Porphyry,[115] is found in Symmachus's famous *Relatio*, composed in 384 as a plea to the emperor Valentinian for the reinstatement of the recently removed Altar of Victory:

115. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 53–54.

> Each person has his own customs, each person his own religious observance [*ritus*]. The divine mind has distributed various forms of worship [*cultus*] to different cities as their protection.… For, since all of reason lies in obscurity [*cum ratio omnis in operto sit*], whence more rightly does awareness of the divinities come than from the memory and from instances of favorable events? Now, if it is long duration that gives religions [*religionibus*] their authority, we should keep faith with so many centuries and follow our parents, who happily followed their own. (*Relat.* 3.8)[116]

A little further follows Symmachus's celebrated line: "What difference does it make by what judgement a person searches out the truth? So great a mystery [tam grande secretum] cannot be arrived at by one path" (*Relat.* 3.10). Porphyry indeed acknowledges the possibility of multiple paths to the divine,[117] but this has nothing to do with religious tolerance. Of great significance, however, is how Symmachus lays the ground for—establishes the theoretical basis of—this final argument in the previous paragraph by the phrase "ratio omnis in operto sit" ("all of reason lies in obscurity"). This matches closely Victorinus's statement *verum latet* in its content and corresponds to this aspect of Porphyry's philosophy of religion.

With a Christian emperor in charge, Symmachus could present this perspective as a philosophical basis for a tolerant state policy on religion that left room for the old practices now deemed erroneous by the ruling power. In response, Ambrose exploits another angle of Porphyry's thought against Symmachus when writing to Valentinian:

> "So great a mystery," he says, "cannot be arrived at by one path." What you (pagans) are ignorant of we have known by the word of God, and what you seek through hints [*suspicionibus*], we have ascertained from the very wisdom and truth of God. What you have, then, is not in accord with us.… God does not want to be worshiped in stones. Even your own philosophers have mocked these things. (Ambrose, *Ep*. 73.8)[118]

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116. Translation follows Boniface Ramsey, *Ambrose* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 181. For the critical text, see Symmachus, *Q. Aurelii Symmachi quae supersunt*, ed. Otto Seeck, MGH 6.1 (Berlin: Weidmann 1961), 280–83. On Symmachus's religious thought, see Marco Bertolini, "Sull'atteggiamento religioso di Q. A. Simmaco," *SCO* 36 (1987): 189–208.

117. In *Philosophy from Oracles* (frag. 323f), Porphyry cites a saying from Apollo that the Phoenicians recognized "many paths of the blessed" (πολλὰς … ὁδοὺς μακάρων), as did the Assyrians, Lydians, and Hebrews (*Fragmenta*).

118. PL 16:974A; trans. Ramsey, *Ambrose*.

Symmachus invokes the hiddenness of reason and the multiple ways of attaining *tam grande secretum* as part of a plea for toleration, but any such confluence of ideas is foreign to the concerns of Porphyry. He seems to have regarded some measure of adherence to traditional forms of religion as obligatory.[119] Thus his *Letter to Marcella* (*Marc.* 18) states, "This is the chief fruit of piety: to honor the divine reality according to the ancestral customs."[120]

It is worth noting, in anticipation of my conclusion, that the piece of Porphyrian philosophy of religion relentlessly mocked by Arnobius and Ambrose—the theory that cultural traditions about religions reveal only human conjectures (*suscipiones*) about the divine realm—may seem to modern secular minds as displaying a laudable humility about religious knowledge, a sound and time-tested basis for religious tolerance.[121] But as Peter Van Nuffelen has argued, this modern conception of tolerance cannot be read back into the only partially parallel ideas of premodern thinkers, whether Porphyry or Victorinus, concerning the relation of religion to reasons of state.[122] Although we cannot be certain that Porphyry took part in Diocletian's deliberations in 302 about what to do about the Christian problem, there is little reason to doubt that Porphyry's *Against the Christians*—whatever it consisted of—was part of his sustained opposition to Christianity.[123] He would not have been exceptional in this, as

119. On Porphyry's reasons to consider Christianity a threat, see the extensive discussion of Becker, *Porphyrios, Contra Christianos*, 32–85.

120. I am grateful to Florian Zacher for drawing my attention to *Marc.* 18 in this regard: οὗτος γὰρ μέγιστος καρπὸς εὐσεβείας τιμᾶν τὸ θεῖον κατὰ τὰ πάτρια. For the critical text, see Porphyry, *ΠΡΟΣ ΜΑΡΚΕΛΛΑΝ*, ed. and trans. Walter Pötscher, PhA 15 (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 22.25.

121. This kind of argument against religious persecution in the modern period is first found, to the best of my knowledge, in the 1554 work of Sebastian Castellio, *De haereticis, an sint persequendi*. See Marian Hillar, "Sebastian Castellio and the Struggle for Freedom of Conscience," *EPH* 10 (2002): 31–56.

122. See Peter Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance durant l'Antiquité tardive*, CEPHE 10 (Paris: Cerf, 2018), 39–40, 53–64. See also Clifford Ando and Jörg Rüpke, eds., *Religion and Law in Classical and Christian Rome*, PAB 15 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), 10: "Whatever the roots of religious tolerance at Rome, tolerance itself was not the necessary product of its polytheism. Rather, tolerance extended to those private observances that did not infringe upon public cult—cult acts undertaken by magistrates, performed in public spaces, directed to the gods of the community, and expressive of a shared zeal for the common good."

123. See Lucien Jerphagnon, "Les sous-entendue anti-chrétien de la Vita Plotini ou l'évangile de Plotin selon Porphyre," *MH* 47 (1990): 41–52; and Richard Goulet,

"Hypothèses récentes sur la traité de Porphyre *Contre les chrétiens*," in *Hellénisme et christianisme*, ed. Michel Narcy and Éric Rebillard (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2004), 61–109. Contra Mark Edwards: as regards Porphyry's major work against Christianity, "It is certainly not reasonable, whatever our Christian sources may insinuate, to cite this project as evidence of ubiquitous and invincible hostility to the Church." See Edwards, "Porphyry and the Christians," in *Studies on Porphyry*, ed. George Karamanolis and Anne Sheppard, BICSSup 98 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2007), 126. Edwards does not engage Goulet's thorough critique of the theory of Pier F. Beatrice that Porphyry composed only one work against Christianity (*De philosophia ex oraculis*), but he admits that Porphyry "had wounded Church and synagogue equally by exposing the supposititious prophecies of Daniel" ("Porphyry and the Christians," 113) and finds it significant that "among his surviving works there is none that belittles either the people or religion of ancient Israel" (126). Still, extant fragments of anti-Christian work(s) cannot be ignored. Eusebius's quotation in *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.4 from the third book of Porphyry's work on against the Christians (frag. 6F in Becker, *Porphyrios, Contra Christianos*, 132–34) refers to the τῆς δὴ μοχθηρίας τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν γραφῶν (rendered by Rufinus as *ineptiis Iudaicarum scripturarum*). Becker is to my mind correct in opposing recent claims that attacks on the Jewish Bible were not attacks on Judaism itself: "ist eine Kritik an den Heiligen Schriften immer auch als Kritik an der ganzen Religion zu werten" (*Porphyrios, Contra Christianos*, 140). It was hardly but a flesh wound to the descendants of ancient Israel to slander their holy books generally or to argue on impressive historical grounds that the book Daniel was a forgery. To Edwards's point: Why would Porphyry have been called on to write against the Christians in connection with the Great Persecution—which, as Edwards grants, is the implication of *Marc.* 4—had he not previously taken a position against Christianity ("Porphyry and the Christians," 126)? See full discussion in Angelo Sodano, *Porfirio, Vangelo di un pagano* (Milan: Bompiani, 2006), 103–16. Porphyry's identity as a philosopher was bound up with the traditional gods, even if he had a critical perspective on the animal sacrifices Diocletian held dear, whose disruption by Christian court officials in 299 helped incline the emperor to take serious measures against the church. See Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 2.49–50, and the discussion of Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, "An Oracle of Apollo at Daphne and the Great Persecution," *CP* 99 (2004): 57–77. For full discussion of whether Porphyry took part in Diocletian's deliberations in 302 about what to do about the Christian problem, see Digeser, *Threat to Public Piety*. Simmons affirms Porphyry's role unequivocally (*Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity*, 17–18, 22–23). Johnson is skeptical, wondering "whether Porphyry would have found sufficient philosophical motivation for participating in such intellectual-imperial collaboration at all" (*Religion and Identity*, 288; see also 21, 287–96). For a good brief survey of the evidence, see Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, "Lactantius, Porphyry, and the Debate over Religious Toleration," *JRS* 88 (1998): 129–46. Digeser concludes that Porphyry took part in these deliberations. See also the description of Porphyry's project by Girgenti: "Porphyry attempted a salvage operation, in vain, of

Platonists of the late third century tended to regard Christianity as a threat to public order and accordingly supported imperial efforts to suppress it.[124]

4.3. *Verum Latet* and *Suspiciones* in Porphyry and Victorinus

Macrobius, Arnobius, Symmachus, and Ambrose reveal a link between the terminology of *suspiciones* and the idea that the truth is hidden, along with the concomitant postulate that the diversity of religious and philosophical opinions is a result of this epistemological situation. Other aspects of the Porphyrian philosophy of religion shed light on Victorinus's use of the phrase *verum latet* and its full context in the commentary on *De inventione*.

Despite the ammunition supplied to Christian apologists by Porphyry's admission that at least the beginnings of theological knowledge lay in conjecture, the concept played an important role in his dispute with Iamblichus over Platonist theology and religious practice. For Porphyry, it was important to limit to a matter of conjecture the knowledge of the gods held by professional interpreters of the ambiguous signs—the diviners, priests, and theurgists he mentions in *Letter to Anebo*—and likewise to philosophers such as Iamblichus, who borrowed their authority to assert the superiority of his own theurgical Platonism. But for Porphyry the divine mandate to philosophize was the main thing, requiring no additions, since

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traditional Roman religion—Hellenistic Roman, but now syncretized with Middle Eastern religious practices of various origins—in two diverse and complementary modes: in a negative mode, that is, as a *pars destruens*, by attacking an ever more widely diffused Christianity head on; and in a positive mode, that is, as a *pars construens*, offering to ancient εὐσέβεια/*pietas* a Neoplatonic theological vestiture [*veste*] inspired by the metaphysics of Plotinus and of more ancient Platonism that functioned in a certain way as a rationale for more widespread religious and cultural practices" (*Porfirio, Filosofia revelata dagli oracoli*, xix).

124. Digeser sees the argument between Porphyry and Iamblichus as "an intramural debate between two philosophical circles over the value of sacrificial rituals for philosophically capable people [who] produced the texts and generated the arguments that led indirectly to the Great Persecution. Whether Porphyry started this project with persecution as a goal is impossible to say. Nevertheless, he and the Iamblichaeans shared two fundamental propositions: first, that traditional sacrificial rituals were beneficial for ordinary souls and the general polity; and, second, that a philosopher who had ascended to God outside the cave ought to help the sovereign create legislation that respected divine law" (*Threat to Public Piety*, 22).

it is the way to attain εὐδαιμονία (happiness, well-being) through knowledge of our true nature and the Good. This is particularly clear from an important fragment from his lost treatise *Know Thyself*. I translate its central portion, which follows Porphyry's discussion of the Stoic interpretation of the "know thyself" command as a command to know "the All" on the grounds that the human being is a microcosm:

> However, because we draw conclusions from things in ourselves also about things in the universe when we investigate and discover ourselves, and we easily transfer (these conclusions) into the knowledge [θεωρίαν] of the All, it is well said (about us being a microcosm). But perhaps God did not encourage the contemplation [θεωρίαν] of oneself to be done on account of philosophy but on account of some other greater thing, on account of which philosophy was undertaken. For philosophy was pursued from our longing for what is wise and from our love for contemplative [θεωρητικήν] wisdom, but our earnestness for the command to know oneself extends to the attainment of true happiness [εὐδαιμονία], which very thing consists in a disposition in accord with wisdom, in accord with the acquisition of the wisdom that comes from the vision [θεωρίας] of the Good and the knowledge [γνώσεως] of the truly existent realities. God accordingly encourages people to contemplate [θεωρεῖν] and understand [μανθάνειν] themselves as they really are [τοὺς ὄντως ἑαυτούς], not to the end that we would philosophize but to the end that having become wise, we would be happy. For the attainment of our being as it really is [τῆς ὄντως οὔσης οὐσίας] and the true knowledge [γνῶσις] of this being is the attainment of wisdom, if indeed true knowledge [ἐπιστήμη] of the real being of things is proper to wisdom, and through wisdom comes about the acquisition of complete happiness. (Porphyry, frag. 274F in Stobaeus, *Anth.* 3.21.27)[125]

No ritual method can substitute for this pursuit of wisdom. If there is a universal way to the liberation of the soul, for Porphyry it was philosophy and nothing besides! The conclusions of philosophers working in the Platonist tradition were, to borrow Porphyry's title, "sentences leading to the intelligible world";[126] they were not a philosophical equivalent of "conjec-

125. See the critical text in Porphyry, *Fragmenta*, 310.15–311.34. See the discussion of Saffrey-Segonds, *Porphyre, Lettre à Anébon*, xxvi–xxix, which drew my attention to the importance of this passage.

126. For the fragments of this work with full discussion, see Porphyre, *Sentences: Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française, commentaire par l'Unité Propre*

tures" arising from religious practices and the accompanying discussion of them by priests, diviners, and other practitioners. That first-level discourse is different from what Porphyry understood to be philosophical inquiry into those practices and ideas. More revelatory than human conjectures of what the gods are and do is what the gods have actually said in oracles, but understanding these properly requires philosophical expertise. Thus, in *Philosophy of Oracles* (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 4.8.2), Porphyry states: "the gods do not prophesy openly about these things but through riddles [δι'αἰνιμάτων]."[127] It was not just the oracles of the gods—Porphyry was convinced—but also the utterances of inspired poets that revealed divine things through obscure language.[128] This is a profoundly positive religious perspective completely compatible with his assumption of the general hiddenness of truth in the world of opinion.

Whether or not Porphyry maintained there was a universal way for the salvation of the soul—a matter on which scholarly opinion is divided—there is no doubt that he thought there was "a bronze-bound road to the gods," and philosophy was it, even if this road is "steep and rough" (Porphyry, *Philos. orac.*, frag. 324, commenting on the "gates of bronze" in frag. 323).[129] This is one reason why the term στοχασμός (or *suspicio*) cannot be regarded as evidence of a skeptical or pessimistic point of view on Porphyry's part: it is rather an expression of the conviction that all the hints of the divine present in the mundane world require interpretation from an informed philosophical standpoint. This standpoint is the self-knowledge that permits an adequate appraisal of the All, as fragment 274F from his *Know Thyself* makes clear (quoted at length above). Aaron Johnson has

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de Recherche n. 76 du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 2 vols., trans. John Dillon, ed. Luc Brisson, HDAC 33 (Paris: Vrin, 2005).

127. Porphyry, *Fragmenta*, frag. 305f.

128. See, e.g., *Antr. nymph.* 16 about the Orphic poet or "theologian" αἰνισσομένου; also, *Antr. nymph.* 21 about Homer's αἴνιγμα of the cave.

129. Trans. Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 339 (see his discussion, 105–10). See Gillian Clark, who in her analysis of Augustine's use of *De regressu animae* in *City of God* argues that Porphyry did not accept that there was such a *via universalis*. Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation," in Karamanolis and Sheppard, *Studies on Porphyry*, 127–40; similarly Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 105–6. For a different interpretation of Porphyry on this issue, see Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, x–xii, for his thesis statement and ch. 3 for his argument against those who maintain Porphyry was an "elitist" as regards access to salvation. See also Goulet, "Augustin et le *De regressu animae*," 100–104.

identified this hermeneutical procedure as "ritual translation" and "religious translation," a feature of Porphyry's project of combing through the various traditions of salvific transformation known to him.[130] The philosopher, however, was not exempt from the need to make conjectures about matters of historical judgment. This is made clear in a fragment of his work *On What Is in Our Power*, where Porphyry admits to making "a lucky guess"[131] (ἐπιτυχῶς στοχάσασθαι) about where Plato got his teaching—from Egyptian wise men—about the power of self-determination in the souls sent into bodies. Porphyry's theory that the language and practice about the gods arose in all cultures as a matter of conjectures or guesses—*suspiciones*—grants to philosophers who study and interpret those manifestations a certain independence, not only from practitioners but also from philosophers such as Iamblichus who sought to elevate theurgical rituals as authoritative processes for receiving the divine apart from the contemplative path of philosophy.

The implications of Victorinus's statement that what is true is hidden are clear when read in light of this Porphyrian philosophy of religion. The purified minds of individuals who pursue philosophy in its goal of contemplating the divine—and are in the process of being transformed in that light—are not representative of the mass of humankind. For others who have not pursued truth in this systematic way, what is true will necessarily remain hidden; philosophers, therefore, cannot be expected to go along with new developments in popular opinion and religious practice. Matters stand differently for those who aim to speak persuasively in any public capacity: they must function within the conventions and convictions of the general public. Philosophers have different standards. As Victorinus notes in *Def.* 6, they reject the kind of dialectical reasoning fit for the needs of orators, since philosophers despise probable arguments and will not admit anything that is merely "believable" (*credibile*).[132] But for orators, all arguments must at minimum be *credibile* to have any hope of acceptance, and in that regard they are dependent on prevailing opinion. Even in cases where something is obviously true, Victorinus maintains, opinion

130. See ch. 3 of Johnson, *Religion and Identity* ("Salvation, translation, and the limits of cult") for his full exposition of these concepts in Porphyry's works (103 and 122 for these terms).

131. Porphyry, *To Gaurus and How Embryos Are Ensouled and On What Is in Our Power*, trans. James Wilberding, ACA (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 145.

132. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 336.

is also a factor: what is true can be "unbelievable" (*incredibile*), as he says in the intriguing (but suspect) passage where Simon Magus comes up in his commentary on Cicero.[133]

Precisely this rule of opinion is in my view the situation that the phrase *verum latet* describes. Doubtless it expresses what some would call "Platonist elitism," in assuming that most people will be unable to move beyond the realm of opinion about the most important matters, as Plato says in numerous passages of *Republic* and elsewhere.[134] Victorinus included this theoretical perspective in his rhetorical teaching not so much to encourage his students to become philosophers but to warn them to work within the worldviews of the audience. Rhetoric is an audience-orientated form of communication; and budding orators should not think that what they know of philosophy will be an effective tool of persuasion.

5. Conclusion

The result of the foregoing analysis is that the traces of Porphyrian religious thought identified by Hadot and Courcelle in Victorinus's commentary on Cicero establish an interpretive context in which his remarks

133. See §1 above, esp. nn. 26–31.

134. To confine oneself to book 6 of the *Republic*, one can note this elitism at 493, 496c, 498d, 505b. In my view, however, it is very unfortunate that Karl Popper in his seminal work *The Open Society and Its Enemies* reduced the philosopher's quest for the just society to the will to power: "Behind the sovereignty of the philosopher king stands the quest for power." See Popper, *The Spell of Plato*, vol. 1 of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge, 1943), 137. Popper may legitimately disagree with Plato's claim of how a society can best be oriented toward a good that transcends the interest of (generally selfish) individuals, but in itself this is not sufficient grounds for the contention that Plato and his disciples sought that good for the sake of power as an end in itself, rather than seeking the "good" that they held to be the object not only of philosophical contemplation but of statecraft as well. Even before Popper wrote, there were scholars who objected to such facile mischaracterizations of "Platonist elitism," e.g., Stella Lange, "Plato and Democracy," *CJ* 34 (1939): 480–86. Lange's conclusion seems undeniable and should in my view not be regarded as elitism but realism: "Plato knew that mentally as well as physically all men are not alike, that not all men are fit to govern, and that if the unfit govern, the state is sick" (485). Needless to say, "the unfit" can arise from all levels of a society. The phrase *Platonist elitism* can be used, without the populist sneer, as a legitimate category of historical and philosophical discussion. See the recent work of Nicolas Banner, *Philosophic Silence and the "One" in Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), esp. 7, 65–69.

about the eccentricity of Christian beliefs have a disparaging tone. Unless at the time of composing this work Victorinus was already the crypto-Christian sympathizer Augustine depicts him to have been for some time before his conversion, his remarks on the opinion of Christians set them up as illustrative of the maxim that truth is hidden. If he was not already a crypto-Christian at the time—a purely hypothetical supposition lacking clear evidence—then he was either in some measure attached to the traditional gods, however understood, or he was personally detached from that religious tradition—this would be part of his skepticism as Hadot has envisioned it—and perhaps accordingly neutral about the growth of Christianity. What Augustine depicts as his adherence to and defense of paganism, Hadot suggests, was simply a "political-social conformism," no more than occasional gestures performed out of respect for the *mos maiorum*, the "ancestral customs," which for Victorinus had only "a purely external value," as he would have already been under the impression of "an identity between the Platonist philosophy to which he adhered and Christianity."[135]

I have previously maintained that fidelity to the *mos maiorum* on Victorinus's part need not be considered as a merely conformist and empty attachment to tradition but part of an ethno-religious identity that was not without some personal investment.[136] Cassiodorus refers to Victorinus as "prospector atque amator Latinorum" ("an overseer and lover of Latin authors") (*Inst.* 2.3.18).[137] It strikes me as improbable to assume a detached attitude on Victorinus's part toward the culture, including the religious aspects of that culture, that nourished the Greek philosophy and the Latin authors he loved and taught. Hadot's portrait of a religiously neutral or detached Victorinus is one possible and even plausible reconstruction, but I hope in the foregoing to have shown there are grounds for a different reconstruction that makes different and better sense of his remarks on Christians in his commentary on *De inventione*.

One might well wonder whether Victorinus's pre-Christian literary activity as whole conveys commitment to more than a rarified Platonism. How are we to evaluate Victorinus's translation of the *libri Platonicorum* in the time when traditional Greco-Roman religious practices were losing

135. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 58.

136. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians*, 24.

137. For the critical text, see Cassiodorus, *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*, ed. Roger A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 129.4.

imperial favor and support? To a Roman with any measure of attachment to *Romanitas*, which had no minor religious component, things would have seemed bleak, certainly by 346, when Constantius and his brother Constans issued decrees closing pagan temples (Cod. theod. 16.10.4). What would a translation of Porphyry's works—*De regressu animae*, at least,[138] and perhaps *Philosophy from Oracles*—alongside a selection of Plotinus's *Enneads*—mean in the post-Constantinian years except a defense of pagan religion at least in its philosophical interpretation?

It is at any rate incontrovertible that the passage where Victorinus mentions the "opinion of Christians" in his commentary on Cicero identifies them as holding views outside the norm. This is also Hadot's reconstruction,[139] which I follow to this point but cannot agree with him that no slight was intended by the remark. My argument that the remark has a hostile edge depends on reading the remark not only in its immediate context but also in the larger literary context of Victorinus's preface to the commentary, where he presents elements of Platonist anthropology emphasizing the mind's diminished capacity for knowledge in its embodied condition. This framework of ideas strongly suggests that when Victorinus later in the same text writes of the hiddenness of truth and the domination of opinion, he is expressing the same set of deplorable circumstances. As a professor of rhetoric, he was obligated to alert his students to the structural condition of public discourse, in order that they would understand the context in which convincing arguments have to be made. The Platonist philosopher that was Victorinus[140] appears to have invoked this theoretical perspective—one better dubbed realistic than pessimistic, in my view—to account for some features of his social world. This could well have included the new and deviant religious opinions that were threatening to become dominant and displace the more venerable religious traditions of the Roman world. The circumstantial evidence of Victorinus's use of Porphyrian concepts to discuss the soul, its divine

138. Courcelle, *Les lettres Grecques en occident*, 167–69.

139. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 48: "Victorinus does not want to say that Christian beliefs are absurd. Christians profess, it is true, a different opinion than the common one [*l'opinion générale*]. But it is not more absurd than the common opinion itself."

140. For brief discussion with reference to the literature, see Stephen Cooper, "The Platonist Christianity of Marius Victorinus," *Religions* 7 (2016): 122, doi:10.3390/rel7100122.

source, and the possibility of its return to that source strongly suggests that Victorinus accepted Porphyry's religious interpretation of philosophy and his interpretation of traditional religious practices as containing valuable hints for understanding the gods and the world. In that light it seems more probable that Victorinus would have at least initially also shared Porphyry's hostility to Christianity.

Further, it strikes me that the reconstruction of the pre-Christian Victorinus as skeptical and therefore detached may be an anachronistic portrait, a picture better suited to modern intellectuals than those of the mid-fourth century CE. The danger of anachronism also lurks when reading the crucial passage on account of the place of the term *opinion* in modern discourse. Although there is the pejorative sense of opinion as mere opinion, in contemporary parlance it is counterbalanced by the widespread discourse in which one's personal opinion—*mea sententia* in Latin—and the right to such is conceived as an essential aspect of human dignity. By contrast, I do not see that the Platonist conceptual world that Victorinus invokes in the preface to his commentary on Cicero has any room for such a generous understanding of personal opinions in religion, which anciently was not a private sphere of activity devoid of public import. In the same way too, his statement that "everything is done on the basis of conjectures" should not be read as leading to the conclusion that one conjecture is as good as another as regards religious belief and practice (see my discussion at the conclusion of §4.2 above). His remarks on Christianity, falling as they do amid a depiction of the power of opinion, seem rather an illustration of an unhappy reality with which philosophers have always had to contend.

Victorinus's probabilism and his acknowledgment of the power of opinion should not, in my view, lead us to confuse this ancient skepticism with aspects of the critical turn in modern thought, for example, the perspectivalism of Friedrich Nietzsche that has become a key feature in the critique of reason that became dominant in the latter half of the twentieth century.[141] The signal difference between modern perspectivalism and what might pass under that heading in Victorinus is that his version has a far more restricted scope, for two reasons. In the first place, Platonist metaphysics correlates opinion with the shifting world of the senses, restricting

141. See George J. Stack, *Nietzsche's Anthropic Circle: Man, Science, and Myth*, RSP (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005), esp. ch. 2, "Perspectivalism: Knowledge/Interpretation."

(true) knowledge to a different ontological level of reality. In the second place, Victorinus put forward his perspectivalism as a part of his teaching of rhetoric, that is, the practice of creating persuasive arguments in light of current views. Thus, it is simply anachronistic to impute to him anything we moderns associate with his recognition of cultural relativity, chiefly, a tolerant attitude with regard to religion and social mores.

The interpretation I have suggested of Victorinus's remark on Christian beliefs—that it is indeed a hostile comment—is supported externally by Augustine's presentation of the rhetor in his pre-Christian period as an opponent of Christianity (*Conf.* 8.4.9). To conclude that Augustine misreported what Simplician recounted to him about Victorinus in this regard requires ignoring some important facts. Augustine is one of the most vociferous opponents of the lie ever:[142] Is it even plausible to suppose he falsified this aspect of Victorinus's biography when Simplician was yet alive and among those who would have been eager to read *Confessions*? Simplician was a friend to Victorinus and a mentor to Augustine. Would Augustine have risked his disapprobation by smearing Victorinus as an enemy of Christianity, if this claim ran contrary to Simplician's report? In this light, is Hadot's reconstruction in any sense more plausible than one that involves taking Augustine's account of Victorinus at face value on this point? If my attempt to show the embeddedness of Victorinus's reference to Christians in his commentary on Cicero in a Porphyrian matrix of thought is compelling, we may also conclude that there is an autobiographical shade to Victorinus's comment on Gal 1:24: "What could be so magnificent as when one's mind is overwhelmed and one comes to accept the opposing mindset, to accept the one you had earlier been intent upon wiping out?"[143]

Appendix: Riesenweber's Critical Text of *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.29.44

In his critical edition for the Teubner series, Riesenweber has dissented from Halm's long standard text—and the recent Corpus Christianorum Series Latina edition of Antonella Ippolito—in introducing two important alternative

142. His treatises *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium* are well-known, although it is problematic to reduce his contributions on the topic of lying to these treatises, as Erika T. Hermanowicz has recently pointed out in "Augustine on Lying," *Spec* 93 (2018): 699–727.

143. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 111.6–8: "Quid enim tam magnificum quam vinci mentem et accipere contrariam et accipere eam quam ante expugnaras?"

readings into the passage of Victorinus's commentary on *Inv.* 1.44, where he mentions Christians and their beliefs. The first involves Riesenweber's retention of the word *quantum* found in the oldest manuscript (from the late seventh or early eighth century),[144] in place of the reading *tantum* found in the majority of the manuscripts and printed editions. The second is a matter of punctuation: Riesenweber places a question mark where the previous critical editions set a comma; and at the end of the next sentence (or clause), he gives an exclamation point.[145] For ease of discussion, I print the alternative readings with enough surrounding context to make the passage intelligible.

> Illud tamen scire debemus, argumentum necessarium paene non esse solumque esse inter homines probabile. Nempe nobis necessarium videtur ex vero constare: nam si probabile ex veri simili, ex vero necesse est necessarium. Inter homines autem verum latet totumque suspicionibus geritur: ergo necessarium esse non potest argumentum. Sed tantum inter homines potest necessarium, quantum secundum opinionem humanam valet. Alioqui secundum Christianorum opinionem non est necessarium argumentum: "Si peperit, cum viro concubuit": neque hoc rursus, "Si natus est, morietur." Nam aput eos manifestum est sine viro natum et non mortuum. Ergo necessarium argumentum illud est, quod iam opinione persuasum est.[146]

> Illud tamen scire debemus, argumentum necessarium paene non esse solumque esse inter homines probabile. Nempe nobis necessarium videtur ex vero constare; nam si probabile ex veri simili, ex vero necesse est necessarium. Inter homines autem verum latet totumque suspicionibus geritur; ergo necessarium esse non potest argumentum. Sed quantum inter homines potest necessarium? Quantum secundum opinionem humanam valet! Alioqui secundum Christianorum opinionem non est necessarium argumentum: Si peperit, cum viro concubuit, neque hoc rursus: Si natus est, morietur. Nam apud eos manifestum est <et>[147] sine viro natum et non mortuum. Ergo necessarium argumentum illud est, quod iam opinione persuasum est.[148]

144. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, vii.

145. The exclamation point was later retracted in Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 184.

146. Halm, *Explanationum in rhetoricam*, 232.35–41.

147. For discussion of the *et* found in one family of manuscripts, see Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 184.

148. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 110.26–111.1.

I have placed the text of Halm first and that of Riesenweber second, because this order reflects how modern readers have for the most part encountered this passage (Ippolito's edition contains the same text as in Halm, differing only in orthography and punctuation).[149] This order of presentation should not create the presumption that Halm's text is the default reading and therefore occupies a position of privilege. Rather, the correct reading of the sentence in question must be established by the usual principles of textual criticism. Given the extreme frequency of the *tantum … quantum* construction in Latin, in printing *quantum … Quantum* Riesenweber has followed the principle *lectio difficilior potior*, which creates a presumption in favor of his editorial decision, which rests on other grounds. In any case, Riesenweber's decision to retain the reading *quantum … Quantum* found in the oldest and best manuscript is no more conjectural than Halm's editorial decision not to follow that manuscript at this point.

The evidence of the manuscripts is as follows: *sed quantum* occurs in one manuscript (D), but it is the oldest and by Halm's admission the best manuscript of the work.[150] Riesenweber prints this reading and—following many manuscripts and the earliest printed edition—punctuates the sentence as a question. Riesenweber supports these editorial decisions with parallels from other of Victorinus's works—the theological works, along with two examples from his *Ars grammatica*—where he employs an interrogative pronoun to formulate a didactic question, followed by an answer beginning with a corresponding relative pronoun of the same or similar sort.[151] Riesenweber reasonably connects this construction with Victorinus's oral didactic style. Thus, in his *Ars gram.* 1.3: "quae est

149. Ippolito, *Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*, 137–38, 158–70. For Halm's colons, Ippolito follows contemporary conventions in having semicolons; she also has placed a semicolon between *valet* and *alioqui* instead of Halm's full stop.

150. Halm, *Rhetores Latini Minores*, ix: "Nos in eo recensendo tribus antiquis libris usi sumus, Bambergensi saeculo XI scripto, Monacensi, olim Frisingensi, saec. X exarato, qui cum multas lectiones optimas exhibeat, tamen iam manum emendatricem sive potius corruptricem expertus est, denique optimum omnium, Darmstadtiensem, qui in haud paucis locis, si lectiones primae manus sequaris, solus veras scripturas servavit et interpolationibus, quae in hos libros, cum medio quod vocant aevo assiduo lectitarentur, iam pridem invaserunt, fere plane integer est."

151. Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 183: "Es liegt eine der häufigen Interaktionen des Victorinus mit seinem Hörer bzw. Leser vor, bei denen nicht selten das Interrogativpronomen in der Antwort durch ein gleich- oder ähnlichlautendes Relativpronomen aufgegriffen wird."

ἐξηγητική? Quae enarrat. Quae ὁριστική? Quae definit."[152] While most of the examples are of the simple relative and interrogative pronouns, Victorinus's remarks on Eph 1:4 have the same construction with the interrogative *quando*: "Quando autem benedixit nos? Quando ad fidem accessimus cognovimusque mysterium."[153]

Beyond the question of the probability of the *quantum … Quantum* construction in this passage where we have no other exact material parallel in Victorinus's works (i.e., one with the word *quantum*), we can envision an objection to the interrogative rendering of the phrase "sed quantum inter homines potest necessarium" in terms of conceptual context and coherency. Does this phrase not appear to skip from the assertion that there can be no necessary argument to a question about *the extent to which* there could be one? No such problem occurs if one adopts Halm's *tantum … quantum* reading. But this objection loses its force if we suppose that *sed quantum* is an elucidation of the first sentence in the passage as quoted above, where Victorinus demurred from Cicero in stating "argumentum necessarium paene non esse." For *paene* already raises readers' expectations that there may be some exception to the claim that there are no necessary arguments. What Victorinus is doing in his comments on the opening of this passage from Cicero[154] can be understood by grasping that (1) he is dissenting from Cicero's absolute distinction of necessary and probable arguments (Victorinus summarized the rationale for such an absolute distinction in his statement si probabile "ex veri simili, ex vero necesse est necessarium" as well as slightly later in the passage);[155] (2) his dissent is based on empirical grounds (Christian beliefs contradicting what seems a necessary argument to all others); and (3) he offers a philo-

152. For the critical text see Marius Victorinus, *Ars grammatica*: *Introduzione, testo critico e commento*, ed. Italo Mariotti (Florence: Le Monnier, 1967), 67.

153. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 11.150–153.

154. "Omnis argumentatio quae ex eis locis quod commemoravimus sumetur, aut probabilis aut necessaria debebit esse. Etenim, ut breviter describamus, argumentatio videtur esse inventum aliquo ex genere rem aliquam aut probabiliter ostendens aut necessarie demonstrans. Necessarie demonstrantur ea quae aliter ac dicuntur nec fieri nec probari possunt, hoc modo: 'Si peperit, cum viro concubuit.'"

155. Marius Victorinus, *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.29.44: "Atque ut scias hoc necessarium non esse omnino necessarium, ostendit Cicero etiam hoc hominibus persuaderi, cum ait, 'Necessarie demonstrantur ea, quae aliter ac dicuntur nec fieri nec probari possunt'" (Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 111.1–4). See 2.2.1 above for translation and 2.2.2 for analysis.

sophical postulate—"inter homines autem verum latet"—that explains the troublesome empirical data and preserves Cicero's distinction in a weakened form.

In this way Victorinus presents his conclusion in his comments on the passage—necessary arguments exist only where they conform to premises already held by an audience—that begins from Cicero's definition of necessary arguments, stated as a premise, and moves to a conclusion through a minor premise Victorinus himself supplies:

- Major premise: arguments that compel universal conviction are necessary arguments.
- Minor premise: some of Cicero's examples of necessary arguments fail to compel universal conviction.
- Conclusion: Necessary arguments are possible if only they conform to current opinion, that is, practically speaking there are no necessary arguments but only probable ones.

Along these lines, one can see that the minor premise is brought into the discussion by the example of Christians, who consider as necessary arguments dogmas that other people would hardly count as probable. The philosophical postulate of the hiddenness of truth *inter homines* explains the matters of fact that apparently played into Victorinus's conviction that Cicero's absolute distinction between necessary and probable arguments is untenable.

Critical Remarks on the *De definitionibus* of Marius Victorinus

Thomas Riesenweber

Although Victorinus did not contribute much to the field of διόρθωσις,[1] I have always believed that he, being a Neoplatonist, would have been in full sympathy with the concerns of an editor of a critical edition, for an occupation of that kind, which aims at the reconstruction of an original lost from its various copies, resembles in some way the return of the Many to the One. In textual criticism this return of the Many to the One takes place, as is well known, in two steps that cannot always be clearly separated: *recensio* and *examinatio.* The *recensio* deals with the textual transmission and attempts to assign each manuscript the proper place within the *stemma codicum* by means of conjunctive errors and separative errors. Most importantly, it should demonstrate, if possible, which manuscripts are independent witnesses of the text and which ones owe their knowledge directly or indirectly to another surviving witness and, in consequence, are only able to offer a new version of that which we already know from older and superior witnesses. The *recensio* aims, if possible, at the reconstruction of an archetype, which is the (in most cases lost) exemplar of all of the extant manuscripts. Thus, if we are lucky, we will be able to reconstruct the shape of the text as it was in Carolingian times; however, in most cases the archetype was younger, sometimes considerably younger. The *examinatio* endeavors to determine whether the transmitted text, including the unanimously transmitted text, represents the exact wording

1. Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), 290 n. 36; Thomas Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of *C. Marius Victorinus, Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, UALG 120.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 19–20.

of the original, and if not, to emend the errors (if possible) by means of conjecture (*emendatio*).

In the following, I would like to direct attention to a relatively neglected text by Victorinus, the short treatise *De definitionibus*. At the moment, I am preparing a new critical edition to replace Thomas Stangl's meritorious but, after more than 130 years, outdated edition.[2] After a short introduction of this work, its date of composition, its place within the *corpus Victorinianum*, its intention, content, structure, and sources (§1), I would like to give the reader a brief summary of my knowledge at present of the history of the text and its editions (§2)[3] and discuss the textual problems of selected passages (§3). However, I must stress that this is only a work in progress. It will be a few years before we can read the *De definitionibus* in a new critical edition, for the text is often obscure and its transmission complicated.

1. On Definitions

The *De definitionibus* is a unique work. There is no other book known from antiquity that systematically collected types of definition, nor is there, to the best of my knowledge, a similar collection from later times. This might be due in part to the particular environment in which this booklet originated, because Victorinus was obviously thinking about his students and their needs. Victorinus himself tells us this at the beginning:

> necessarium admodum arbitror nosse quid sit definitio quibusque speciebus ac partibus compleatur, ut facillime et eam rem, quam declarat,

2. Thomas Stangl, *Tulliana et Mario-Victoriniana*, reprinted without corrections (!) in Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 331–62, and Marius Victorinus, *Liber de definitionibus: Eine spätantike Theorie der Definition und des Definierens, mit Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, trans. Andreas Pronay, StKP 103 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997), 51–82. Stangl's text is also available online: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b4040335&view=1up&seq=5.

3. I have given a more comprehensive report on the manuscripts and their filiations in my article, "Towards a New Critical Edition of Marius Victorinus's *De definitionibus*," in *Tempus quaerendi: Nouvelles expériences philologiques dans le domaine de la pensée de l'Antiquité tardive*, ed. Lorenzo Ferroni (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 105–32. In this article I have also tried to give reasons as to why we need a new critical edition of the *De definitionibus*.

> <is, qui declarat,>[4] possit ostendere et tollat tamen cognitis modis in dicendo sua varietate fastidium. (*Def.* 1.20–23)
>
> I do consider it necessary to know what a definition is and of which species and parts it consists, so that <he who wants to define a thing> can, without any difficulty, determine the thing he wants to define and still avoid the audience's satiety while speaking, thanks to his large repertoire of various definitions.[5]

Fastidium, "satiety" (or *taedium*), is a rhetorical concept and is derived from a rhetorical context, as is its complement, *varietas*, "variety."[6] Victorinus developed the *De definitionibus* from teaching rhetoric; his intention was to make it easier for his students to coin definitions in great variety, which then would help them to increase their audience's attention in court.[7] As it is, almost every forensic speech needs definitions, for example, "Somebody stole another man's purse in a temple and is accused of sacrilege."[8] In a case like this, it is paramount that the orator knows the definition of *sacrilege* and is able to distinguish it from common theft.

The educational milieu in which the *De definitionibus* originated can also help us, in the absence of other evidence, to deduce the date of composition. Although Victorinus was a public professor of rhetoric in Rome until 362 CE, he seemingly did not write much on scholastic topics after his conversion around 355 CE. It is very likely that he finished his *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica* while he was still on his path toward Christianity, perhaps during the early 350s.[9] The *Commenta*, on the other hand, appear

4. It is worth considering inserting a subject other than *definitio*, which seems odd in combination with *facillime* and *cognitis modis* (Stangl's commas before *cognitis* and after *in dicendo* should be removed, because the latter closely belongs to *tollat fastidium*, not to *cognoscere modos* sc. *definitionis*). The syntax would be much more agreeable if *nosse*, *ostendere*, *tollere*, and *cognoscere* had the same subject, i.e., the orator; and <*is, qui declarat*> could have easily dropped out after *declarat* by *saut du même au même.* For *varietas* "as a feature of speech or writing," see *OLD*, s.v. "*varietas* 2b."

5. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

6. Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*: *Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990), 142.

7. There is a good characterization of the *De definitionibus* and its author in Hermann Usener, *Anecdoton Holderi: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Roms in ostgothischer Zeit* (Bonn: Georgi, 1877), 60.

8. This well-known example is already found in Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.13 (1374a4–5).

9. Riesenweber, *Prolegomena*, 12.

to presuppose the term *definitio ἐννοηματική* (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 2.26.78), which Victorinus explains at length in *Def.* 17.9–18.12 and 24.27–25.15. Of course, this is not compelling proof that the *De definitionibus* was composed prior to the *Commenta*, as it is only circumstantial evidence, but this is all we have, and it suggests that this short treatise was written in the same period, perhaps before the two books of *Commenta* were finished. On the other hand, it is certain that the *De definitionibus* followed Victorinus's translation of Porphyry's Εἰσαγωγή, because he refers to this work in *Def.* 9.13–16. However, as it is also impossible to ascertain the date of the Victorinian translation, this does not help us determine a *terminus post quem* of the composition of the *De definitionibus.*

There is another link to one of Victorinus's scholastic works, which, although it does not help us to estimate the date of composition, should be mentioned here, because it is relevant to understanding the genesis of the *De definitionibus*: the commentary on Cicero's *Topica.* In the early sixth century it was replaced by Boethius's commentary and ultimately lost,[10] but we are indebted to Boethius for a little information on his predecessor's work. According to Boethius, Victorinus explained the *Topica* so meticulously that he needed four volumes to cover less than a quarter of the whole work (§§1–23 out of 100). Consequentially, he never finished it (see Boethius, *In Top. Cic.* 1 praef.). But he appears to have used some of the material he had collected on the later chapters of the *Topica* in a book *On Hypothetical Syllogisms* (*De syllogismis hypotheticis*) and in the *De definitionibus.* The former appears to have corresponded to §§53–57, the latter to §§26–37 of the *Topica.*[11] The *De syllogismis hypotheticis* was also superseded by one of Boethius's works, whereas the *De definitionibus* survived, because it was inserted, maybe consciously, into the Boethian corpus and soon (with few exceptions) commonly believed to be a work by Boethius.

Boethius himself thought that Victorinus was inspired by Cicero's *Top.* 28—"sunt etiam alia genera definitionum, sed ad huius libri institutum nihil pertinent" ("there are also other types of definition, which, how-

10. Cassiodorus in the late sixth century appears to still have had access to it (*Inst.* 2.3.18).

11. Peter Lebrecht Schmidt, "C. Marius Victorinus," in *Restauration und Erneuerung: Die lateinische Literatur von 284 bis 374 n. Chr.*, vol. 5 of *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike*, ed. Reinhart Herzog and Peter Lebrecht Schmidt (Munich: Beck, 1989), 349.

ever, are of no relevance to the purpose of this book")[12]—to write the *De definitionibus*. In his commentary on the passage just quoted he has the following note:

> Hunc locum Victorinus unius voluminis serie aggressus exponere et omnes definitionum differentias enumerare multas interserit, quae definitiones esse paene ab omnibus reclamantur. (Boethius, *In Top. Cic*. 3)[13]
>
> Victorinus, trying to elaborate this passage through one single volume and to enumerate all of the different types of definition, inserted many species, which surely almost everybody would object to being definitions at all.

This clearly shows that in Boethius's eyes, Victorinus wrote the *De definitionibus* in order to expand on Cicero's vague allusions in *Top.* 28. It certainly was the treatise's peculiar structure that led him to this conclusion, because Victorinus himself tells us nothing as to why he made his collection, apart from the short introductory remarks quoted above.

The first part of the *De definitionibus* is dominated by the discussion of the definitions Cicero mentions in his *Topica* and in the *De inventione*. After a short introduction (1.1–2.2), Victorinus opens with Cicero's definition of a definition as given in the *Topica*:

> Definitio est oratio, quae id, quod definitur, explicat quid sit. (Cicero, *Top*. 26 = Victorinus, *Def*. 2.3–4)
>
> A definition is a phrase which explains what the thing defined is. (Reinhardt)

Victorinus analyzes this definition and its components in great detail (2.3–3.3), applying already the concepts *genus*, *species*, and *proprium*, which will become more important later. After that he tries to describe definition in three ways, starting three sentences with *omnis definitio* (3.12, 20, 24),

12. Translation follows Cicero, *Topica: Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Tobias Reinhardt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 129.

13. For the critical text, see Boethius, *In Topica Ciceronis*, in *M. Tulli Ciceronis Opera*, ed. Johann Kaspar von Orelli and Johann Georg Baiter (Zurich: Füssli, 1833), 5.1:324.46–48.

the last of which introduces the general distinction between an imperfect rhetorical definition (3.24–6.24) and a perfect philosophical definition (6.24–11.3).

The rhetorical definition has two forms: one sophistic form,[14] in which the opposing parties choose one single aspect of a definition which best suits their interests, for example, "Desecration of a grave is whenever someone opens a grave in order to violate the sanctity of the spirits of the dead." Someone opened a grave in order to steal burial objects; he is accused of desecration of a grave. The prosecutor focuses on the act itself; the defender concentrates on the intention of the act (3.24–4.15).[15] Another form of rhetorical definition results from comparison, for example, "To take a bribe means to receive a gift with your own hands." Verres did not receive gifts himself; members of his staff did it for him. Cicero extends this definition by comparison: "Your people, Verres, were your hands" (4.16–29). The section on rhetorical definition (4.29–6.20) concludes with remarks on the four-step sequence of such definitions—proposing one's own definition, confirming it, applying it to the case at hand, refuting the adversary's definition—taken from Cicero, *Inv.* 2.53–56.

Victorinus then turns to philosophical definitions (6.25: "quae philosophorum propria"), which are the only ones that can be called definitions in the truest sense. This entire passage begins with the topos drawn from the whole (*locus a toto*), as explained by Cicero in *Top.* 9, which is said to correspond to the substantial definition (*definitio substantialis* or οὐσιώδης). Victorinus presents it according to *Top.* 29, and with explicit reference to Aristotle's Τοπικά and Porphyry's Εἰσαγωγή: every substantial definition must begin with the genus of the item to be defined and add the differences between this item and other species of the same genus, until it finally reaches the characteristic of the item. A variety of examples is discussed (7.23–11.12) in order to illustrate this practice, for example, the famous definition of a human being: "A human being is an animal that is rational, mortal, belonging to dry land, two-footed, and capable of laughter" (8.12–13).

There is, in a metaphorical sense, a second and a third type of definition, mentioned in Cicero, *Top.* 8: by enumeration of its parts (*a partibus*)

14. The term was coined by Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 164.

15. Pronay's discussion of this passage is wrong: the past tenses show that 4.2–3 is the narrative of a declamation theme, i.e., that the accused had actually opened the grave, but for a different purpose (*Liber de definitionibus*, 174–79). The colon after "ex his duobus" (this refers back to "et animo et facto"!) should be removed.

and by etymology (*a nota*). Both are discussed in accordance to Cicero's exposition in *Top.* 28–37 (11.13–16.14).

After finishing the Cicero portion of the *De definitionibus*, Victorinus inserts the famous catalogue of fifteen types of definition. A formulaic phrase provides a transition or rather a return to the definition drawn from the whole (*definitio a toto*), which is then said to have many different forms:

> Sed ex his eas, quas colligere potuimus, partiemur (sunt etenim et aliae fortasse), deinde rationes ac differentias et exempla dicemus. (*Def.* 16.15–17)
>
> But we will only mention in the following table of contents those forms we were able to collect (there may be others as well). After that, we will describe their patterns, their differences, and give examples.

A table of contents follows, which enumerates the fifteen types of definition together with their technical terms in Greek and Latin (16.18–17.5), beginning with the substantial definition and skipping enumeration and etymology. In other words, there is a second list, and the first item on it is the same as the first item on the tripartite Ciceronian list. After that, the first item is dealt with briefly (17.6–8), because it was already the main subject of the Cicero part; then Victorinus discusses the remaining definitions, most of them in meticulous detail, beginning with the "notional definition" (*definitio ἐννοηματική*), which is drawn from the common notion of the thing to be defined (17.9–29.2).[16] He ends with closing remarks that clearly refer back to the beginning of the passage:

> Sunt et aliae fortasse species definitionis, verum, si quis invenerit, adiciat numero.[17] Modo illud diligenter attendat, ne forte harum alicui specierum illud, quod invenerit, possit adiungi. (*Def.* 29.3–5)

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16. The juxtaposition of substantial and notional definition is already attested in Galen and particularly in Porphyry; see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 173.

17. The following sentence makes it quite obvious that Victorinus did not mean that a number (e.g., sixteen) should be added; what he really is concerned with is whether the new discovery adds to the number of fifteen definitions or whether it should be assigned to one of them. He either wrote "adiciat <ad> numerum" with manuscripts B^{pc}, P^{pc}, T (see n. 25) and the *editio princeps* or "numero" with manuscript C. Both constructions are attested in Victorinus: "adicere ad," e.g., *In Gal.* 2:12–13 "adiciendum ad vitam putabant"; c. dat. *Adv. Ar.* 3.12 "nihil adicitur vitae"; both errors

> There may be other types of definition, and if one discovers any, he should add them to my list. But he should diligently pay attention, lest his findings can be assigned to one of the types mentioned above.

The final section of the *De definitionibus* deals with the faults in definitions (29.13–32.29). It can be divided into two parts. The first part discusses the two main weaknesses in substantial definitions: if they include too much or if they do not include enough; definition and *definiendum* have to be equivalent and reversible (29.13–30.7). The second part reports five faults mentioned by Cicero in *Inv.* 1.91 and 2.54: if they are common, if they declare something wrong, if something is missing, if they are disgraceful, if they are useless. Faults 1 and 3 converge with the two faults discussed in the first part (30.8–32.29).

He ends by stating that he thinks that for the sharp-minded and busy what he said is enough (32.30).[18]

The most interesting part of the *De definitionibus* is undoubtedly the catalogue of the fifteen types of definition, which Victorinus claims to have collected himself and which already in antiquity had an immense influence on scholars such as Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Isidore.[19] Despite his claims of originality, however, the artificial transitional phrase, the second listing of definitions, and the framing of the catalogue make it very likely that Victorinus used and expanded an already existing collection, presumably a Greek source, perhaps a lost work of Porphyry.[20] This view

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can be explained easily. See Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior: Opera exegetica*, ed. Franco Gori, CSEL 83.2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986), 119.14; *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), 212.25. For the sake of analogy with *alicui adiungere*, I chose the dative *numero*.

18. Or, with Stangl's conjecture: "what I said is enough, the whole treatise and every single chapter." I suggest *occupato* for the transmitted *omnia et*. At any rate, this is a playful allusion to Cicero, *Top*. 25: "utrum igitur hactenus satis est? Tibi quidem tam acuto et occupato puto" ("So is this enough? For someone who is as acute and as busy as you, I imagine it is" [Reinhard, *Cicero's Topica*, 127]).

19. Hadot reprints Boethius's summary of Victorinus's catalogue in his commentary on Cicero's *Topica* and gives evidence of Cassiodorus's use of Victorinus's terminology in his commentary on the *Psalms* (Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 363–65). See also the large-scale paraphrases in Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 2.3.14; Isidore, *Etym.* 2.29 (PL 82:148C–151A).

20. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 177–78 (and see n. 15 above). Pronay thinks that the principal source was of Stoic origin, but this is not very probable (*Liber*

is supported by the fact that Victorinus always gives the Greek technical term before he translates it into Latin. However, Victorinus did not simply translate his source but appears to have transformed and adapted it for a Roman audience. This becomes quite obvious from the examples he cites: normally they are not taken from Greek literary texts[21] but from Latin authors, especially Cicero and Vergil. Victorinus presumably replaced the Greek examples of his source by Latin ones, which were much more familiar to his Roman readers.[22] And there is yet another piece of evidence that indicates that Victorinus redesigned his source on a larger scale. As Pierre Hadot demonstrates convincingly, Victorinus tried to harmonize his Greek source with what he could find in Cicero, *Top.* 83 and 87, paragraphs that deal with the rhetorical issue of definition, and additionally in *Top.* 32 and Cicero, *Partitiones oratoriae* 41.[23] He even refers to these paragraphs explicitly several times. However, beginning from the ninth type (καθ' ὑποτύπωσιν), he appears to have followed his Greek source alone—or at least we can assume that he could not find the types 9–15 in Cicero's rhetorical handbooks. Be that as it may: the rearrangement and harmonization of heterogeneous material that we can observe in the *De definitionibus* is typical of the teacher Victorinus attempting to mold his

de definitionibus, 21–22). Among other things, *Def.* 1.1 *et iam* is not a strong argument for chronological questions, because it is either a conjecture or a misprint in de Gregoriis's 1492 *editio princeps*; the archetype had *etiam*, and *etiam … et* is good Victorinian style.

21. I have noticed two exceptions, for which it is probable that he could not find a Latin counterpart: 21.11, where the manuscripts have something similar to ἄνθρωπός ἐστι †τιημηροσουρογοσος†, which I cannot make much sense of at the moment (Stangl's ἀνήρ ἐστιν ὥσπερ ὁ ἄνθρωπος has no manuscript support, and it is obscure to me); and 26.9, a quotation from Aristotle, *Cat*. 1b27.

22. This was a common practice among the late antique Latin schoolmasters. In his translation of Porphyry's Εἰσαγωγή Victorinus proceeded accordingly: Porphyry, *Isag*. 1.20 (Busse): καθ' ὃ σημαινόμενον τὸ Ἡρακλειδῶν λέγεται γένος → Victorinus, *Isagoge sive quinque voces*: "per quam Dardanidum dicitur genus" (Boethius in his translation, although he is in general closer to the Greek original than Victorinus, even writes *Romanorum*). See Porphyry, *Isagoge*, ed. Adolf Busse, CAG 4.1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1887). Porphyry, *Isag*. 2.26–27 (Busse): ὁ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος εἶδος ὢν Σωκράτους καὶ Πλάτωνος κατηγορεῖται → Victorinus, *Isagoge sive quinque voces*: "homo enim species cum sit, de Socrate, Platone, Cicerone praedicatur" (Victorinus, of course, added Cicero, who is missing in Boethius's translation).

23. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 170–71.

various sources into a homogeneous system, which was easier to understand, for the sake of his students.

To summarize: the *De definitionibus* is a fascinating conflation of Greek and Latin, Neoplatonist, and Stoic sources, combining Cicero's *Topica* with Aristotle and Porphyry and placing them in the context of rhetorical instruction. It is a rare gem, and despite its sometimes unfortunate presentation of the material, a treasure trove of definitions useful for orators, philosophers, and theologians as well, and was, in consequence, widely read in antiquity and the Middle Ages.

2. *Recensio*

In the case of the *De definitionibus* we have a remarkably rich manuscript tradition at our disposal. This is (it has to be said) not due to Victorinus but to Boethius, to whom the booklet was ascribed until the late nineteenth century.[24] Most manuscripts contain the *De definitionibus* among other works by Boethius, and some of them, even older ones, attribute it to Boethius explicitly.

Of all of the thirty witnesses dating from the tenth until the fifteenth century, which are still extant today,[25] fourteen manuscripts have been collated completely so far by others as well as myself. It is too early to draw a reliable stemma at the moment. At least, it appears that the younger manuscripts do not give independent access to the archetype, so they are insignificant for the reconstruction of the text. Of the older manuscripts, B, P, T, M, N, and W can be affiliated to one family; whether the remaining manuscripts E, F, L, O, C, V, K, and R constitute another family or more than one (especially K and R very often strike out on their own) I cannot determine at present. At any rate, contamination has afflicted the younger strata of the transmission as a rule, but the older manuscripts also show signs of it.

What is special about the *De definitionibus*, compared to other works of antiquity pertaining to the trivium, is the rich indirect transmission: Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Isidore paraphrase large parts of it and even

24. That the *De definitionibus* was written by Victorinus was convincingly demonstrated by Usener, *Anecdoton Holderi*, 59–66.

25. Two very old *codices Carnotenses* were destroyed in World War II; of a third one photos were taken before its destruction so that it can still be studied on microfilm.

borrow single sentences and expressions verbatim.[26] Therefore they can occasionally be referred to as a witness against the manuscripts and aid us in checking the manuscripts' testimonies. Unfortunately, we still do not know whether Isidore acquired the text from Cassiodorus or whether both can be traced back to a lost common source independently. I do not believe, however, that the hypothesis stating that Isidore simply transferred the text from Cassiodorus can explain all the evidence, but I do not wish to examine this question in greater detail here.

3. *Examinatio*

In the following section, I will discuss a selection of passages from the *De definitionibus*, in which my text (partly in light of new manuscript evidence) will be different from Stangl's.

3.1. *De definitionibus* 1.7–12

> Unde non solum commoditatis genere perspicienda est virtus definiendi, quia per hanc res orationem semper evolvitur et quod illa sit, quae id, de quo quaeritur, explicat, verum etiam quod principalis semper adhibita maximum lumen et manifestum parit rei, quae in contrarium deducta habeat quaestionem.

genere] *gratia* M^{vl}NV || *orationem* M W V: *oratione* BPT N E?FLOC KR || *quod illa*] *quid illa* EFC KR || *id* om. B^{ac}P^{ac} V KR || *id de quo quaeritur explicat*] *quaeritur explicatur* KR || *deducta*] *deductae* P^{ac} W L^{t}C K^{ac}R: *ductae* B^{ac}

The expression *commoditatis genere* is discussed elsewhere.[27] Here I would simply like to stress that the text printed by Stangl, "quia per hanc res orationem semper evolvitur," is only attested in manuscripts M, W, and V, whereas all of the other witnesses have "quia per hanc (sc. virtutem definiendi) res oratione semper evolvitur." In my eyes, there can be no doubt that this is correct. Again and again we see that Victorinus is concerned with pointing out that every definition is an *oratio*, most nota-

26. See n. 19.

27. See Thomas Riesenweber, "Zu den 'Institutiones oratoriae' des Sulpicius Victor, Teil 2: Zu einzelnen Textstellen," *Hermes* 147 (2019): 69.

bly in 2.3–3.3, when he is dealing with Cicero's definition of definition in *Top.* 26: "definitio est oratio, quae id, quod definit, explicat quid sit" ("a definition is a phrase, which explains what the thing defined is").[28]

Not surprisingly, the ablative *oratione* is added to verbs such as *demonstrare* several times: 3.4–5, "omne quod demonstratur oratione aut an sit demonstratur aut quid sit aut quale sit"; 4.16–19, "est etiam et alia … quae longe a virtute definiendi plenissime separatur, quae … hoc esse a simili, cum aliud sit, oratione concludit"; 11.6, "non plenissime quid sit ea res adhibita oratione declarant."

3.2. *De definitionibus* 3.20–24

> Omnis definitio aut probandae rei causa sumitur; aut augendae, si res in quaestione <non> versatur; aut confirmandae, si vel apud adversarium vel apud auditorem quemlibet iam nota res est. Nihilo minus tamen definitio, ut eadem, quae nota <res> est, certa et fixa teneatur, adhibetur.
>
> *non* add. Christ || *aut confirmandae* BP^{ac} M NW EFV*: confirmandae* P^{pc}T LO KR || *res* hic add. Stangl: *res* ante *eadem* add. de Gregoriis: *res* post *eadem* add. O

Astute as always, Wilhelm Christ,[29] who had already ennobled Halm's edition of Victorinus's commentary on the *De inventione* with his ingenious conjectures, here adds *non*, presumably because he considered that the *amplificatio* or αὔξησις of something could only be performed if this thing itself is not controversial ("si res in quaestione <non> versatur"). For this, he would have been able to appeal to Victorinus himself, who in his commentary on the *De inventione* limits the *amplificatio* to *res certae* twice:

> Locorum autem communium genera duo sunt: unum, cum certae rei certa est amplificatio, aliud, cum rei dubiae est disputatio. Amplificatio rei certae est, ut in parricidam, in sacrilegum. Dubiae vero rei communis

28. Reinhardt, *Cicero's Topica*, 127.

29. Christ was Halm's colleague in Munich, and his contributions to the *Rhetores Latini Minores* and the *De definitionibus* were communicated to Halm orally or *per litteras* but never published separately.

> locus est, qui a Graecis dicitur θέσις, quae habet partes duas. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 2.14.46)[30]
>
> There are two kinds of commonplaces: one, when there is a certain amplification of a certain thing, another, when there is a discussion of a doubtful thing. An amplification of a certain thing is performed against a parricide or a blasphemer. A commonplace for a doubtful thing is called *thesis* in Greek; it has two species.
>
> Etenim cum duo genera sint (sc. locorum communium), quorum alterum rei dubiae ad probationem ducendae generalem tractatum habet, alterum rei certae continet amplificationem, necessario causae ipsius facultas suggerit, si quid amplificationis aut indignationis conquestionisque nascitur. (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 2.22.68)[31]
>
> For as there are two kinds (sc. of commonplaces), one of which contains a general discussion of a doubtful thing, which has to be proved, another is an amplification of a certain thing, necessarily the potential of the case itself suggests, if there is a place for amplification or indignation and lament.

However, in the passages just quoted, Victorinus is not dealing with *res probatae* or *res non probatae* but with issues that are certain, such as "against a parricide," and those for which plausible arguments can be adduced in both directions, for instance: "It is right to put confidence in suspicions" and "it is not right." I have doubts whether these passages from Victorinus's commentary should be compared with the matter at hand.

Consequently, there do not appear to be any serious obstacles to punctuate the unanimously transmitted text 3.20–22 as follows:

> Omnis definitio aut probandae rei causa sumitur aut augendae, si res in quaestione versatur; aut confirmandae, si vel apud adversarium vel apud auditorem quemlibet iam nota res est.
>
> Every definition is taken up on account of a matter to be proven or amplified, if this matter still is in question; or on account of a matter to

30. Marius Victorinus, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, ed. Thomas Riesenweber, BSGRT (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 163.17–20.

31. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 178.15–18.

be confirmed, if this matter is known to our adversary or to any audience member.

The sentence is neatly constructed by two antithetical conditional clauses, whereas Christ's addition of *non* destroys this balance. In his version the sentence is divided into three parts, only two of which are supplemented by a conditional clause. Furthermore, both conditional clauses say the same thing. Finally, adding *non* in the place proposed by Christ between *quaestione* and *versatur* is implausible on rhythmical grounds, as it destroys the catalectic dicretic *quaestiōnĕ vērsātur.*[32] So it seems to be prudent to return to the transmitted text.

The second addition, proposed by Stangl, should also be rejected: *res* in line 23 is not necessary after "iam nota res est" in the previous sentence. It is almost certain that it was missing in the archetype; of course, a mechanical loss is not completely unthinkable, but not very probable. The testimony of manuscript O and de Gregoriis's version in the *editio princeps* only show that Stangl was not the first reader who wished to provide more clarity here than was actually needed.

3.3. *De definitionibus* 4.8–15

Ita existit definitivae orationis iste tractatus, ut, cum totum, quod agnoscitur in sepulturae violatione, per partes suas fuerit distributum easque partes oratores singuli tenuerint, contendendi genere definitione uti videantur. Sed non recte dicitur huiusmodi definitio, cum non sit certa, non plena, non integra [definitio], nisi cum totum, quidquid ipsius rei est de qua quaeritur, exprimens quid sit oratio declararit. Verum haec captiosa, falsa, non certa rhetorum definitio.

sed non recte dicitur huiusmodi definitio $B^{pc}P^{pc}$ EFLV: om. $B^{ac}P^{ac}$T M NW OC KR || *integra* Glareanus 1546: *definitio* add. BPT M NW EFOCV KR: *difinitionē* add. L^{ar}: *difinitio ē* add. L^{pr} || *captiosa*] *est* add. EFO || *certa*] *est etiam* add. L: *est* add. O

32. Victorinus himself shows us that he knew what the clausula should look like: "ita una illa ratio in actu est atque opere, hanc vero alteram civilem rationem, quae in quaestiōnĕ vērsātur, scientiam nominavit: hic enim docetur quid iustum, quid utile, quid honestum sit" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.5.6 [Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 24.30–32]).

The archetype had a second *definitio* after *integra*, and many manuscripts have omitted the entire passage "sed non recte dicitur huiusmodi definitio." The evidence available indicates that these words are interpolated. Furthermore, the problematic words anticipate the conclusion of the complete paragraph to the extent that a rhetorical definition is captious, false, and not undisputable ("verum haec captiosa, falsa, non certa rhetorum definitio"). It seems that the interpolator felt the need of a main clause that made it clear, that a *definitio per partes* is not a definition in the strict sense. This is, however, already apparent through *videantur*: "Orators (only) appear to use a definition, … whereas it is not an undisputable, perfect, and complete definition, if it does not declare what something is, expressing the whole of all that which belongs to the thing in question. However, the rhetorical definition we are dealing with here is captious, false, and not undisputable."

This interpolation resembles in a way the intervention in 3.8, where after "cum quid sit ostenditur, quod medium est inter an sit et quale sit" we find the additional words "vere est definitio" in manuscripts B, P, T, M, N, W, and C. They are missing in manuscripts E, F, L, O, V, K, and R, and in most cases the consensus of these manuscripts gives us the text of the archetype. Furthermore, the addition is syntactically unnecessary, too, because the long parenthesis causes a slight anacoluthon, explicitly marked by *inquam* (3.11), which takes the *cum* clause from the beginning of the sentence; the main clause *definitio nuncupatur* does not follow until the end of the sentence (3.12). However, anacolutha caused by parenthesis occur quite often in Victorinus[33] and are completely forgivable.

Two similar interpolations that belong to different main branches of the transmission give us reason to assume that the archetype already had these interpolations in the margin or between the lines and that each of them was adopted by one branch and omitted by the other.

3.4. *De definitionibus* 4.23–27

> Item in illo exemplo, cum quaeritur quid sint inimicitiae, dicimus inimicum esse eum, qui aliquid mali molitus sit; at Cicero collec-

33. See Thomas Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar und Indices*, vol. 2 of *C. Marius Victorinus, Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, UALG 120.2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 113–14.

> tione utens dicit inimicum qui facit contra omnium rem, voluntatem, honorem, dignitatem.
>
> *at* Stangl: *hac* BPT M NW EFLOCV KR || *collectione*] *collatione* LO || *dicit inimicum*] *esse* add. LO || *omnium rem*] *rem omnium* R: *omnium* O

It is quite obvious that a few words are missing here. Notwithstanding whether Stangl's simple change *at* for transmitted *hac* is correct, we need a significant difference between both definitions that are discussed here. However, I cannot detect such a significant difference in the transmitted text. The source of the example discussed by Victorinus, Cicero, *Verr.* 2.3.7, reads as follows:

> An si qua in re contra rem meam decrevisset aliquid iniuria, iure ei me inimicum esse arbitrarere: cum omnia contra omnium bonorum rem causam rationem utilitatem voluntatemque fecerit, quaeris cur ei sim inimicus cui populus Romanus infestus est? (*Verr*. 2.3.7)[34]
>
> Or if he had in any particular made a decree contrary to my interest unjustly, would you then think that I was fairly an enemy to him; but now that he has acted contrary to the interests, and property, and advantage, and inclination, and welfare of all good men, do you ask why I am an enemy to a man towards whom the whole Roman people is hostile?[35]

This example is discussed again 6.14–15, where it is even quoted verbatim. From this quotation, Victorinus 6.16–20 extrapolates the definition of Cicero's adversaries a second time. This definition reads as follows: "Inimicitiae sunt cum contra rem meam aut facit aliquis aut dicit iniuriam" (6.17). Consequently, something like *contra rem meam* (as opposed to *contra omnium rem*, etc.) appears to be missing in the adversaries' counterdefinition in 4.24–25. I suggest that the sentence be printed with the following supplement:

> dicimus inimicum esse eum, qui <contra rem nostram> aliquid mali molitus sit. (*Def*. 4.24–25)

34. For the critical text, see Cicero, *Orationes; Divinatio in Q. Caecilium; In C. Verrem*, 2nd ed., ed. Gulielmus Peterson, OCT (Oxford: Clarendon, 1916), 203.8–12.

35. Translation follows Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. Charles Duke Yonge (London: Bell & Sons, 1913–1917), 1:298.

> We say that he is our enemy who attempted something evil <against our interest>.

3.5. *De definitionibus* 6.12–15

> Post adiungitur, ut diximus, destructio definitionis adversae partis, sed per concessionem, id est similium: "An, si contra rem meam fecisset iniuriam aliquis, iure ei me inimicum esse profiterer?"
>
> *similium* de Gregoriis: *syllogismum* BPT M NW EFOCV KR: *per syllogismum* L

Andreas Pronay translates Stangl's text printed above as follows: "Damit verbindet Cicero, wie gesagt, die Widerlegung der gegnerischen Definition, aber er tut dies in der Form eines Zugeständnisses *einer fingierten gegnerischen Definition, welcher als Definitionsobjekte* ähnliche Verhältnisse *zugeordnet sind*" (italics added).[36] This translation is problematic, because the words printed in italics do not have an equivalent in the Latin, whereas *id est* is not translated at all.[37]

More importantly, all of the manuscripts have *syllogismum* instead of the barely translatable *similium*. Certainly, it is quite intelligible as to the reason that the first editors of the *De definitionibus* conjectured *similium*: in 4.16–27 Victorinus deals with a form of definition that by means of comparison does not show what it is but concludes *from a similar matter* that it is such a thing, although it is something else ("quae per collectionem non quid sit ostendit, sed hoc esse a simili, cum aliud sit, oratione concludit"). In the course of that paragraph, Victorinus cites the example from Cicero's *Verrines* with which he is dealing here for the first time (4.23–27). But there the word *simile* does not represent the true definition of a specific object (namely, the adversaries' definition, which one must declare as true by means of *concessio*) but a criterion, with which one can extend an

36. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 101: "After that Cicero adds, as we have already said, the refutation of the opposing definition, but he does this by conceding *a fabricated opposing definition, to which* similar circumstances *are attributed as objects of definition.*"

37. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 185: "The expression of the adversative clause … is so short, that it can be rendered only by paraphrase." Would such brevity be appropriate in a textbook such as the *De definitionibus*?

uncontroversial definition to one's own definition. In the case of the first example, the procedure evolves as follows: "*Accipere* means, without any doubt, to take something with your own hand; although Verres did not take anything with his own hand, his henchmen acted as his hands, they were similar to his hands." Moreover, note the second example: "It is (personal) enmity whenever someone wishes to harm you; this is not applicable to Verres who did not harm Cicero personally; but (personal) enmity is similar to hostility towards the community of all men." Victorinus apparently adduces both examples in order to illustrate such extensions or transfers of undisputable definitions. So this procedure cannot be identical to the "destructio definitionis adversae partis," the fourth step of a rhetorical definition, which Victorinus deciphers here. They are different matters.[38]

Consequently, the conjecture *similium* is inappropriate on grammatical, stylistic, and conceptual grounds. Anyway, it would be difficult to explain paleographically the evolution of an original *similium* to become *syllogismum*. However, the transmitted *syllogismum* is barely any better: it is difficult to imagine that Victorinus put the *concessio* on a level with a form of argumentation such as the *syllogismus*. I suggest that "id est syllogismum" be deleted as an infelicitous gloss of a confused reader.

3.6. *De definitionibus* 6.33–7.3

> Ergo definitio quae philosophorum est in rebus exprimendis—quae explicat quid sit, <non> quale sit—quemadmodum membris suis constare debeat exponemus.

non add. Stangl || *quale*] *qualis* EFOV^{ac}? || *exponemus*] *exprimemus* L^{t}: *audiamus* EFV

38. In my edition I start a new paragraph at 4.29. In 3.25–4.15 Victorinus deals with one sort of rhetorical definition in which the single parts of a complete definition are distributed to both parties of a lawsuit; in 4.16–29 he presents the definition *a simili* as a second type. After that, he turns toward the structure of rhetorical definitions as discussed in Cicero, *Inv*. 2.53–56. This is a new paragraph, which he begins by summing up his previous statement about the two kinds of rhetorical definitions: "sed hae definitiones quae oratoribus aptae sunt et poetis." If he were only dealing with the definition *a simili*, he would have said "sed haec definitio."

Stangl in his *apparatus criticus* ascribes the addition of *non* to "*edd. vett.*," but I could not find it in the editions of de Gregoriis (1492), Glareanus (1546), or Jacques-Paul Migne (PL 1847). It seems to be of his own concoction.

The testimony of Isidore, who preserved this sentence, is also of crucial importance: "Definitio est philosophorum, quae in rebus exprimendis explicat quid res ipsa sit, qualis sit et (om. T) quemadmodum membris suis constare debeat" (*Etym.* 2.29.1).[39] This shows that with some degree of probability *non* was already missing from Isidore's exemplar. Admittedly, the sentence as transmitted by Isidore is nonsensical as well: a philosophical definition provides information about what something is ("quid res ipsa sit"), not what sort of thing it is ("qualis sit").[40] Moreover, in Isidore the predicate *exponemus* is absent, which in Victorinus's version turns the sentence "ergo definitio … quemadmodum … constare debeat" into an indirect question unexpectedly at the end. Perhaps Isidore himself or his exemplar simplified this sophisticated syntax deliberately.

If one tries to harmonize the testimonies of the Victorinus manuscripts and of Isidore, one could think of the following text:

> Ergo definitio, quae philosophorum est in rebus exprimendis, quae explicat quid sit, qualis sit <et> quemadmodum membris suis constare debeat exponemus.
>
> Hence we will expound what sort of thing that kind of definition is, which philosophers use in order to express specific things and which explains what something is, <and> how the components of this definition have to be arranged.

After adopting the definition of definition from Cicero's *Topica* (*Top.* 26) in 2.3–4 and clarifying what a definition is, he now wants to demonstrate its quality and the arrangement of its parts.[41]

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39. PL 82:148c–d. For any judgment about the disputed relationship between Isidore and Cassiodorus, it is relevant to know that this sentence is missing in Cassiodorus.

40. As Victorinus tells us himself in 3.6–7: "item cum quale sit aliquid oratione monstratur, pari modo definitio non erit."

41. See 1.20–21: "necessarium admodum arbitror nosse (1) quid sit definitio (2) quibusque speciebus ac partibus compleatur."

3.7. *De definitionibus* 7.4–17

> Definitiones esse principia disputandi et supra diximus et [M.] Tullius probat, cum in dialogis omnibus, tum etiam in eo libro, qui Topica inscribitur. In quo docet primum argumentorum locum esse definitionem, hoc est a toto; cui loco, qui appellatur a toto, necessario adhibenda est definitio, ut ita argumenti locus a toto sit definitio. Porro, ut supra diximus, explicandi argumenti quod a toto est dicitur definitio. Ergo praeceptis et dialecticorum et philosophorum [omnium] illud tenere debemus: non esse definitionem nisi solam, quae [declaret] in ea re, quam definitam volumus, primum quam eius rei "esse" intellegimus, <declaret atque ostendat> substantiam. Hoc ut apertius fiat, hic docebimus nullam esse definitionem certam, integram, approbandam, nisi eam, quam dicunt philosophi substantialem, Graece οὐσιώδης appellatur; quid autem substantiale sit alibi explicandum.

et supra] *ut supra* LO K^{ar}R || *Tullius* OV: *m. tullius* BPT EF R: *marcus tullius* M NW LC K || *cum in*] *cum* N F^{pc} K: *tum in* de Gregoriis || *eo libro*] *illo libro* O KR || *necessario*] *necessaria* EF || *ut ita* NW: *ita ut* BPT M EFLOCV KR || *explicandi argumenti*] *explicandi argumenta* B^{ac}: *explicandi argumentum* R: *locus* add. K^{sl}: *explicandi argumenti oratio* L: *argumenti explicandi oratio* O || *dicitur definitio* LOV K^{pr}: *dicitur oratio* (*.s. diffinitio* add. P^{sl}) BPT M NW EFC K^{ar}?R || *philosophorum* Stangl: *philosophorum omnium* BPT M NW EFLOCV KR || *solam quae*] *solam quae declaret* BPT M W EFLOCV K^{pr}R: *solam quae declararet* N K^{ar}? || *in ea re*] *eam rem* EF: *in eam rem* P^{pc}? || *primum quam*] *primam quam* K^{pr}R: *priusquam* V || *rei*] *quae est diffinienda* add. B^{pc}PT || *esse intellegimus* de Gregoriis: *intellegimus esse* BPT M NW EOCV KR: *intellegamus esse* FL || *declaret atque ostendat* de Gregoriis: om. BPT M NW EFLOCV KR || *substantiam*] *substantia* B^{ac}E: *substantialem* B^{pc}P^{vl} || *hic* Stangl: *sic* BPT M N EFLOCV KR: *si* W || *substantialem*] *quae* add. B^{pc}PT || *substantiale* EFOV: *substantialis* L: *substantia* BPT M NW C KR || *explicandum* P^{ac} M NW K^{ac}: *explicandum est* BT EFLOCV K^{pc}R: *.s. est* add. P^{pc}

This passage contains a number of problems, and I am afraid that I am not able to solve all of them satisfactorily at the moment.

Let us start with a minor detail: in his extant works, Victorinus uses Cicero's *nomen gentile*, *Tullius*, more than seventy times, but only once together with the *praenomen*, *Marcus* (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.22.31). In this

sole isolated case, however, we do not read Victorinus's own words but a quote from Cicero's speech *Pro Tullio*, and the M. Tullius mentioned there was not the famous orator, but a client of the same name. There is no other instance in Victorinus's extensive corpus for M. Tullius. However, in *Def.* 7.5 all of the older manuscripts I have collated, except for manuscripts O and V, clearly attest this combination. I am inclined to accept it, as there is no reason why anybody would have interpolated the *praenomen* here. At any rate, it is a singularity, not an anomaly.

In the following sentence (7.7) the explanation *hoc est a toto* is objectionable. First of all, it should have been placed after *locum*, not after *definitionem*, which raises the suspicion that it is a marginal gloss inserted erroneously into the text in the wrong place. Moreover, the following "cui loco, qui appellatur a toto" would be redundant after the explanation "hoc est a toto." Victorinus paraphrases a passage from Cicero's *Topica*, which in Reinhardt's 2002 edition reads as follows:

> Sed ex his locis, in quibus argumenta inclusa sunt, alii in eo ipso, de quo agitur, haerent, alii assumuntur extrinsecus. In ipso tum ex toto, tum ex partibus eius, tum ex nota, tum ex iis rebus, quae quodam modo affectae sunt ad id, de quo quaeritur. Extrinsecus autem ea ducuntur, quae absunt longeque disiuncta sunt. Sed ad id totum, de quo disseritur, cum definitio adhibetur, quasi involutum evolvitur id, de quo quaeritur. (*Top.* 8–9, partial)

> But of those Places in which the arguments are contained, some are attached to the subject under discussion itself, others are drawn from without. Attached to the subject under discussion are arguments drawn from the whole, from its parts, from etymology, and from those things which are somehow related to the subject at issue. Arguments drawn from outside are those which stand apart and are clearly dissociated. But when a definition is applied to the entire subject under discussion, then that which is at issue and as it were wrapped up is unfolded.[42]

Victorinus appears to have interpreted this passage as if the *locus a toto* mentioned by Cicero in the first place were equivalent to definition, because in this *locus a toto* a definition was applied (necessarily, as Victorinus thinks), in order to unfold the wrapped up meaning of a specific thing. He justifies this as follows: "In the *Topica* Cicero teaches that defini-

42. Reinhardt, *Cicero's Topica*, 121.

tion is the first Place of arguments. For[43] in this Place of arguments, which is called 'from the whole,' a definition has to be applied necessarily, so that[44] this Place 'from the whole' is equivalent to definition" (*Def.* 7.7–8). I bracket "hoc est a toto" as a gloss inserted into the text at the wrong place.

The following sentence (7.8–10), "porro, ut supra diximus, explicandi argumenti quod a toto est dicitur definitio," is particularly problematic. Pronay has translated it as follows: "Definition nennt man nun, wie schon oben gesagt, den Ansatz für diejenigen Argumente, die sich von der Ganzheit (des Untersuchungsgegenstandes) herleiten."[45] Unfortunately, this is not in the Latin. Of course, Pronay could not know that the archetype presumably did not have *definitio* but *oratio*, because Stangl does not say anything about it in his apparatus criticus. However, it is simply absurd to supplement *locus* ("Ansatz") as a word to which the otherwise free-floating gerund could be referred.[46] Moreover, the cross-reference "ut supra diximus" also seems very odd. Pronay makes the following comment: "In the immediately preceding context 7.6–9."[47] However, normally such an

43. Raphael Kühner and Carl Stegmann, *Satzlehre*, vol. 2 of *Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache* (Hannover: Hahn, 1992), 319 (§197.1): "Sehr häufig gebraucht der Lateiner das Relativ zur Verbindung von Sätzen, die wir im Deutschen bestimmter durch Hauptsätze mit den Konjunktionen und, aber, denn; also, daher und mit einem Demonstrative oder Personalpronomen bezeichnen."

44. There is no reason why we should not print *ita ut* with the great majority of manuscripts. At many places Stangl printed the same (erroneous) variants that can also be found in W, because W was related to the exemplar that de Gregoriis used for the *editio princeps* (evidence is provided in the article mentioned in n. 3). At all these places editors have printed the mistakes of a relative of W for more than five hundred years; it is high time to change this!

45. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 107: "The Place of those arguments which are drawn from the whole (of the issue in question) is called 'definition,' as we have already said above."

46. A reader of manuscript K appears to have conceived the same idea, because there we find *s*(*cilicet*) *locus* added above the line. *Locus* is found in the text (!) of a few younger manuscripts: Assisi, Biblioteca del Sacro Convento, Fondo comunale 296, s. XIII (A); Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Lat. qu. 214, s. XII^2; Nice, Bibliothèque Municipale à Vocation Régionale, 43, s. XII (Z); Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, San Marco 166, s. XII^2 (H); Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, San Marco 669, s. XIII (I); Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 811, s. XV (S). However, these manuscripts do not seem to be stemmatically independent, and one does not see how *locus* could drop out in all of the other witnesses.

47. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 189.

expression would not be used in order to refer to the immediately preceding sentence. Finally the conclusion, clearly marked by *ergo*, that only the substantial definition is a true definition comes as a surprise, because Victorinus does not even slightly prepare the ground for it in his discussion on Cicero's remarks in the *Topica*. If one considers that *porro* oftentimes introduces the minor premise of a syllogism (*TLL* 10.1:2774.65–2775.30),[48] there is reason to assume that the major premise has been lost. Such a substantial loss of text would explain all of the difficulties mentioned above. In this lost passage Victorinus might possibly have spoken about how *quid est*, the well-known question as to the essence of a specific thing, is connected to the term *totum*, newly introduced here. Even though it is pointless to speculate about the exact wording, I do suspect that the text was lost due to a *saut du même au même* that discarded the first word of the following sentence as well: "<* * *. Definitio> porro,[49] ut supra diximus, explicandi argumenti, quod a toto est, dicitur oratio."

After that the conclusion follows (7.10–13), which explicitly relies on the doctrines of all of the dialecticians and philosophers.[50] I have briefly touched on this sentence elsewhere;[51] here I would like to enhance the discussion of its problems a little bit. Pronay makes a long philosophical comment on this passage in which he rejects Carl Prantl's and Benedetto Riposati's interpretations at the very beginning, who adopted the variant *prius quam*:[52] "It is necessary to have recognized the substance of a certain

48. For the combination of *porro/ergo* in argumentations in Victorinus see *Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.3.5; 1.5.7; 1.9.12; *Adv. Ar.* 3.4, 8; *Adv. Ar*. 4.4; *In Eph*. 1:7; *In Gal*. 1:7.

49. *Porro* occurs fifty times in Victorinus, twenty-two times at the beginning of a sentence and twenty-eight times in the second place. At the beginning of a sentence it is found only in his Christian treatises (fifteen times in the phrase *porro autem*), never in the pagan textbooks.

50. Why Stangl discarded *omnium* after *philosophorum*, which all of the manuscripts transmit and all of the editors before him printed, remains a secret. He does not even acknowledge it in his apparatus criticus.

51. Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 81–82 (see n. 54).

52. Pronay attributes this to the "'codex deterior' π." Rather, this siglum stands for Migne's 1847 edition, but I agree that it has little value. Carl Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1855–1870), 1:689, with n. 105; Benedetto Riposati, *Studi sui 'Topica' di Cicerone*, EUCC 22 (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1947), 73 n. 3. In fact, both quote Jacques-Paul Migne's text (PL 64:895C); Riposati still believed that Boethius was the author.

object, even before one knows if it exists."[53] Pronay is correct in calling this absurd. Unfortunately, after that he praises Stangl for putting *primum quam* back in the text, although a brief glance at the apparatus would have revealed to him that Stangl understood *primum* in the sense of *prius*.[54] Nonetheless, Pronay suggests the following interpretation of the text with *primum*: "Only that definition can be called a definition in the true sense, which precisely indicates the essence (substantia) of the object yet to be defined. By 'essence' I primarily mean the 'being' (esse) of this object."[55] He violently connects (*primum*) *quam* with *substantiam* and refers *primum* as an adverb to *intellegimus.* After that he dedicates almost an entire page to the question of what "I primarily mean" means. Henceforth, as he could not find an answer to that question, he does not speak any more of "meaning primarily" but of "being primarily": "At the same time, this 'essence' is primarily (*primum*) the 'being' (*esse*) of the object.… The 'being' of the object is primarily its conceptual and immaterial essence."[56] However, this does not stop him from understanding *primum* still as an adverbial adjunct to *intellegimus.*[57] According to this interpretation, Victorinus uses *primum* based on a hierarchy of being ("Seins-Reihenfolge") consisting of at least two levels, which he vaguely ("nur andeutungsweise") implies in the *De definitionibus*: one level represents the factual existence of an object, another level the conceptual being, that is, the essence or substance.[58] The latter is the essential and primary level of being ("die wesentliche und

53. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 189.

54. With reference to Victorinus, *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.9.12: "sed primum quam de eodem syllogismo tractemus, ea, quae in eo obscura sunt, explicemus" (Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 45.5–6). I have argued for adopting *prius* there and, consequently, incorporated *prius* in the text of my 2013 Teubner edition, because I do not believe that Victorinus used *primum* in the sense of *prius* (Riesenweber, *Kritischer Kommentar*, 81–82).

55. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 102–3 (nn. 54 and 56–58 are to the same pages).

56. "Dieses Wesen ist zugleich vorrangig (primum) das Sein (esse) des Gegenstandes.… Das Sein des Gegenstandes ist vorrangig sein begrifflich-immaterielles Wesen."

57. "Das als Adverb gebrauchte 'primum' ist nähere Bestimmung zu 'intellegimus.'"

58. "Die Verwendung von 'primum' setzt eine Seins-Reihenfolge, die aus mindestens zwei Stufen besteht, voraus." A pedantic grammarian would reply that *primum* presupposes necessarily three or more levels of being. "Es gibt einerseits das faktische Vorhandensein eines Gegenstandes." "Vom faktischen Vorhandensein unterscheidet

primäre Seinsweise des Gegenstandes"). So, according to Pronay, "to be or not to be" is not the question here, but "to be primarily or secondarily."[59]

It does not come as a surprise that Pronay could not find this revolutionary theory of definition with its two levels of being in any other author, at least not in an analogous form ("bei keinem Vorgänger, jedenfalls nicht in analoger Form"): it is an imaginary creature of the commentator, born from a text that itself had been created by an anonymous humanist, probably by de Gregoriis himself. The medieval manuscripts give us a completely different text, which was already mentioned in Stangl's apparatus, so that Pronay could have known this version:

> non esse definitionem nisi solam quae declaret in ea re, quam definitam volumus, primum quam eius rei intellegimus ēssĕ sūbstāntĭam.
>
> It is not a definition unless it declares in the first place what we understand as the substance of the object, which we want to be defined.[60]

I do not dare to maintain with certainty that this version is identical with the writing of Victorinus, but I am convinced that further investigation of the meaning of the text has to start from here. In particular, I would like to highlight the elegant rhythmic clausula *ēssĕ sūbstāntĭam* (a dicretic), which is spoiled in de Gregoriis's version. Certainly, *primum* remains problematic, even if one refers it to *declaret*, but in the light of the following examples, which clearly show that in definitions Victorinus equated *substantia* with *genus*,[61] the temporal reference that a definition has to declare the substance of the object *in the first place* does not appear to be inappropriate.

Victorinus das begriffliche Sein, d. h. das Wesen oder die Substanz (substantia) des Gegenstandes."

59. For a recent discussion of primary and secondary being in Victorinus and the Neoplatonists see Václav Němec, "Zum Problem der Gattung des Seienden bei Marius Victorinus und im antiken Neuplatonismus," *RhM* 160 (2017): 161–93.

60. For the indicative in indirect questions see Stangl, *Tulliana et Mario-Victoriniana*, 54.

61. 7.25–26: "substantiam enim hominis declaravi, cum dixi 'animal.'" 8.13–16: "'animal' cum dictum est, substantia hominis declarata est. Est enim, uti supra diximus, ad hominem genus 'animal.' Omne autem genus speciei suae substantialis est declaratio."

At the end of the passage the addition of the Greek *terminus technicus—Graece* οὐσιώδης *appellatur*—is objectionable, because this term will not be introduced before 16.18; it would be needlessly anticipated here. Admittedly, this could be explained by the intention of a professor of rhetoric to better impart the study matter to his students through frequent repetition. However, the change in the syntactical structure of the sentence is unusual: one would have expected <*quae*> *Graece* οὐσιώδης *appellatur*,[62] a conjecture that, as a matter of fact, is found in B^{pc}, P, and T. But this is like curing symptoms and not the disease. The Greek translation could have easily been taken from 16.18–19; it is my opinion that we ought to delete it here.[63]

In the last sentence as well, there is, in my opinion, no reason that we should depart from the majority of manuscripts and print *substantiale* as transmitted by E, F, O, and V instead of *substantia* as transmitted by B, P, T, M, N, W, C, K, and R. Admittedly, *substantiale* could be understood as a cross-reference for the extensive discussion of the *definitio substantialis* a little later, but in that case *alibi* ("elsewhere") would be puzzling, a word that Victorinus, if I am not mistaken, uses only when he wants to refer to a passage in another work.[64] Perhaps he planned to discuss the question

62. Kühner and Stegmann give many examples for cases where "from a genitive, dative or ablative of a preceding relative pronoun a nominative or accusative has to be supplemented" (*Satzlehre*, 323–24 [§198]). That the nominative has to be supplemented from the accusative is comparatively rare. See Johann B. Hofmann and Anton Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*, HAW 2.2.2 (Munich: Beck, 1965), 565. Out of roughly eight hundred references for relative clauses with *quem*, *quam*, *quos*, and *quas* in Victorinus I have not found a single case that could be compared with the one in question here (if nothing has escaped me).

63. It seems no coincidence that at 27.9–10 another superfluous οὐσιώδης is found in a context that makes it difficult to accept: "non enim translatio est, cum lex dicitur 'mens civitatis'; nec tamen genus est, ut substantialis habeatur, οὐσιώδης" ("for it is not a metaphor whenever the law is called 'the mind of the city'; nor is 'mind' a genus so that it is not a substantial definition, either, οὐσιώδης"). Here too, I would like to delete οὐσιώδης, because its syntactical position is misleading. *Substantiālĭs hăbĕātur* would give an excellent rhythmic clausula (a catalectic dicretic with resolution of the second long syllable).

64. Victorinus also uses *alibi* sixteen times in order to introduce a quotation. In these cases, he always cites from a different work or at least from a different book within the same work, e.g., *Ars gram*. 5.18 (Vergil, *Aen*. 10.611, 11.841) or *Adv. Ar.* 1A.18.3–4 (Rom 11:36, Col 1:16–17). Particularly revealing for his usage of the word *alibi* is *Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 2.18–21 (Riesenweber): "haec virtus in Rhetoricis a Cice-

Quid est substantia? in another book. Or maybe he is referring to his commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*—if he ever wrote such a commentary.[65]

In my critical edition, the text discussed here at the moment appears as follows:

> Definitiones esse principia disputandi et supra diximus et M. Tullius probat, cum in dialogis omnibus, tum etiam in eo libro, qui Topica inscribitur. In quo docet primum argumentorum locum esse definitionem [hoc est a toto]; cui loco, qui appellatur a toto, necessario adhibenda est definitio ita ut argumenti locus a toto sit definitio. <* * *. Definitio> porro, ut supra diximus, explicandi argumenti quod a toto est dicitur oratio. Ergo praeceptis et dialecticorum et philosophorum omnium illud tenere debemus: non esse definitionem nisi solam, quae declaret in ea re, quam definitam volumus, primum quam eius rei intellegimus esse substantiam. Hoc ut apertius fiat, sic docebimus nullam esse definitionem certam, integram, approbandam, nisi eam, quam dicunt philosophi substantialem [Graece οὐσιώδης appellatur]; quid autem substantia sit alibi explicandum. (*Def.* 7.4–17)

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rone eadem ponitur quae sapientia; alibi vero, id est in libris de re publica, ab eodem Cicerone illa virtus dicitur quae prudentia" ("in the books *On Invention* Cicero understands *virtus* in the sense of *sapientia*; but elsewhere, namely, in the books *About the State*, *prudentia* is called *virtus* by the same Cicero"). Whenever Victorinus inserts cross-references within the corpus of his own writings, his usage of the word *alibi* is by no means different, for example when in *Adv. Ar.* 4.5 he refers to *Adv. Ar.* 4.4.6–46, *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.10–15, and *Adv. Ar.* 4.21.26–31 (according to the apparatus) with the words "verum de his pluribus et alibi" ("but I have discussed these issues in greater detail elsewhere"—the single books referred to as *Adversus Arium* are, as is commonly known, independent works), or when *In Gal.* 4:18 he probably refers to a lost work of his own, perhaps a commentary on another letter of Paul with "altior veriorque expositio alibi a nobis panditur et explicatur." On the latter example see Stephen A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 320 n. 108. In this group of cross-references within the own corpus, too, there is a particularly striking example, as it shows very clearly that *alibi* means "elsewhere" in the sense of "not in this book, but in another one": *In Eph.* 1:19 (*Opera pars posterior*, 25.64–65) "a nobis in his libris saepe tractata est et alibi plenius explicata" ("we have frequently discussed this in these books and explained it more completely elsewhere"). The latter refers to *Adv. Ar.* 1.32, according to Gori's apparatus.

65. Hadot is very skeptical (and has good reasons for that; *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 111–12).

> That definitions are the principles of debating we have said before and M. Tullius shows this apart from all his dialogues also in his book called *Topica*. There he teaches that definition is the first Place of arguments […]; for on this Place, which is called "from the whole," a definition has to be applied necessarily, so that this Place of argument "from the whole" is equivalent to definition. <* * *.> Moreover, a speech that explains an argument "from the whole" is called a definition, as we have said previously. Consequently, according to the doctrines of all of the dialecticians and philosophers we have to bear the following in mind: it is not a definition unless it declares in the first place what we understand as the substance of the object that we want to be defined. In order to make this more apparent, we will put it this way: there is no undisputable, complete, and acceptable definition except that which the philosophers call "substantial" …; what substance is has to be explained elsewhere.

3.8. *De definitionibus* 8.23–27

> Sic perfecta omni ex parte definitio est ad hominem declarandum, cum, posito genere, exclusis omnibus per differentias quae poterant convenire, ad proprietatem eius, de quo quaerebatur, pervenit oratio.

cum posito B^{pc} EFLCV K: *composito* B^{ac}PT M NW R: *cum proposito* O || *genere* $B^{ac}P^{ac}$ M NW L: *genere et* EFOV: *genere sed* $B^{pc}P^{pc}T$ KR: *genere adiectae sunt species, quae differentiarum genere* C || *per differentias* EFLV: om. BPT M NW OC KR

Perhaps alluding to the fact that the relative clause *quae poterant convenire* could be referred to *per differentias* (which would of course, be nonsense) is too pedantic. However, such an ambiguity in a textbook raises doubts as to whether the phrase *per differentias*, which is transmitted only in E, F, L, and V, is authentic, especially as its loss in the other manuscripts is difficult to explain.

Certainly, the words are correct in regard to content: the *differentiae* must be enumerated, in order to exclude all of the other similar *species*, until one reaches the *proprium*, as in the following expressions: "cetera per differentias in oratione subiungimus" (7.20–21); "subiungere species, ut … tamdiu interponamus differentias" (8.7–9); "eo usque … orationes interponere et adicere differentias" (8.28–29); "tamdiu interponere debemus species et differentias" (9.19–20). More instructive, however, is the preced-

ing sentence, because (taking the example "Quid est homo?" up again) it explains what parts the *definitio substantialis* is composed of:

> Quibus omnibus animalibus, quae convenire poterant ad superiora in oratione posita, discretis atque disclusis adiectum est proprium in parte postrema: est enim solum hominis quod "ridet." (*Def.* 8.20–23)
>
> After separating and disincluding all of the animals that could be consistent with the criteria mentioned before, in the final part (of the definition) the special property is added: for it belongs only to the human being that he laughs.

Here, too, *per differentias* is missing after "quibus omnibus animalibus … discretis atque disclusis." Consequently, it should be left out in 8.25 as well, since it is nothing more than a brief summary of the preceding discussion.

3.9. *De definitionibus* 11.1–3

> ut, proposito eius rei, de qua quaeritur, genere et adiunctis speciebus cum differentia, usque ad eius proprium, disclusa omnino communione, veniamus.
>
> *proposito* N L: *praeposito* B^{pc}PT M EF KR V: *praepositio* B^{ac}: *positio* W: *posito* de Gregoriis

The manuscript evidence suggests that Victorinus wrote *praeposito*, not *proposito.* The genus is *placed first* in the process of definition, it is not *proposed*; then the species are added (*adiunctis speciebus*); at the end the *proprium* is reached. This sentence describes a chronological sequence. There is a close parallel for *praeponere* in this sense *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.22.32: "huic 'animal' praeposuit, ut speciem faceret id, quod 'homo.'"[66] In light of both passages, one might consider emending Victorinus's comment on Phil 2:16: "ergo cum genus praeposuisset (*prop-* codd.) 'non in vacuum laboravi. … adiecit speciem certam 'non in vacuum cucurri.'"[67]

66. Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 81.19–20.
67. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 197.13–16.

3.10. *De definitionibus* 11.13–16

> Tullius in Topicis de tribus locis primis tractans: a toto, a partibus, a nota [dicit], cum a toto argumentum est, ut supra docui, definitionem adhibendam <dicit>; illic enim ponitur genus, quo quid res ipsa sit, de qua quaeritur, explicetur.
>
> *cum* Glareanus 1546: *vim* de Gregoriis: *dicit cum* BPT M NW EFLOCV KR || *dicit* de Gregoriis: om. BPT M NW EFLOCV KR

First of all, there is in my opinion no reason to remove *dicit* with de Gregoriis from its transmitted position before *cum a toto argumentum est* after *adhibendam*—other than the fact that the transmitted position makes *a toto, a partibus, a nota* look even more problematic. However, even in de Gregoriis's version it is difficult to construe the Latin, because the phrase *a toto, a partibus, a nota* should be taken together with *de tribus locis primis* but is separated by *tractans*, which itself is closely linked to *dicit*. Therefore I initially put *a toto, a partibus, a nota* in round brackets in order to mark a parenthesis, but now consider it more likely that the same glossator who in 7.7 added *a toto* is responsible for the explanation here too. An author who proceeds systematically would have enumerated all three terms right at the beginning of the discussion, not in the middle;[68] in any case, they are mentioned again at the end of the discussion in 16.9–10. Perhaps this was the source for the glossator.

3.11. *De definitionibus* 13.4–6

> Sic illud in controversiis est: "Auxilium ferre est decernere mittendo proficisci; venire, etiam si non pugnaveris; hostes ne dimicent terrere."

This appears to have been the wording of the archetype; the punctuation is Stangl's. In my opinion, this text raises several questions. First of all: What does *decernere mittendo proficisci* mean? *Mittendo* can hardly be an ablative: neither *decernere* nor *proficisci* tolerates such an adverbial phrase. The

68. Pronay writes: "Victorinus gives us the complete overview, which was already due at 7.6, not before 11.13ff" (*Liber de definitionibus*, 189, translation mine). Actually, it is not a complete overview, rather a transition from the *locus a toto* to the *locus a partibus*.

examples for *decernere* with dative, collected in *TLL* 5.1:148.83–149.16, cannot be compared. One might conjecture *decernere de exercitu mittendo*, "to decide about sending an army" (see *TLL* 5.1:150.4–7), and put a semicolon before *proficisci*; easier still, one might think of *mittendum* (sc. *auxilium*), "to decide that help should be sent" (see *TLL* 5.1:145.83–146.24).[69] Subsequently, I found out that *mittendum* is transmitted in manuscripts C and Lo. It is probable that it is merely a conjecture there and has no testimonial value; but that does not mean that the conjecture is necessarily wrong.

Moreover, what is the sense of "venire, etiam si non pugnaveris," "to arrive, even if you have not fought" (as if a fight on the way is a requirement for arriving to help the ally)? I punctuate the text as follows:

> Auxilium ferre est decernere mittendum; proficisci; venire; etiam si non pugnaveris, hostes ne dimicent terrere.
>
> To bring help means to decide that help should be sent; to set out; to approach; to deter the enemies, even without having fought, from waging a decisive battle.

This is the same scenario that we find in Fortunatianus, *Ars rhet.* 1.14: "Qui obsidebantur ab hostibus, auxilia a finitimis conduxerunt; dum in itinere sunt auxilia, recesserunt hostes ab obsidione" ("The inhabitants of a besieged city recruited an army from their neighbors in order to get help; while the army was on the march, the enemies broke off the siege").[70] They argue about whether the agreed money has to be paid.

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69. Oliver Humberg (Bergische Universität Wuppertal) refers me to Justin., *Epit.* 5.11.5–6: "Dimissus igitur Cyrus iam non occulte bellum, sed palam, nec per dissimulationem, sed aperta professione parare coepit; auxilia undique contrahit. Lacedaemonii memores Atheniensi bello enixa eius opera adiutos, velut ignorantes, contra quem bellum pararetur, decernunt auxilia Cyro mittenda, ubi res eius exegisset" ("Released by Artaxerxes, Cyrus now began to prepare for war overtly and without concealment, making no secret of his intentions but openly declaring them, and assembling reinforcements from all quarters. The Spartans remembered the strong support he had given them in their war against Athens, and they decreed that assistance be given to him when his enterprise required it, pretending ignorance of the identity of the intended foe"). Translated by John C. Yardley, *Justin, Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, APhAClR 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 67.

70. For the critical text, see Fortunatianus, *Ars rhetorica*, ed. Lucia Calboli Montefusco, ESUFC 24 (Bologna: Pàtron, 1979), 85.15–19.

Finally, I have serious doubts that this example is suitable for illustrating that particular type of a definition drawn from the parts (*definitio a partibus*), which defines the whole of the object in each of its parts (*in singulis totum*). Is it really true that each step of bringing help (deciding, setting out, approaching, deterring) already means bringing help? Of course, *proficisci* (*ad auxilium ferendum*) "to set out (in order to bring help)" for example can, in a broader sense, mean almost the same as *auxilium ferre* "to bring help"; but actual help will not be brought until the enemies are deterred from waging the decisive battle. More importantly, the controversial issue of this school exercise appears to be whether bringing help includes a decisive battle or not, that is, whether the parts of the definition already considered are sufficient or whether the crucial part is missing. In this respect, there is a great difference between this example and the following ones, which are taken from Cicero's speeches *Pro Cornelio* and *Pro Tullio.* In their cases Cicero is dealing with different types of treason (*laesa maiestas*) and deceit (*dolus malus*) respectively; and if we eliminate one of these, it does not change the fact that the remaining types are still criminal offenses in accordance with the laws against treason or deceit. In contrast, the definition of bringing help conveys the impression that it is not complete until all of the steps are taken. Moreover, it would be strange if Victorinus had not considered it necessary to clarify his meaning with his first example. In contrast, he quite extensively explains the second and third examples. Finally, the transition from the first to the second example is quite strange: the examples taken from Cicero are connected by the phrase "hoc etiam pro Tullio tenet" (13.11–12), which emphasizes that the third example is as appropriate as the second. Between the first and the second example we find nothing of that kind, in both sentences the beginning is more or less the same (13.4, "sic illud in controversiis est …"; 13.6, "sic Tullius … tractat …").

To sum up, I consider it possible that the first example is an interpolated gloss, which was originally meant to illustrate the first type of a definition drawn from the parts (*definitio a partibus*), which defines the whole of the object by the sum of its parts (2f. *totum ab omnibus partibus colligatur*). It is not uncommon that glosses are displaced in the course of the textual transmission and incorporated at a place for which they were not conceived.

3.12. *De definitionibus* 13.31–14.3

> Ergo vel divisione vel partitione efficietur ista, de qua loquimur, definitio: sic enim etiam ipsa divisione eademque partitione, cum enumeratis—vel omnibus, si paucae sunt, vel multis, si infinitae—aut speciebus aut partibus ad cognitionem rei, de qua quaeritur, notionemque deducimur.

vel divisione] *vel in divisione* N: *divisione* W C || *efficietur*] *defficietur* L^{ar}: *effietur* P: *efficitur* T W $FO^{ac}C$ || *loquimur*] *loquitur* EL^{t} || *deducimur* $P^{ac}T$ NW FL^{pc}?OCV KR: *deducimus* M EL^{ac}?: *ducimur* BP^{pc}

Pronay has translated this passage as follows:

> Man wird also diejenige Art der Definition, von der ich jetzt rede, entweder durch Einteilung (divisio) oder durch Zerlegung (partitio) bilden müssen. Man gelangt nämlich allein schon durch Einteilung, aber auch durch Zerlegung zu einer Erkenntnis (cognitio) und Vorstellung, Begriff (notio) des fraglichen Gegenstandes, wenn man seine Bestandteile beziehungsweise Arten aufzählt, und zwar entweder alle, wenn es davon nur wenige gibt, oder viele, wenn ihre Anzahl unbegrenzt groß ist.[71]

In this translation, however, one word is missing: *cum*. It cannot be a preposition, as the similar expression in 11.16–19 shows:

> At a partibus cum argumentum est, etiam ipsa quidem dicitur definitio, verum translato nomine, cum enumeratis omnibus totius partibus sic quod totum est recognoscitur.
>
> However, if the argument is drawn from the parts of the object, that, too, is called a definition, albeit figuratively, when it enumerates all of the parts of the whole and thus leads to the comprehension of the whole.

71. Pronay, *Liber de Definitionibus*, 111: "In consequence, that type of definition I am talking about right now will have to be conceived by division (*divisio*) or partition (*partitio*). For division itself and also partition leads us to the comprehension (*cognitio*) and the notion (*notio*) of the object in question when it enumerates its species or parts, either all of them, if they are only few, or many, if their number is infinite."

Without any doubt *cum* is a conjunction in both places. It follows that the first part of the sentence (*sic … partitione*) lacks a predicate. Maybe Victorinus expects us to add *efficietur definitio* in our mind, with *ipsă … eădemque* being nominatives. However, the repetition of the same thought, using almost the same words, raises the question whether *sic … partitione* should be deleted. Such a sentence would make excellent sense and be worthy of a famous teacher of rhetoric in elegance of style:

> ergo vel divisione vel partitione efficietur ista … definitio […], cum enumeratis … aut speciebus aut partibus ad cognitionem rei … notionemque deducimur.
>
> In consequence, that type of definition … will have to be conceived by division or partition […], when it enumerates its species or parts … and leads us to the comprehension and the notion of the object in question.

Admittedly, it is difficult to assign a reason for this interpolation. It is, of course, as always also possible that text was actually lost, not interpolated. So perhaps one should not bracket the words too hastily. At any rate, "ipsa divisione eademque partitione" deserves to be enclosed *inter cruces*.

3.13. *De definitionibus* 14.29–15.6

> Illud tamen probe admonitum volo: cum duo genera rerum sint, corporalia et incorporalia, in utroque et genus et totum accipi ac pari modo partes et species nominari, sed separata rationis propriae sectione: ut, cum genus qualitatis modo fuerit nominatum, ei species supposita intellegere debeamus; cum vero totum, non quoque qualitas eius animadvertatur—quae significatur semper in genere—, sed quasi quoddam substantiale corpus, ut id sectum in partes suas distributumque quasi cuiusdam quantitatis receperit sectionem. Sive illud corpus sit sive, ut diximus, incorporale: animadversione utriusque cognitionis quae aut in qualitate aut in quantitate est, si qualitate rem appellatam velimus, genus esse dicamus et huic species supposita; si quantitatem quandam in eo quod totum est comprehendimus, merito ac iure partes in sectione esse dicimus.

rerum sint] *sint rerum* B R || *quoque* Stangl: *quo* $B^{ac}P$ M NW FLOC KR: om. $B^{pc}T$ V: *.i. ut* add. K^{sl} || *eius*] *enim* M N: *eius ei'* F: om. W || *animadvertatur* $B^{pc}P^{pc}T$ FLOV K: *animadvertitur* $B^{ac}P^{ac}$ M W C R: *animadverteretur* N || *distributumque* FLOV KR: *distributum* $B^{ac}P^{ac}$ M NW: *distributam* C: *distributumque eius* (*.i. totius* add. B^{mgsl}) *partes* B^{pcmg}: *distributumque eius* (*.i. totius* add. P^{sl}: *partes* add. P^{mg}) P^{pc}: *distributumque eius* (*partes .i. totius* add. T^{sl}) T || *receperit* FLOCV KR: *receperunt* BPT M NW: *se ad* add. $B^{pc}P^{pc}T$ || *sive illud*] *sive enim illud* LO || *cognitionis* M FLOCV KR: *cogitationis* BPT NW || *qualitate rem* A HS^{72} de Gregoriis: *qualitate* N: *qualitatis rem* BPT M W $L^{vl}C$ KR: *qualitatem* FL^{t} V: *qualitatem rem* O || *appellatam* $FL^{t}OK^{pc}$: *appellatum* BPT M W $L^{vl}CV$ $K^{ac}R$: deest N || *suppositas*] *esse suppositas* W OC || *si* W C: *sin* BPT M N FLOV KR || *quantitatem* W FLOCV KR: *qualitatem* $B^{ac}PT$ M: deest N || *sectione* FLOCV KR: *sectionem* BPT M NW

This is how Stangl prints this difficult passage. However, the text remains obscure, although the transmitted version was changed twice: in 14.33 Stangl prints *quoque* instead of the more or less unanimously transmitted *quo*; in 15.4 he follows the *editio princeps* in printing the weakly attested *qualitate rem*, even though the great majority of manuscripts suggest that the archetype had *qualitatis rem*. This former intervention particularly causes problems: What is the function of *quoque* ("too") in this context? Pronay translates it as "no longer,"[73] which is doubtlessly impossible.

It should be noted that the phrase *non quoque* is quite unique in ancient Latin literature: except for the passage here, I have found it only twice in Boethius, both times in a question "cur non quoque…?,"[74] with *quoque* referring to the following noun. This can be ruled out here: Victorinus cannot advise that quality, too, has to be observed, because quantity has not been mentioned before.

It is helpful that Victorinus frequently says the same thing twice with slightly different words. The sentence

> ut, **cum** genus qualitatis modo fuerit *nominatum*, ei species suppositas intellegere debeamus; **cum** vero totum, non quo qualitas eius animadvertatur—quae significatur semper in genere—, sed quasi quoddam

72. See n. 46.

73. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 113: "if, on the other hand, one describes the genus as the whole, then one no longer points out a quality of the whole."

74. Boethius, *In Cat.* 4 (PL 64:292C); *In Herm.* 3 (PL 64:487D).

> substantiale corpus, ut id sectum in partes suas distributumque quasi cuiusdam quantitatis receperit sectionem.

corresponds quite accurately to the following sentence in terms of content and structure:

> animadversione utriusque cognitionis quae aut in qualitate aut in quantitate est, **si** qualitate rem *appellatam* velimus, genus esse dicamus et huic species suppositas; **si** quantitatem quandam in eo quod totum est comprehendimus, merito ac iure partes in sectione esse dicimus.

I have highlighted the correspondences between both sentences: one clearly sees that *nominatum* corresponds to *appellatam* and that the *cum* clauses are varied by the *si* clauses. This makes it almost certain that "(admonitum volo …) ut id sectum in partes suas distributumque quasi cuiusdam quantitatis receperit sectionem" is the apodosis of the second *cum* clause, because it closely resembles the apodosis of the second *si* clause, "merito ac iure partes in sectione esse dicimus." The protasis of the second *cum* clause must be interpreted as follows: the predicate for *cum vero totum* has to be supplemented from the first *cum* clause, *nominatum fuerit*; the rest between *cum vero totum* and the *ut* clause should be bracketed as parenthesis: "non quo qualitas eius animadvertatur, quae significatur semper in genere, sed quasi quoddam substantiale corpus" means "not because the quality of the whole is observed, which is always indicated in a genus, but, in a manner of speaking, a substantial body."[75]

There remains another question: What does the first *si* clause, "si qualitate rem appellatam velimus (genus esse dicamus et huic species suppositas)," mean, which so obviously corresponds to the first *cum* clause, "cum genus qualitatis modo fuerit nominatum (ei species suppositas intellegere debeamus)"? In my opinion, *appellatum*, which is transmitted by the majority of the older manuscripts, appears to be correct, because it repeats *nominatum*. Consequently, *rem* has to be removed. Perhaps originally it was intended to be a reading aid (*.s. rem*); for it becomes obvious

75. For *non quo …, sed …* see Kühner and Stegmann, *Satzlehre*, 385 (§211.4) and in Victorinus, e.g., "dedit supra philosophicae inductionis exemplum, dat nunc in rhetorica, non quo, inquit, diversa praecepta sint, sed ne quis forte praeceptum in philosophicam datum in rhetorica videre non possit" (*Comm. Cic. Rhet.* 1.33.55 [Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, 124.27–30]).

only at second glance that *appellatum* has to be referred to *utrumque genus rerum*.

Finally, the most surprising hypothesis Victorinus makes here is that bodiless notions can be a whole and, accordingly, divided into parts ("in utroque et genus et totum accipi ac pari modo partes et species nominari"). It appears to be reasonable to connect the repetitive phrase "sive illud corpus sit sive, ut diximus, incorporale" with the second *cum* clause, which discusses the whole and its division, rather than to let it begin the following sentence. Moreover, at the beginning of the next sentence, the focus needs to be on the division into quality and quantity again (*si qualitate …; si quantitatem …*), not into bodily and bodiless notions. So we should put a full stop after *incorporale*.

At the moment I am going to print the text as follows:

> Illud tamen probe admonitum volo: cum duo genera rerum sint, corporalia et incorporalia, in utroque et genus et totum accipi ac pari modo partes et species nominari, sed separata rationis propriae sectione: ut, cum genus qualitatis modo fuerit nominatum, ei species supposita intellegere debeamus; cum vero totum (non quo qualitas eius animadvertatur, quae significatur semper in genere, sed quasi quoddam substantiale corpus), ut id sectum in partes suas distributumque quasi cuiusdam quantitatis receperit sectionem, sive illud corpus sit sive, ut diximus, incorporale. Animadversione utriusque cognitionis quae aut in qualitate aut in quantitate est, si qualitate appellatum velimus, genus esse dicamus et huic species supposita; si quantitatem quandam in eo quod totum est comprehendimus, merito ac iure partes in sectione esse dicamus.[76]

> I want you to keep this firmly fixed in your memory: as there are two kinds of things, bodily and bodiless, in both we accept genus and whole and, accordingly, speak of parts and species, but with a different sectioning, depending on their own nature. Consequently, when we speak of genus as quality, we have to understand that species are subordinated to it, but when we speak of whole (not because the quality of the whole is observed, which is always indicated in a genus, but, in a manner of speaking, a substantial body), it is split up and distributed into its parts and receives a sectioning like a quantity, whether it is a body or, as we have said before, bodiless. Observing that comprehension is concerned

76. For structural and rhythmical reasons I have restored the subjunctive *dicamus* instead of the transmitted *dicimus*.

> either with quality or with quantity, if we want to speak of something as quality, we shall say that it is a genus with species subordinated to it; but if we comprehend a certain quantity in that which is a whole we shall say with good reason that it can be split up into parts.

3.14. *De definitionibus* 15.19–25

> Sed saepe verbum simplex, purum, nulla compositione conexum in definitione a nota ducitur, ubi est vis eius, quam Graeci appellant ἐτυμολογίαν, at Cicero veriloquium. <Veriloquium> non potest ex discretione, quae nulla est, compositionis ostendi, sed, adhibita declinatione ac denominatione quodammodo, quid sit id, de quo quaeritur, explicari, ut a bonitate bonus et a malitia malus et a sapientia sapiens.

conexum] *complexum* FL || *definitione*] *quae* add. O KR || *ducitur* BPT M N W $F^{vl}L^{vl}C$ K: *dicitur* $F^{t}L^{t}O$ R: *đucitur* V || *est vis eius*] *est eius vis* FL: *vis eius* V K || *ЄΘΙΜΟΛΟΓΙΑΜ* vel sim. BPT M NW OCV KR: *ΚΑΤΑΑΝΟΛΟΓΙΑΜ* vel sim. FL || *at* M NW OCV: *ut* BPT FL KR || *veriloquium*[1]] *veriloquum* B^{ac}: *per veriloquium* $B^{pc}P^{pc}T$ FL || *veriloquium*[2] Stangl: om. BPT M NW FLOCV KR: *sed* de Gregoriis || *ostendi sed*] *ostendi et* BPT K^{ar}? || *explicari*] *potest* add. V: *.s. potest* add. K^{sl} || *et a malitia*] *a malitia* T W C

In the first sentence, I stumbled over "verbum … a nota ducitur." Pronay translates as follows: "Aber oft läßt sich in einer Definition ein schlechthin einfaches (simplex purum), aus keinerlei Zusammenfügung gebildetes Wort von der sprachlichen Bedeutung, in der sein eigentlicher Sinn (vis) begründet ist, herleiten."[77] This is nonsense: a word cannot be derived from its "linguistic meaning"; it is, according to Victorinus, always imposed on a thing,[78] as is shown by the statement of the compound noun (*verbum compositum*) in the immediately preceding sentence:

77. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 113–14: "But often in a definition a simply pure (*simplex purum*) and not compounded word is derived from the linguistic meaning, on which its literal sense (*vis*) is based."

78. There are innumerable parallels for the phrase *nomen* (*rei*) *imponere* within the *corpus Victorinianum*. See *Comm. Cic. Rhet.* (cited by page in Riesenweber, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*): 8.9; 37.17; 37.22; 37.29; 38.1–2; 38.12; 38.13; 38.21; 40.3–4; 85.16–19: "verba autem nostra omnia rerum nomina sunt, ut 'salio', 'curro';

> 15.12–14 Tertia definitio est quae a nota dicitur, cum vis verbi vel nominis, quae in compositione sita est, rem suam facta quadam separatione designat.
>
> The third type of definition, which is called "from etymology," is made, whenever the meaning of a verb or noun, which is based on a composition (of two or more words), signifies the thing it belongs to [rem suam] by making some sort of separation.

Moreover, Victorinus uses *ducere* in similar contexts quite differently: he never *derives* a word, as Pronay's translation suggests, but always *leads his readers* to the comprehension of its meaning. The parallels within the *De definitionibus* give very clear evidence of that.[79] Here too, the context makes it very unlikely that Victorinus wanted to derive a word, but rather to define its meaning. It would be much more appropriate if the predicate were something like *potest ostendi*, "it can be made clear," as in the following sentence. This raises the question whether Stangl's punctuation and the insertion of *veriloquium* was justified.[80] I am inclined to follow manuscripts F, L, O, and R and print *a nota dicitur* instead of *ducitur*, even if it is a medieval conjecture. In my eyes, this is more appropriate for the context of the *definitio quae a nota dicitur* (15.12; 16.5; see also 16.1). All we have to do is add the monosyllabon *quae* after *in definitione*, which could have easily dropped out (basically we are talking about one letter, $\bar{q}$):

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utique his omnibus res significantur. Unde multi illum sapientissimum ac beatissimum esse dixerunt, qui rebus nomina inposuit"; 86.24; 97.24–25; 107.19; 114.28; *Def.* 1.16. Victorinus's remarks on the lemma from Eph 1:21 *et omne nomen* in his commentary on Ephesians are of particular importance for the matter at hand. For translation, see Stephen Cooper, *Metaphysics and Morals in Marius Victorinus' Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians: A Contribution to the History of Neoplatonism and Christianity*, AUS 5.155 (New York: Lang, 1995), 61–62. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 26.112–113: "ultra est tamen quam haec omnia vocabula videntur inposita"; 27.125–127: "quibus utique rebus nondum cognitis nomina nondum a nobis inposita sunt (neque enim possunt, quippe cum nota non sint)."

79. 1.18–19: "(nomina vocesque singulae) nota quadam in rerum significationem … ducerent audientes." 14.2–3: "ad cognitionem rei … notionemque deducimur." 15.26–27: "facile hoc, quod ab eo est derivatum et quodammodo denominatum, ad cognitionem ducit." 17.14: "verbis in rei sensum ducentibus audientem."

80. Before Stangl, editors used to insert *sed* after the first *veriloquium*. This is also found in the thirteenth-century manuscript A.

"in definitione, <quae> a nota dicitur" ("in the definition which is called 'from etymology'").

Pronay has translated the second sentence as follows:

> Nun ist es aber unmöglich, diese Grundbedeutung (sc. ἐτυμολογία) durch Zerlegung einer Zusammensetzung nachzuweisen, wenn gar keine Zusammensetzung vorliegt; vielmehr kann man das Wesen eines Definitionsobjektes dadurch einigermaßen[81] erkennen[82], daß man die Wortform durch eine Umbenennung (declinatione) und Ableitung (denominatione) verändert: So ist etwa "gut" aufgrund von "Güte," "schlecht" aufgrund von "Schlechtigkeit" und "weise" aufgrund von "Weisheit" zu erkennen.[83]

One question is whether "veriloquium non potest … ostendi" can mean "it is impossible *to determine* the original meaning"; at any rate, the verb *ostendere* is more appropriate for the object of definition than for the method of definition by means of etymology.[84] Another question is whether to recommend placing a full stop after *veriloquium*, as we have already seen above.

All in all, I suggest that the following text be printed:

> Sed saepe verbum simplex, purum, nulla compositione conexum in definitione, <quae> a nota dicitur, ubi est vis eius (quam Graeci appellant

81. Stangl separates the ablative absolute *adhibita … quodammodo* not without reason by placing commas; as 15.26–27, "hoc quod ab eo est derivatum et quodammodo denominatum," shows, *quodammodo* qualifies the verbal action implied in *declinatione ac denominatione*.

82. An unfortunate translation: the Latin has *explicari*, "to be explained," not *intellegi*, "to be understood."

83. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 114: "It is impossible to determine the original meaning (sc. ἐτυμολογία) by separation of the components, if there is no composition at all; rather one can recognize the nature of the object to be defined by changing its word form by renaming (*declinatione*) and derivation (*denominatione*): for example 'good' from 'goodness,' 'bad' from 'badness,' 'wise' from 'wisdom.'"

84. One only needs to compare the immediately following sentence: "(praeceptum uti …) cum autem simplex verbum unde sit denominatum accipere coeperimus, argumentum quidem a coniugato accipiamus …, definitionem tamen esse dicamus, quia quid sit ostendit—quod proprium est definitionis" (16.5–8). The etymological argument shows what the object of definition is.

> ἐτυμολογίαν, at Cicero veriloquium),[85] non potest ex discretione, quae nulla est, compositionis ostendi, sed, adhibita declinatione ac denominatione quodammodo, quid sit id, de quo quaeritur, explicari.
>
> But often in a definition which is based on the original significance, where the meaning of a word lies hidden (the Greeks call it *etymologia*, but Cicero called it *veriloquium*), a simple, natural, and uncompounded word cannot be determined by means of separation of its components, which is impossible, but rather the object in question can be explained by some sort of renaming or derivation.

3.15. *De definitionibus* 21.18–22.2

> Non tamen hoc idem videbitur esse modus iste, de quo nunc loquimur, si quidem, sola differentia cum posita fuerit inter duo, de quibus quaeritur quid sit, utrumque cognoscitur: etenim in superioribus sola quaeque definiuntur, hic duo, <quae> quasi cognata sunt et quadam inter se communione confusa, adiecta differentia secernuntur, per quam quid sit utrumque <cognoscitur>, ut: "Rex est modestus et temperans, tyrannus vero crudelis."
>
> *nunc* om. FL || *hic duo* R Glareanus 1546: *haec duo* BPT M N FL^{t}OCV K: *hac duo* L^{vl}: deest W || *quae* add. Stangl: *non* add. V: om. BPT M N FLOC KR: deest W || *cognata* O Stangl: *cognita* BPT FLCV KR: om. M N: deest W || *sunt et* Stangl: *sed* BPT M N FLOCV KR: deest W || *cognoscitur* L^{sl}OCV R: *ostendit* T: *ostenditur* B^{pc}P^{pc} L^{t}: om. B^{ac}P^{ac} M NW F K^{t}: *.s. cognoscitur* add. K^{sl}

In contrast to the previous examples, in which each notion was defined by its own differences (*differentiae*) and peculiarities (*propria*), a definition κατὰ διαφοράν ("by means of difference") defines two notions at the same time by a single difference (*differentia*), as in "king" and "tyrant": one is moderate and prudent, the other cruel.

Again, the great number of unnecessary divergences from the transmitted text is disconcerting, as is so often the case in Stangl's edition. For him the starting point was seemingly the feeling that *cognita* could not be correct, because the notions yet to be defined were not known, hence the

85. The parenthesis is a quotation from Cicero, *Top*. 35: "quam (sc. notationem) Graeci ἐτυμολογίαν appellant, id est verbum ex verbo veriloquium."

change of *cognita* to *cognata*. The consequence of this was that the unanimously transmitted *sed* had to be changed to *sunt et*, because *cognata* does not constitute a suitable antithesis to *confusa*. On paleographical grounds the corruption *sunt et* (*s̄ et*) → *sed* (or *set* respectively) can be explained easily, but upgrading the participle to a predicate (*cognata sunt*) also makes it necessary to insert the relative pronoun *quae* before *quasi*. Admittedly, all of Stangl's interventions are trivial and, taken in isolation, possible; their combination, however, is quite unlikely. Moreover, it is doubtful whether Stangl was right to change *cognita* to *cognata*: one must not overlook that the text says *quasi cognita*, which means that the notions only *appear* to be known, whereas, in reality, the boundaries between them are blurred, because they are so similar. Apart from that, it is not surprising that the definition of a notion, which is related in some way to another notion, must be known, if it is supposed to aid in the comprehension of the latter. In this respect, the sixth type of definition, κατὰ διαφοράν, somehow resembles the eighth type, κατ' ἀφαίρεσιν τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ ἐναντίου ("by means of abstraction of the opposite"), which can only be used if one of two related notions is already known (23.11–17).[86]

Moreover, there is no reason why the transmitted "haec duo … secernuntur" is so inaccurate that *haec* has to be replaced by *hic*. *Haec duo* obviously refers to "sola differentia cum posita fuerit inter duo, de quibus quaeritur,[87] quid sit utrumque cognoscitur." The phrase is used antithetically to *sola quaeque*.

Finally, *cognoscitur* was already added in the *editio princeps* but does not have much evidential support from the manuscripts. The distribution of variants shows that scribes and readers attempted to supplement the missing predicate from an early stage of the transmission onward. The phrase "quid sit utrumque <cognoscitur>" was bound to come to an attentive reader's mind who remembered the same phrase from 21.20. Although repetition in such a narrow space may not look particularly attractive, *cog-*

86. The thirteenth and fourteenth type of definition (κατ' ἀναλογίαν and κατὰ τὸ πρός τι respectively) are also very similar. Stangl prints 16.25 and 23.9 κατ' ἀφαίρεσιν τοῦ ἐναντίου, but the transmission (*ΚΑΤΑΑΦΗΡΗCΙΝΤΟΥΕΑΥΤΟΥΕΝΑΝΤΟΥ* vel sim.) in both places suggests that ἑαυτοῦ should be added, which can also be found in the Latin translation *per privantiam contrarii eius*. Greek words are a special problem in the *De definitionibus*, which I hope to deal with elsewhere.

87. Stangl puts this comma after *quid sit*, but 21.15, "quid uterque sit definitur," and 21.23, "per quam quid sit utrumque <cognoscitur>," support my punctuation.

noscitur has the advantage of better rhythmic clausula as compared with *ostenditur* or *demonstratur*, words that could also be thought of as a suitable supplement. Thus I stick with the traditional addition, even though we cannot be positive that it was indeed what Victorinus wrote.

Originally, the complete sentence probably looked like this:

> Etenim in superioribus sola quaeque definiuntur, haec duo quasi cognita, sed quadam inter se communione confusa, adiecta differentia secernuntur, per quam quid sit utrumque <cognoscitur>.
>
> For in the previous examples every notion was defined on its own; the two notions here, being almost known, but confused because of some shared common qualities, are distinguished by assigning a difference which makes us understand what both things are.

3.16. *De definitionibus* 24.11–17, 25–27

> Sub hanc definitionem cadunt etiam <notiones>, cum accidentia tolluntur et alia omnia, quae diversa sunt, et cum contraria accidentis vel consequentis accidentia tolluntur; ut si quis id esse substantiam dicat, quod neque qualitas neque quantitas neque aliqua accidentia sit, cum omnia alia, quae diversa sunt, tolluntur. Talis est definitio, ut si quis hominem definiens tollat omnia animalia vel generaliter vel specialiter.… Contrarium accidentis vel consequens cum tollitur, talis est definitio: "Vigilare uti sensibus, dormire est non uti sensibus naturaliter."
>
> *notiones* add. Glareanus 1546: *notio nos* add. de Gregoriis: om. BPT M NW FLOC KR || *tolluntur et* M R: *tolluntur et cum* BPT W FLOC K: deest N || *alia omnia* BT M W L: *omnia alia* FOC KR: deest N || *consequentis* de Gregoriis: *consequens* BPT M W FL^{pc}OC KR: desunt N L^{ac} || *accidentia tolluntur* BPT M W: *accidentis tolluntur* FOC KR: desunt N L || *aliqua accidentia* Stangl ex Cassiod.: *reliqua accidentia* BPT M NW FOC KR: *accidentia reliqua* L || *vigilare uti* B^{1pc}P^{ac} M NW O^{ac}?: *vigilare est uti* B^{2pc}P^{pc}T FLO^{pc}C KR: *vigilare* B^{ac}

At the beginning of this passage *notiones*, which is almost certainly a conjecture by Glareanus, was printed by Migne and Stangl. It is terminologically inappropriate and not based on any manuscript evidence. Obviously, the starting point for this conjecture was de Gregoriis's non-

sensical *notio nos*. It is difficult to determine where this comes from; perhaps from a gloss added by someone who, while reading the following remarks pertaining to the differences between the definition κατ' ἀφαίρεσιν τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ ἐναντίου and the ἐννοηματική, remembered the latter's Latin equivalent, *notio* (16.20; 17.9).[88] At any rate, *notiones* can hardly be correct, and it is impossible to explain how it would have gotten lost in the manuscripts. The same holds true for *orationes* added in manuscript U^{sl}. However, it appears to be necessary to assume a lacuna, if we do not want to take the three *cum* clauses[89] as subjects for *cadunt.* This is hardly possible, because in this case one would expect *cadit*.[90] To write "cadunt etiam accidentia cum" seems to be even less recommendable. I would prefer inserting something like *tres species* or *alii modi*,[91] if this were not so violent an intervention. Perhaps Victorinus expected his reader to supplement something of that kind?

Moreover, I am convinced that in 24.12 we should follow the precedent set by the majority of the manuscripts[92] and print *et cum alia omnia.* Consequently, we have to distinguish three different types that must be subsumed under the definition κατ' ἀφαίρεσιν τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ ἐναντίου: (1) when accidental qualities are removed ("cum accidentia tolluntur"); (2) when everything else (is removed) that differs ("cum alia omnia [tolluntur], quae diversa sunt"); (3) when all that is contrary to an accidental quality or a consequence of it is removed ("cum contraria accidentis vel consequens accidentia tolluntur"). In this last case, all of the manuscripts transmit *consequens* instead of *consequentis*, which is printed in the *editio princeps.* Additionally, we should prefer the nominative against the background of 24.25, "contrarium accidentis vel consequens," even if the singular nominative is perhaps not completely correct yet. Less certain, in my opinion, is *accidentia* for which F, O, and C and K and R, two important subgroups of the manuscripts, attest *accidentis.* Maybe Victorinus

88. Steven Ooms (Universiteit Leiden) kindly suggested this.

89. I am going to demonstrate in what follows that there are three *cum*-clauses, not two, as in Stangl's text.

90. This conjecture can actually be found in B^{vl}, P^{vl}, and O.

91. Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 2.3.14, paraphrases the passage thus: "sub qua specie sunt hae definitiones," but the inversion would be good Latin, too: "sub hanc definitionem cadunt etiam <tres species>, cum … cum … cum …" For the critical text, see Cassiodorus, *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*, ed. Roger A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 122.20.

92. The text printed by Stangl is attested only in M.

wrote "contraria accidentis vel consequentia accidentis," but this kind of surgery would be quite drastic.

Then all three types are illustrated with examples: (1) 24.13–15; (2) 24.15–25; (3) 24.25–27. That is why Stangl's punctuation should be changed, too. At the beginning of the third example in 24.25–26, we read: "Contrarium accidentis vel consequens cum tollitur, talis est definitio." Analogously, the second example, in 24.15–16, should begin as follows: "Cum omnia alia, quae diversa sunt, tolluntur, talis est definitio, ut si quis …" One might even consider whether a similar *cum* clause got lost before the first example. Maybe Victorinus wrote as follows:

> Sub hanc definitionem cadunt etiam <tres species>, (1) cum accidentia tolluntur, et (2) cum alia omnia, quae diversa sunt, et (3) cum contraria accidentis vel consequentia accidentis <tolluntur. (1) Est autem talis definitio, cum accidentia> tolluntur, ut si quis id esse substantiam dicat, quod neque qualitas neque quantitas neque aliqua accidentia sit. (2) Cum omnia alia, quae diversa sunt, tolluntur, talis est definitio, ut si quis hominem definiens tollat omnia animalia vel generaliter vel specialiter.… (3) Contrarium accidentis vel consequens cum tollitur, talis est definitio: … (*Def.* 24.11–17, 25–26 *passim*)

> Also <three species> fall under that kind of definition, (1) when accidental qualities are removed, (2) when everything else that differs is removed, and (3) when all that is contrary to an accidental quality or a consequence of it is <removed. (1) For example a definition, when accidental qualities are> removed, would be if someone says that "substance" is that which is neither quality nor quantity nor any other accidence. (2) When everything else that differs is removed, a definition is, for example, if someone defining "human being" removes everything that is animal, either generally or specially.… (3) When all that is contrary to an accidental quality or a consequence of it is removed, an example of a definition is as follows: …

3.17. *De definitionibus* 29.35–30.3

> At si <ita> diceret "cupiditas est ut avaritia," quasi exemplum dederat et auditorem transmiserat in totum, quod cupiditas est, similitudinis propositione <"ut avaritiae">, essetque illa definiendi species, quam decimam collocavimus, ὡς τύπος.

at C Stangl: *ac* BPT M NW FL KR || *ita* Stangl: om. BPT M NW FLC KR || *dederat* $B^{ac}P^{ac}$ M $L^{t}C$ $K^{ar}R$: *declarat* NW: *daret* L^{vl}: *dederit* $B^{pc}P^{pc}T$ K^{pr}: *adest* F^{t}: *deest* F^{sl} || *transmiserat* $B^{ac}P^{ac}$ M NW C $K^{ar}R$: *transmitterat* L: *transmiserit* $B^{pc}P^{pc}T$ K^{pr}: *transmitteret* F || *ut avaritae* Glareanus 1546: om. BPT M NW FLC KR

Both insertions are superfluous; *ut avaritiae*, which is difficult to construe, is not even translated by Pronay,[93] although he usually sticks to Stangl's text quite rigorously. It is a gloss that erroneously entered de Gregoriis's edition; originally, it was probably concocted to explain *similitudinis propositione*. Be that as it may, there is no place for it in the text.

93. Pronay, *Liber de definitionibus*, 130.

Marius Victorinus's *De trinitate hymni*: Bible, Theology, Poetry

Miran Špelič and Jan Dominik Bogataj

Poetry presents an intriguing and sometimes neglected phenomenon in the study of early Christianity, because it has not always striven only for exact and precise doctrinal clearness but has provided a literary form that allows the convergence of intimate lyrical features and orthodox liturgical worship. When we are dealing with the extremely interesting opus of Gaius Marius Victorinus, which was crucial for the formation of Christian thought in the centuries to come,[1] we often overlook the importance of what we might call his poetic attitude toward theology. His three extraordinary *Hymns on the Trinity* (*De trinitate hymni*)[2] are an integral part of

1. See Paul Henry, "The *Adversus Arium* of Marius Victorinus, the First Systematic Exposition of the Doctrine of the Trinity," *JTS* NS 1 (1950): 42–55. He is not to be confused with the Claudius Marius Victorinus who died around 446, a Christian teacher of rhetoric, poet from Marseille, and presumably author of a 1,020-line hexametrical poem on Genesis titled *Aletheia* (Gennadius of Marseilles, *De vir. ill.* 61). The hexametric form of the poem *De ligno crucis* of the unknown writer (sometimes also referred as *De pascha* or *De ligno vitae* [PL 2:1113]), its Vergilian language, and its Lactantian usage of allegory show that its author is unlikely Marius Victorinus, to whom it has been sometimes attributed, besides Tertullian or Cyprian. See Otto James Kuhnmuench, *Early Christian Latin Poets from the Fourth to the Sixth Century* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1929), 231; Carolinne White, *Early Christian Latin Poets* (London: Routledge, 2000), 136.

2. Printed in PL 8:1139d–1146d, the hymns are cited here from the critical edition: Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), 285–305. Some translations into modern languages are available: French, in *Traités théologiques sur la Trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960); Italian, in *Opere teologiche di Mario Vittorino*, ed. and trans. Claudio Moreschini and Chiara Ombretta Tommasi (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 2007); English, in

his work and represent an aspect of his personal contribution to the shaping of Christian theological method, which was starting to include poetry during the fourth century. While Victorinus's *Hymns* are not poetry in the classical sense of corresponding to the metrical schemes of Latin poetry, there are good reasons to consider them under the wider modern sense of poetic compositions, as we will detail below.

Twentieth-century spiritual master Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia (Mount Athos) writes: "Whoever wants to become a Christian must first become a poet."[3] This may somehow also be true for Marius Victorinus, since the exact date of his hymns is not precisely known and they may have preceded his Trinitarian treatises, whose philosophical language and conceptuality they share.[4] Despite our uncertainty whether Victorinus composed his hymns before or after his treatises *Adversus Arium*,[5] the study of these

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Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatises on the Trinity*, trans. Mary T. Clark, FC 69 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1979); German, in *Christlicher Platonismus: Die Theologische Schriften des Marius Victorinus*, trans. Pierre Hadot and Ursula Brenke, BAW.AC (Zurich: Artemis, 1967); Polish, "Hymny o Trójcy Swietej," trans. Tomasz Stępień, *TV* 37.2 (1999): 7–26; Slovenian, "Hvalnice Trojici," trans. Jan Dominik Bogataj and Miran Špelič, *KUD Logos*, October 20, 2017, https://tinyurl.com/SBL4214b.

3. Elder Porphyrios, *Wounded by Love: The Life and the Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios* (Limni: Harvey, 2005), 107.

4. *Hymn.* 1 and especially *Hymn.* 2, which, because of its intimate and confessional character, may be related to his baptism. Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), 259 n. 24; Henry, "*Adversus Arium* of Marius Victorinus," 42–55.

5. Henry and Hadot place the hymns at the end of the Sources chrétiennes volume, following the manuscript tradition, proposing 363 as the date of composition, though aware of the uncertainty of this proposal (*Traités théologiques*, 1:59–70). Later, Hadot proposed also a possible earlier date: *Hymn.* 1 and *Hymn.* 2 around Victorinus's conversion (probably around 355) and *Hymn.* 3 around 358 (*Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 259 n. 24). Following the suggestion of Henry and Hadot in Sources chrétiennes edition is Jacques Fontaine, *Naissance de la poésie dans l'occident chrétien: Esquisse d'une histoire de la poésie latine chrétienne du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981), 100, n. 150: "Il composa probablement vers 363 les trois hymnes trinitaires en prose, diversement rythmée *per cola et commata*, dans lesquels il a condensé sa théologie. Il est notable que ses trois essais hymniques soient ainsi à peu près exactement contemporains des *Hymnes* d'Hilaire de Poitiers." In the introduction to her translation, Clark proposes another idea, recalling Hadot's second suggestion: "It has been suggested that they were in fact written before the prose treatises on the Trinity" (*Theological Treatises*, 37).

hymns can stimulate a reflection on the creative tension between what we will call his "theopoetry" and his more systematic doctrinal texts. Such a reflection raises interesting correlation between the theology in prose and the theology expressed through poetry, and it also opens up a suggestive line of thought for understanding of the intertwinement of theology and poetry in general.[6]

This study intends to present some answers to these questions, based on research into Marius Victorinus's hymns and their relations to his doctrinal treatises. There are several stages of this examination. First we contextualize his poetry in the broader historical-cultural period, which presents the beginnings of Latin Christian poetry, in order to discover some possible influences on the shaping of Victorinus's poetry and to characterize better his hymns in regard to form and content. We consider the nature of his poetry from the ancient as well as from the modern standpoint. Next, we evaluate Victorinus's three hymns regarding structure, elucidate his methods of biblical interpretation—since the Bible forms the foundation for his Christian Trinitarian doctrine—and compare the hermeneutics of his doctrinal treatises and hymns. We analyze the role of Victorinus's hymns among his other works through research into the relation between his systematic, doctrinal, and polemic works (especially his third and fourth books of *Adversus Arium*) that are closely linked to his hymns. Through the examination of what we will argue is an intimate inherent connection between his theology in prose and in poetic form, we hope to uncover how Marius Victorinus expressed some fundamental Christian Trinitarian truths, which are always somehow a mystery, in two different literary genres.

1. Literary-Historical Contextualization of Early Christian Latin Poetry

The role of poetry in early Christianity has already been an object of many studies.[7] The historical development of Christian Latin poetry, even though there is lack of definite sources, has also been well analyzed, although the

6. See, e.g., the very interesting study of Ambrose by Jacques Fontaine, *Prose et poésie: L'interférence des genres et des styles dans la création littéraire d'Ambroise de Milan* (Milan: Publicazioni della Università Cattolica, 1976).

7. See Willemien Otten and Karla Pollmann, eds., *Poetry and Exegesis in Premodern Latin Christianity: The Encounter between Classical and Christian Strategies of Interpretation*, VCSup 87 (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

beginnings of hymnody remain more obscure.[8] Surprisingly, very few studies of Christian Latin poetry mention Marius Victorinus among the pioneers.[9] Following Pierre Hadot's call for research into this area,[10] we seek to delineate the role of Victorinus's poetry in the history of Christian Latin poetry to understand better the nature of his hymns.

Early liturgical hymns,[11] along with other extrabiblical hymns, present the beginnings of the Latin hymnody. Whether translated from Greek (*Phos Hilaron*, *Trisagion*, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*) or not (*Te Deum Laudamus*, *The Lorica of St. Patrick*), these works are characterized by liturgical, doctrinal, and creedal form and content. Normally, Hilary of Poitiers is regarded as the pioneer of Latin hymnody, whereas Juvencus is presented as the first Christian Latin poet.[12] Ambrose of Milan was one of the most important Christian poets from late antiquity. His hymns, in clearly determined form of eight four-line stanzas of iambic dimeters, served as a means of doctrinal, moral, and spiritual catechesis. Ambrose's work influenced strongly the later development of the hymns of Paulinus of Nola, Prudentius, Auspicius of Toul, Sedulius, Ennodius, and Venantius Fortunatus.

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8. Hermut Löhr, "What Can We Know about the Beginnings of Christian Hymnody?," in *Literature or Liturgy? Early Christian Hymns and Prayers in Their Literary and Liturgical Context in Antiquity*, ed. Clemens Leonhard and Hermut Löhr (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 157–74.

9. We do not find any mention of his poetry in many standard works: Kuhnmuench, *Early Christian Latin Poets*; White, *Early Christian Latin Poets*; Richard Chenevix Trench, ed., *Sacred Latin Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1864); Michael J. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Frederic James Edward Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry: From the Beginnings to the Close Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), see marginal note on 16; Matthew E. Gordley, *Teaching through Song in Antiquity: Didactic Hymnody among Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians*, WUNT 2/302 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); Michael J. Roberts, "Poetry and Hymnography (1): Latin Christian Poetry," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 628–40.

10. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 283: "A very large field for investigations still lies open to research in this area: to situate Victorinus precisely within the Christian tradition, the Eastern as well as the Western."

11. E.g., Phil 2:5–11; Col 1:15–20; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 2:21–25; the "Star Hymn" in Ignatius, *Eph.* 19.2–3; the "Hymn to Christ the Savior" in Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 3.12.101.4; etc.

12. Roberts, "Poetry and Hymnography," 629.

In this context, some scholars recognize the initiatory role of Marius Victorinus in the development of Christian Latin poetry. Aniello Salzano considers the work of Marius Victorinus as a "pioneer attempt" due to the eminent role he played, along with Hilary of Poitiers, in the beginning of the Christian Latin hymnodic poetry.[13] Brian Dunkle emphasizes the pagan and philosophical influence for the development of Victorinus's poetry, which he calls "literary hymnody" and regards as the beginnings of the Christian hymnody in the fourth century among the more learned authors.[14] He is correctly dubious about Victorinus having intended his hymns for public singing, but Dunkle interestingly shows that hymns could nevertheless also have been read publicly in learned circles.[15]

Marius Victorinus's poetical language and forms do not depend on the classical poets (Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Lucan, Statius, Juvenal), which otherwise was characteristic of Christian Latin poetry. Dunkle rightly further observes that Victorinus's hymns "signal that they are deliberately departing in their content from Neoplatonic models in order to offer Nicene orthodoxy."[16] Marius Victorinus's hymnodic poetry is unique in not following preestablished patterns: it is similar neither to so-called biblical narrative poetry nor to the didactic biblical epic that developed in the fifth and sixth centuries (Cyprianus Gallus, Claudius Marius Victorinus, Avitus, Sedulius, Arator).

Michael Roberts, based on the studies of other scholars, affirms that Christian poetry did not invent any proper literary form, technique of style, or composition.[17] But he does not mention the poetry of Marius Victorinus, whose style certainly is very particular and hardly corresponds to any existent form. Its liturgical, lyrical, theological, exegetical, and formal

13. Aniello Salzano, *Agli inizi della poesia cristiana latina; autori anonimi dei secc. IV–V* (Salerno: Edisud Salerno, 2007), 27.

14. Brian P. Dunkle, *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 39–41.

15. Dunkle, *Enchantment and Creed*, 39 n. 146. An interesting parallel is found in Victorinus's contemporary, Gregory of Nazianzus, who also wrote similar literary hymnody—*Carmina arcana, Carmina de seipso*—with a similar focus on linguistic and doctrinal precision, which was also intended apologetically for a sophisticated educated audience.

16. Dunkle, *Enchantment and Creed*, 40.

17. Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, 122–23.

features represent an interesting fusion of Semitic, biblical, and psalmic poetry with Hellenistic philosophical modes of thought and expression.[18]

In Victorinus's poetry, one does not get the impression that his "aim was to produce poetry that could compare in literary quality with the classical verse and would surpass it by its Christian content."[19] Instead, as was the case with the poetry of Hilary and Ambrose, Victorinus also intended to produce something along the lines of a liturgical hymn, which through the worship of God would also work to defend the true faith and doctrine.

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18. See, e.g., the Odes of Solomon, which are full of classical Semitic, biblical *parallelismus membrorum* in all kinds of varieties, poetic paronomasias, alliterations and assonances, rich metaphors, biblical language, psalm-like verses and are very lyrical and personal-confessional. A comparative study would be extremely interesting also regarding the Trinitarian doctrine (see Odes Sol. 23.22) and other possible allusions (Odes Sol. 7.7 and *Hymn.* 3.186–191; Odes Sol. 16.18 and *Hymn.* 3.203–204; Odes Sol. 36.3 and *Hymn.* 1.1–2). Ode 19 even has triadic structures that recall Victorinus's third hymn: "A cup of milk was offered to me, / and I drank it in the sweetness of the Lord's kindness. / The Son is the cup, / and the Father is he who was milked; / and the Holy Spirit is she who milked Him" (Odes Sol. 19.1–2 [*OTP* 2:752]). Some similarities with the poetry of Synesius (ca. 370–ca. 414) were already noted by Hadot; see his commentary, *Traités théologiques*, 2:1058–88. He mentions also some parallels in other works: Corpus Hermeticum, Parmenides, Iamblichus, Porphyry, Plotinus, etc. Regarding Synesius, we find Trinitarian themes in *Hymns* 1, 2, 3, 4, and 9; and some passages are strikingly interesting, e.g., *Hymn.* 1.210–216: Ὑμνῶ σε, μονάς, / Ὑμνῶ σε, τριάς· / μονὰς εἶ τριὰς ὤν, / τριὰς εἶ μονὰς ὤν, / νοερὰ δὲ τομὰ / ἄσχιστον ἔτι / τὸ μερισθὲν ἔχει; "I sing to Thee, Unity, I sing to Thee, Trinity; Thou art One being Three, art Three being One; and the intelligible segment holds what has been divided still indivisible" (trans. Augustine FitzGerald, *The Essays and Hymns of Synesius of Cyrene* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930], 2:378). For the critical text, see Synesius, *Opere*, ed. and trans. Antonio Garzya (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1989), 744. See also Synesius, *Hymn.* 2.117–119: Μονὰς εἶ τριὰς ὤν, / μονὰς ἄ γε μένει / καὶ τριὰς εἶ δή (Synesius, *Opere*, 762); "Thou art Unity, Trinity withal, a Unity that dost endure, and a Trinity in very truth Thou art" (FitzGerald, *Essays and Hymns of Synesius*, 2:385). Further examination of the similarities between Victorinus's and Synesius's theopoetry would certainly be rewarding and extremely interesting, since they both represent unique but similar examples of theopoetry, greatly influenced by Neoplatonism, intertwined with intimate lyricism of God-seeking, and expressive of Trinitarian truth. [Editors' note: The pioneering work in this area is Willy Theiler, *Die chaldäischen Orakel und die Hymnen des Synesius*, SKGG 18.1 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1942).]

19. Willy Evenepoel, "The Place of Poetry in Latin Christianity," in *Early Christian Poetry: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Jan den Boeft and Antonius Hilhorst, VCSup 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 50.

Even among the scholars who treat Victorinus's works, not much attention has been given to the analysis of his three hymns. Most of them recognize that the three *De Trinitate hymni*[20]—which belong to Victorinus's theological works—formulate somehow an outline of his philosophical-theological ideas. Yet among those few studies that discuss the poetry of Marius Victorinus, few offer any broader contextualization or evaluation of his poetical work.[21] In the Sources Chrétiennes critical edition, translation, and commentary, for example, Hadot presents just one brief observation on the hymns—"[they] offer, in a succinct and relatively poetical form, the summary of Victorinus's Trinitarian theology"—and relatively succinct comments; and his general study on Victorinus dedicates only two pages to the hymns.[22]

There have nonetheless been a few cogent observations about the nature of Victorinus's poetry that contribute also to our analysis. In his *Naissance de la poésie dans l'occident chrétien*, Jacques Fontaine considers "the theological hymns of Victorinus" as a continuation of a biblical model, though "they remain for a Latin ear well short of poetry," for diverse reasons: "exalted prose, rather monotonous rhetoric … the vocabulary is not elaborated enough, very often the development remains open, without limits, definitions, forms."[23] Despite this, Fontaine affirms the value of the three hymns of Victorinus and attributes them to his desire to proclaim his newly accepted Christian faith.[24]

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20. From a formal point of view, they could have also consisted in one *Liber de Trinitate*, as stated in the MS Berolinensis Phillipps 1684 (folio 93). The order of the hymns was originally probably different from that presented in the CSEL and SC edition (first, *Hymnus secundus*, *"Miserere"*; second, *Hymnus primus de trinitate*; third, *Hymnus tertius de trinitate*), but, following Hadot (see Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 285), we also keep the traditional order given in the editions to avoid misunderstandings. See P. Justinus Wöhrer, "Studien zu Marius Victorinus," in *II. Jahresbericht des Privat-Untergymnasiums der Zisterzienser für das Schuljahr 1904/05* (Wilhering: Verlag des Privat-Untergymnasiums, 1905), 36–37; see also Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 256 n. 7.

21. See Paolo Frassinetti, "Le confessioni agostiniane e un inno di Mario Vittorino," *GIF* 2 (1949): 50–59; Pierre Hadot, "Les hymnes de Victorinus et les hymnes 'Adesto' et 'Miserere' d'Alcuin," *AHDL* 27 (1960): 7–16; Hadot, *Traités théologiques*, 1:37; Manlio Simonetti, *Studi sull'innologia popolare cristiana dei primi secoli* (Rome: Academia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1952), 359–71.

22. Hadot, *Traités théologiques*, 1:1058–88; Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*: *Recherches*, 280–82.

23. Fontaine, *Naissance de la poésie*, 11.

24. Fontaine, *Naissance de la poésie*, 100.

Kurt Smolak has treated the literary form of the hymns and claims that they have neither direct predecessors nor strict followers or imitators in Roman or Greek literature.[25] He defines them as "prose-hymns" (*die Prosahymnen*) and as "a poetic-meditative *Summa* which oscillates between logical argumentation and religious sentiment."[26] Regarding formal classical poetic characteristics, Smolak recognizes some trochaic and iambic verses, which are mixed with rhythmic prose.[27]

In any case, Victorinus's hymns are unique in their form, which is why they also consist of different formal expressions. Some verses are more philosophical and argumentative, whereas others are more hymnic, stylized, apostrophized, and also lyricized. This characteristic constrains the possibility of precise analysis or determination under one genre. Designations such as "rhythmic prose"[28] may present underestimations and undervaluations, because they do not encompass the content of the hymns and rather concentrate only on the formal features.

Nonetheless, a reevaluation of Victorinus's *Hymns* shows that they are to be classified among the first attempts of the Christian Latin poetry. In the strict sense they could not be considered as poetry according to the classical conceptions of antiquity. But the liturgical, doctrinal, and lyrical character of his hymns and the uniqueness of the form—versified, rhythmically, and partly even metrically expressed—direct us toward the perception of Victorinus's *Hymns* as poetry, bearing in mind that this classification is made mostly from the modern standpoint, in part anachronistically.

We propose the expression "theopoetry" or "poetotheology" to emphasize the content-related features of the hymns. Early Christian poetry by all means appropriated and Christianized classical forms, but formal perfection was never a goal in itself for Christian authors. Victorinus's linguistic sensitivity, and his beautiful poetic formulations of the Trinitarian doctrine, combined lyrical expression with the more theological arguments so that this theopoetry might address the whole person.

25. Kurt Smolak, *"O beata trinitas: Überlegungen zu den trinitarischen Hymnen des Marius Victorinus," in Platon, Plotin und Marsilio Ficino: Studien zu den Vorläufern und zur Rezeption des Florentiner Neuplatonismus,* ed. Maria-Christine Leitgeb, Stéphane Toussaint, and Herbert Bannert, WStB 33 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: 2009), 76.

26. Smolak, "*O beata trinitas*," 76.

27. Smolak, "*O beata trinitas*," 84.

28. Moreschini and Tommasi, *Opere teologiche di Mario Vittorino*, 13.

His rhetorical, linguistic, philosophical, and theological skills enabled him to formulate some of the most beautiful and innovative poetic expression of the Christian Trinitarian faith. With his work intended to express orthodox Trinitarian faith through verses, Marius Victorinus certainly aided further development of the tradition of Latin Christian poetry and hymnography, for example, Ambrose of Milan and Prudentius.[29] His freedom in choosing a proper poetic style and unique hymnodic expressions reveals deep relatedness to his doctrinal treatises but also demonstrates the great importance of his biblical interpretation.

2. From the Bible through Poetry to Prose

This section presents an overview of Marius Victorinus's Trinitarian theopoetry under three general aspects: general structure and form, biblical hermeneutics, and relation to the doctrinal treatises.

The first part of the threefold investigation consists of the presentation of the structure and form of each hymn and observes the general theological ideas that lie behind them. Victorinus's hymns do not imitate classical antique poetic forms or include exact meters,[30] but they are rather versified theology with lyrical and hymnodic characteristics. Somehow they reflect more a Semitic, psalmic approach, which is certainly fused with philosophical (Neoplatonic) ideas. The three hymns consist of orthodox Trinitarian doctrine, on the one hand, and of mystical worship and prayer, singing praise to the Holy Trinity, on the other.[31] Philosophy, theology and poetry find themselves very closely related in this work of Marius Victorinus, all being centered on the interpretation of the biblical texts.

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29. See also Augustine, *Psalmus contra partem Donati*. For discussion of this text, see Vincent Hunink, "Singing Together in Church: Augustine's Psalm against the Donatists," in *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy and Religion*, ed. André P. M. H. Lardinois, Josine Blok, and Marc G. M. van der Poel, MnS 332, OLAW 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 389–403.

30. Hadot, though, finds some rare traces of different meters: iambic octonarius (or at least two iambic dimeters, in *Hymn.* 1.3); iambic dimeter (*Hymn.* 1.4); trochaic septenarius (second hemistich of the *O beata trinitas*, *Hymn.* 3). See Hadot, *Traités théologiques*, 2:1058, 1078, noting that rhythm is marked only with rhymes and the cretics at the ends of the verses.

31. Serge Cazelais, "Prière, élévation spirituelle et connaissance de Dieu chez Marius Victorinus," *Dionysius* 29 (2011): 157–70.

Second, we argue the role of Victorinus's biblical hermeneutics for formatting his poetry. Marius Victorinus is known for his exegetical work; his knowledge of the Bible was profound, since he converted through engaging in and studying the Bible (Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.4). His Trinitarian treatises, to which belong also his three hymns, are not *in primis* strictly biblical commentaries, but they do include many biblical interpretations to support the Nicene conception of Christ. A detailed study can reveal some hermeneutical approaches to how the biblical ideas are transmitted not only in the prose works but also in his poetic expressions.[32] We will specify some general observations about his biblical hermeneutics in the hymns, to which we will add an examination of one concrete example (*Hymn.* 1.69, in relation to Rom 11:26) in order to explicit some interesting findings. Due to the limitation of our study, we can only state some of the most obvious transformations from the biblical text into poetic form. For his commentaries on the Pauline letters (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians), Victorinus made use of an up-to-date Vetus Latina text, whereas for quoting Paul and other New Testament passages in his Trinitarian treatises, he translated the text from Greek himself.[33] The three hymns of Marius Victorinus are full of biblical allusions, interpretations, and reappropriations of biblical language and imagery. Alongside Neoplatonic ideas and forms, the Bible was the foundation for his poetry.

Third, we discuss the relation of his Trinitarian theology in poetry and prose forms. We will examine some of the most significant similarities and

32. Some biblical references and allusions of the biblical texts in the hymns are marked in the CSEL critical edition, but without any particular analysis. Some additional, newly found references are also presented in this study.

33. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 261; Frederick F. Bruce, "The Gospel Text of Marius Victorinus," in *Text and Interpretation*, ed. Matthew Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 69–78; Stephen A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 91, 346–60; Hermann Josef Frede, *Altlateinische Paulus-Handschriften*, AGLB 4 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1964), 138, 146; Alexander Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927), 15. Victorinus's quotations from the OT were also taken from more than one Greek version and then translated. See Alberto Vaccari, "Le Citazioni del Vecchio Testamento presso Mario Vittorino," *Bib* 42 (1961): 459–64. No mention about the biblical text in his hymns can be found. We will compare the Latin versions from Victorinus's text with the Greek text (NA^{28}).

allusions between Victorinus's *Hymns* and his *Adversus Arium*. In these hymns Marius Victorinus expresses in a poetical manner his own quest for the orthodox Trinitarian faith. He deals with the Arian problematic of the relation between the Father and the Son (he clearly advocates Christ's divinity and his consubstantiality with the Father),[34] and he writes as well about the role of the Holy Spirit. His reasons for choosing poetic formulations can be found in the features of the hymnodic poetry as well as in the nature of the Trinitarian discourse, which must consist foremost in worship, in personal prayer-relation to God. At the same time, perhaps also consideration for greater availability for the faithful, and the more straightforward characteristics of poetry for transmitting the doctrinal truths of the faith, played a role in his project of transmitting the doctrine, defending the faith, and enabling an intimate experience of the Trinity. Through verses a reader can easily establish a personal relation to the transcendent divinity, since poetry brings one in the condition of worship. Victorinus's hymns therefore "speak not only to the reader's intelligence but also to his aesthetic sensitivity."[35] The hymns of Marius Victorinus are hymns in a properly intimate sense; they are expression of his "praise sung to God" (Augustine, *Enarrat. Ps.* 148.17).[36]

3. *Hymni* 1: *Hymnus primus de trinitate—"Adesto"*

The first of Victorinus's hymns (*Hymnus* [*primus*] *de trinitate—"Adesto"*) features the most philosophical and abstract characteristics in hymnic language.[37] It is the least poetic of all three in content, although Smolak claims that because of its initial references to the Father, it is the one most

34. *Hymn.* 2.26: "Consubstantiale patri est quod ut semper vivit filius" (Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 291; "As consubstantial with the Father, the Son lives forever"). Translations throughout follow Clark, *Theological Treatises*.

35. Angelo Di Berardino, ed., *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon Patrology*, vol. 4 of *Patrology*, trans. Solari Placid (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1986), 73.

36. "Laus ergo Dei in cantico, hymnus dicitur" ("Praise sung to God is therefore called a hymn"). For the critical text, see Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos CI–CL*, 2nd ed., ed. Eligius Dekkers and Johannes Fraipont, CCSL 40 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 2177.6–7.

37. References to Victorinus's hymns are given with line numbers according to the edition in *Opera pars prior*; references to his Trinitarian treatises are given with chapter and line numbers of this edition.

similar to classical aretological hymnody.[38] Hadot argues that it presents the Trinitarian mystery with maximum concision and density, in a form of a ἱερὸς λόγος, a "sacred discourse."[39] The hymn begins (ll. 1–6) and ends (ll. 74–78) with the theme of the divine substance, whereas the central part consists of hymnodic exclamations to the Holy Trinity. Victorinus formulates the Trinity here as two dyads: Father-Son (ll. 7–49) and Logos–Holy Spirit (ll. 50–73). First (ll. 17–38), the Father is entitled *esse* (ll. 25, 32, 34, 35, 51, 64, 65), and Son *motus* (ll. 18–27, 36, 37); whereas later (ll. 39–49) the movement (*motus*) is related to the λόγος and *vita*. This hymn is closely related to the dogmatic treatise *Adv. Ar.* 3, and the Trinitarian and christological features are even more explicitly expressed in the hymn (ll. 63–73).

The opening of the hymn consists of a triadic invocation of all three persons of the Holy Trinity:

> Adesto, lumen verum, pater omnipotens deus.
> Adesto, lumen luminis, mysterium et virtus dei.
> Adesto, sancte spiritus, patris et filii copula. (*Hymn.* 1.2–4)[40]
>
> True light, assist us! O God the Father all powerful!
> Light of light, assist us, mystery and power of God!
> Holy Spirit, assist us, the bond between Father and Son!

The twofold structure of every divine title is engaged from the first with the theme of light—the Father as *lumen verum*, the Son as *lumen luminis*—whereas the Spirit is designated as *copula* of the Father and the Son, a unique expression first used here.[41]

38. Smolak, "*O beata trinitas*," 84.

39. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 281. See also Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, CEAug 33 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968), 1:457–60.

40. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 285.

41. See *Hymn.* 3.242–246: "Tu, spiritus sancte, conexio es; conexio autem est quicquid conectit duo; / Ita ut conectas omnia, primo conectis duo; / Esque ipsa tertia conplexio duorum atque ipsa conplexio nihil distans uno, unum cum facis duo; O beata trinitas" (Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 303; "You, Holy Spirit, are a bond; but a bond is whatever unites two; In order to unite all, you first unite the two; You, the third, are the embrace of the two: embrace identified with the one, since you make the two one. O Blessed Trinity").

3.1. Biblical Interpretation in *Hymni* 1

Christ is regarded in the first hymn as *virtus dei*, "the power of God" (*Hymn.* 1.3, 15, 17, 19, etc.), which echoes Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18; and especially 1 Cor 1:24 (Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν). The Gospel of John, especially its prologue's use of the terms λόγος (*Hymn.* 1.39–45; *Hymn.* 2.8–10; *Hymn.* 3.135–139, 175–178, 184, 205–212, 221, 232, 252) and *vita*[42]—Word and Life—as designations of Christ, had a great impact on Victorinus's poetry. Following Paul in 1 Cor 1:24, 30, Victorinus also calls Christ "wisdom": "But since Christ is wisdom, likewise Christ as Son proceeding from the Father / reveals the Father, and the Spirit reveals Christ" (*Hymn.* 1.60).[43] Another expression from the first hymn, discussed in the following section, includes a strong and obvious scriptural reference: "Cuius altitudo pater est, ipse vero totus / Progressu suo longitudo et latitudo patris est" (*Hymn.* 1.70–71).[44] This recalls Paul's formulation in Ephesians 3:18 (VL): "Ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus santis quae sit latitudo et longitudo et altitudo et profundum."[45]

At the end of the first hymn, Victorinus writes an extraordinary set of verses whose content Hadot designates as "le panchristisme."[46] The Father and the Holy Spirit are defined in relation to Christ: the Son is the power in the Father; the Father acts in the Son. The revelation extends in two stages, first in time and flesh (Christ), and then by the interiorization of Christ (as Holy Spirit) in human souls:

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42. E.g., "Hic λόγος, si Christus est et si λόγος vita est" (*Hymn.* 1.42 [Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 287]); see John 1:4; 3:15–16; 5:26; 6:63.

43. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 288: "Sophia autem cum sit Christus, idem Christus filius docet, / profectus patre Patrem, et Christum, spiritus."

44. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 288. "He himself is the Whole whose depth is the Father, / By his procession, he is length and width of the Father."

45. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior: Opera exegetica*, ed. Franco Gori, CSEL 83.2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986), 53.1–3. The apostle is praying that the Ephesians "have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth." Unless otherwise noted, scriptural quotations follow the RSV.

46. Hadot, *Traités théologiques*, 2:1069. [Editors' note: the term *panchristism* was coined by Maurice Blondel for his Christology; see René Virgoulay and Pierre de Cointet, *Le Christ de Maurice Blondel*, CJJC 86 (Paris: Desclée, 2003).]

Ergo Christus omnia, hinc Christus mysterium,
Per ipsum cuncta et in ipso cuncta atque in ipsum omnia.
Cuius altitudo pater est, ipse vero totus
Progressu suo longitudo et latitudo patris est.
Hinc Christus apparens saeculis ad profundum docendum idque arcanum
Et intimum intus docendo, Christus occultus sanctus spiritus. (*Hymn.* 1.68–73)[47]

Christ is therefore all, hence Christ is mystery.[48]
Through him, all things, in him, all things, for him, all things![49]
He himself is the Whole whose depth is the Father,
By his procession, he is length and width of the Father.[50]

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47. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 288.

48. A number of passages from the Pauline epistles likely contributed to Victorinus's understanding of "mystery." See Eph 3:9: καὶ φωτίσαι [πάντας] τίς ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ ἀποκεκρυμμένου ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων ἐν τῷ θεῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι; Victorinus's VL: "Illuminare omnes quae sit dispositio mysterii absconditi a saeculis in deo qui omnia creavit"; "and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things." See 1 Cor 2:6–7: Σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, σοφίαν δὲ οὐ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταργουμένων· ἀλλὰ λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην, ἣν ροώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν ("Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification"). Col 2:2–3: ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν συμβιβασθέντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ καὶ εἰς πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως, εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ, ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι ("that their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge").

49. See Rom 11:36; Col 1:16–18; 1 Cor 8:6.

50. See Eph 3:14–18: Τούτου χάριν κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, ἐξ οὗ πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται, ἵνα δῷ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι, ἵνα ἐξισχύσητε καταλαβέσθαι σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις τί τὸ πλάτος καὶ μῆκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος ("For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what

> Hence Christ appearing in time to teach the depth and, indeed, the mystery.
> And Christ hiding within, teaching interiorly, is the Holy Spirit.

These five verses include many allusions to biblical texts (see notes), but verse 69 ("Per ipsum cuncta et in ipso cuncta atque in ipsum omnia") is of particular interest for the comparison with Victorinus's interpretation in the prose treatises. Victorinus here refers to Col 1:16–17: "for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."[51]

He comments on these verses four times in *Adv. Ar.* 1A, but we surprisingly do not find exactly the same expressions: Thus in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.13: "But since 'in him, for him, through him are created all things,' he is always the fullness [plenitudo] and always the receptacle [receptaculum]."[52] Later in the treatise he gives a Trinitarian interpretation of the Pauline expressions.

> Sed ista plenius postea. "Quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipsum omnia." Ex ipso, ut dicitur de patre; per ipsum, ut de Christo; in ipso, ut de sancto spiritu. Alibi autem sic dicit: "in ipso, per ipsum, ad ipsum." (*Adv. Ar.* 1.18.1–4)[53]

> "Since from him and through him and in him are all things." "From him," is said as of the Father; "through him," as of Christ; "in him," as of

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is the breadth and length and height and depth"). For the references to some other works and vocabulary, see Henry and Hadot, *Traités théologiques*, 2:1069.

51. Col 1:16–17: ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὁρατὰ αἰ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται· καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν. See also Rom 11:36: ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα· αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν ("For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen"); and 1 Cor 8:6: ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ ("yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist").

52. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 72.16–18: "Sed 'quoniam in ipso et in ipsum et per ipsum' gignuntur 'omnia,' semper plenitudo et semper receptaculum est."

53. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 80.

> the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere, however, he says this: "In him, through him, for him."

Furthermore, he emphasizes the Son's role:

> Quod Christus λόγος est et quod λόγος omnium quae sunt, ad id ut sint, causa, et idcirco dictum est: quod in ipso condita sunt omnia et per ipsum condita et in ipso condita. Λόγος enim et causa est ad id quod est esse his quae sunt et est receptaculum eorum quae in ipso sunt. Quod autem omnia in ipso, ipsum receptaculum conpletur omnibus quae sunt et ipsum est et plenitudo, et idcirco omnia per ipsum et omnia in ipsum et omnia in ipso. (*Adv. Ar.* 1.24.41–48)[54]

> That Christ is *Logos* and that the *Logos* is cause of the being of all existents is said by this: "Because all things are established in him," both established "through him" and established "in him." For the *Logos* is both the cause of the being of existents and the receptacle of the existents which are in him. But because all things are "in him," the receptacle itself is filled by all existents, and it is itself also fullness, and that is why all things are "through him," all things are "for him," all things are "in him."

The fourth time he interprets Col 1:16–17 in a long passage, it serves to build a strong anti-Arian argument for the consubstantiality of the Father and Son. Paul's triadic structure is referred to the Father and the Son: "This expression 'through whom are all things' is attributed to both the Father and the Son.… This expression 'from whom are all things,' he attributed to the Father.… 'In whom are all things,' is proper to the Son, because the *Logos* is also place [locus]" (*Adv. Ar.* 1.37.14–24).[55] He quotes also two other similar Pauline Trinitarian passages (Rom 11:34–36; 1 Cor 8:6).

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54. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 97. See *Cand.* 1.11.18–19 and *Adv. Ar.* 4.29.11–18.

55. Translation modified. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 122: "Primum autem 'per quem omnia' et patri et filio datum est, quoniam filius, λόγος qui est omnium quae sunt, potentia actuosa in ea quae sunt, et quod in filio pater est, in ipso et pater actuosa potentia exsistit; ibi enim potentia, substantia; non enim aliud potentia, aliud substantia. Idem ergo ipsum est et patri et filio. Hoc autem 'ex quo omnia' patri dedit. A patre enim omnia et ipse filius. Hoc igitur patri ut proprium. Filio autem istud ut proprium: 'in quo omnia,' quod λόγος et locus est." For *in ipsum*, see 1 Cor 15:24–28 and Victorinus's interpretation (*Adv. Ar.* 1.7.42–39.34).

Victorinus's biblical-Trinitarian formula was probably known and widespread in his time, since we know other patristic Trinitarian authors also used it.[56] But Victorinus's peculiarity lies in his poetic, hymnodic usage of the Pauline formulation (*Hymn.* 1.69: "Per ipsum cuncta et in ipso cuncta atque in ipsum omnia"), which certainly differs from all other interpretations. Only once in his Trinitarian treatises does Col 1:16–17 include a clear Trinitarian reference (*Adv. Ar.* 1.18.1–4); on another occasions it is associated with other Pauline vocabulary such as *plenitudo* (*Adv. Ar.* 1.3.17–18: "semper plenitudo et semper receptaculum est"),[57] whereas the poetic expression in the hymn continues with an interpretation of Eph 3:14–18. In addition, the double use of *cuncta* and the single use of *omnia* (*Hymn.* 1.69) perhaps indicate different biblical texts or his early personal translation.[58] That would prove the Hadot's hypothesis that the hymns—or at least the first two—could have been written prior to *Adversus Arium*.

3.2. Between Poetry and Prose: *Hymni* 1 and *Adversus Arium* 3

As already indicated by Hadot, the first hymn corresponds structurally to the third book of *Adversus Arium*.[59] The first major common theme is the dyad Father-Son, expressed as *esse* and *motus*.[60] The discourse about the precedence of the Father in *Hymn.* 1.32, 34 ("Esse enim prius est, sic

56. E.g., Basil of Caesarea, *Spir.* 5.8 (PG 32:81C).

57. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 72. See also *Adv. Ar.* 1.24.46–48: "Quod autem omnia in ipso, ipsum receptaculum conpletur omnibus quae sunt et ipsum est et plenitude, et idcirco omnia per ipsum et omnia in ipsum et omnia in ipso" (*Opera pars prior*, 97; "But because all things are 'in him,' the receptacle itself is filled by all existents, and it is itself also fullness, and that is why all things are 'through' him, all things are 'for him,' all things are 'in him'").

58. He uses *cuncta* only in the first hymn (*Hymn.* 1.6, 13, 15, 17, 41, 60, 69). Sometimes he alludes to John's Gospel (*Hymn.* 1.62): "Hinc patris cuncta Christus, hinc habet Christi cuncta spiritus" reflects John 16:15 (Vulg.: "Omnia quaecunque habet Pater mea sunt, propterea dixi quia de meo accipiet et annuntiabit vobis")—but with *cuncta* instead of *omnia* (see also *Hymn.* 1.65 and John 1:3–4). In *Hymn.* 1.68 ("Ergo Christus omnia, hinc Christus mysterium") he reflects on the connection between *omnia* and *mysterium*, which is an allusion to Eph 3:9.

59. See *Hymn.* 1.17–38 and *Adv. Ar.* 3.2.12–54; *Hymn.* 1.39–49 and *Adv. Ar.* 3.3.1–4.5 (also *Adv. Ar.* 3.8.5–17); *Hymn.* 1.50–55 and *Adv. Ar.* 3.8.25–53; *Hymn.* 1.63 and *Adv. Ar.* 3.15.32; *Hymn.* 1.74–78 and *Adv. Ar.* 3.18.11–18 (see Hadot's comments in *Traités théologiques*, 2:1058).

60. The following references to Victorinus's hymns and treatises are given with

moveri posterum.… Esse nam praecedit motum") is very similar to that in *Adversus Arium* 3.2.12–16: "Potentia deus est, id est, quod primum exsistentiae universale est esse, quod secum, id est in se, vitam et intelligentiam habet, magis autem, ipsum quod est esse hoc est quod vita atque intelligentia, motu interiore et in se converso."[61] *Hymni* 1.22 ("Ex deo dictus deus, natus autem, quia motus est") echoes *Adv. Ar.* 3.2.16: "Est ergo motus in deo et ex hoc actio."[62] Some difference lies in Victorinus's use of *intelligentia* (see *Adv. Ar.* 3.2.13, 15, 22, 24, 25, 27), which is not found in the hymns, where he uses *sapientia* (*Hymn.* 1.19, 51). He also employs different designations for the Son: "atque ipse motus, sapientia est et virtus dei" (*Hymn.* 1.19); "vita atque intelligentia motus sunt" (*Adv. Ar.* 3.2.22); and especially "gemina potentia valet vitalitatis et sapientiae atque intelligentiae" (*Adv. Ar.* 3.9.5–6).[63] Victorinus also expresses the main idea of consubstantiality very similarly in *Hymn.* 1.37–38: "Substantiaeque generatio, quid aliud quam substantia est. / Ergo motus et patris est. Filius ergo eadem substantia"; and in *Adv. Ar.* 3.2.52–55: "Idem autem motus quod substantia. Ergo et pater et filius, una eademque substantia. Consubstantiale igitur, id est ὁμοούσιον."[64]

The next section of similarities concerns the two identifications of the Son as *motus* and *Logos-vita*. Victorinus uses similar logical deductions in *Hymn.* 1.42–43: "Hic λόγος, si Christus est et si λόγος vita est, / Genitus λόγος a patre est. Est enim vivus deus"; and *Adv. Ar.* 3.3.3–6: "prius autem ad vim dixi et ad causam, quia motui causa substantia, omnis enim motus in substantia—ergo necessario generator est pater, et item necessario quae

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chapter and line according to the edition in *Opera pars prior* (the same line numbers occur in the critical edition of *Traités théologiques*, vol. 1).

61. "Indeed 'to be' is prior; to move is later.… For 'to be' precedes self-movement"; "God is power, that is to say, that he is the first universal 'to be' of existence; with him, that is, in him, he has life and knowledge, or rather, that which is 'to be' is life and knowledge, by a movement that is interior and turned toward itself."

62. "It is called 'God from God,' born, however, because it is movement"; "There is, therefore, movement in God and from this also action."

63. "But when he is movement, Christ is the 'Wisdom and Power' of God" (translation slightly altered); "Life and knowledge are movement"; "Movement is effective as a twofold power, that both of vitality and of wisdom and understanding."

64. "And can the begetting of substance be other than substance? Therefore movement is from the Father. The Son then is the same substance as the Father"' "But movement is identical with substance. Therefore, both Father and Son are one and the same substance. They are, therefore, consubstantial, that is *homoousion*."

pater habet, habet et filius."[65] His interpretations of John 1:1–3, despite similarities, are quite different and offer much of interest: "'Nihil' namque 'absque hoc' creatum est, 'per hunc' creata cuncta sunt" (*Hymn.* 1.41); and "Etenim vita est per quam vivunt omnia. Et quia vita est, ipse est 'per quem facta sunt omnia' et 'in quem" facta sunt omnia' (*Adv. Ar.* 3.3.12–14).[66]

Some beautiful poetic expressions about the Trinity as an ennead (*Hymn.* 1.55: "ter triplex alterum"; *Hymn.* 3.224: "triplicatur omnis simplex singularitas"; and *Hymn.* 3.250: "ergo ter tres unum") find comparable formulations in some dogmatic texts: "Ista tria in singulis quibusque" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.59.4–5); "in uno tria et idcirco eadem tria: συνώνυμα ἄρα τὰ τρία" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.54.8–9); "unum igitur istorum tria" (*Adv. Ar*. 1B 60.18); "in omnibus singulis terna sint" (*Adv. Ar.* 3.9.7); "omnia enim in tribus terna sunt" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.8.24); "in singulis tria sint" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.21.27); "tria unum et unum tria et ter tria unum et idem et unum et solum est" (*Ad Cand*. 31.12–13).[67] All these expressions demonstrate Victorinus's linguistic and poetic capabilities, but no direct or verbatim citations can be found between the treatises and the hymns. It might again be possible that these three poetic verbalizations of the Trinitarian mystery of unity preceded his other works.

The end of the first hymn has a formulaic structure: "Quia tres exsistunt singuli et tres in uno singuli. / Haec est beata trinitas, haec beata unitas" (*Hymn.* 1.77–78).[68] Some similar expressions in the treatises are found: "haec summa trinitas, haec summa unitas" (*Adv. Ar.* 3.8.51); "triplex igitur

65. "If Christ is this Logos, if this Logos is life, / The Logos is begotten from the Father. For he is the 'living God' [see John 6:57]"; "I said prior, however, with respect to power and cause because substance is cause of movement for all movement is in substance—therefore it follows necessarily that the begetter is the Father, and necessarily likewise, all that the Father has, the Son also has."

66. "For 'without him,' 'nothing' has been created, 'through him' all was created"; "Truly this is the life through which all things live. And because it is life, it is he 'through whom all things have been made,' and 'for whom all things have been made.'"

67. "Thrice a triple singularity;" "So every simple singularity is tripled"; "Thrice are the three one"; "These three are in each one"; "There are three in one and for that reason the three are identical: sunônuma ara ta tria (the three are then synonyms)"; "Therefore each one of them is three"; "In each one are the three"; "For in all three are the three"; "In each one power there are three powers"; "The three are one, the one is three, the three are three times three, and the same and only one."

68. "For the Three exist as singulars, and the three singulars are in each. / This is the Blessed Trinity, this blessed unity."

in singulis singularitatis et unalitas in trinitate" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.21.30–31); "de triplici unitate et de unali trinitate" (*Ad Cand*. 31.3).[69] But because of their diverse direct contexts, especially in the last verse, it seems that the poetic formula could be autonomous and have emerged before the treatises.

4. *Hymni* 2: *Miserere*

The second hymn (*Miserere*) includes the most lyrical and autobiographical elements, which are mixed with hymnodic, litanic-liturgical features expressed through the constant invocations between the stanzas: "Miserere domine! Miserere Christe!" "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy!"[70] In terms of structure and content, it is the most similar of the three hymns to psalmic poetry. It represents Victorinus's soteriological doctrine, connected with motifs of universalism and spiritualization. The Logos leads the soul, which is imperfect and weak, to unification and divinization. This hymn is comparable in content to *Adv. Ar.* 4. It is possible that it influenced Augustine and his *Confessions*, as at least thematically those two works are similar.[71]

4.1. Biblical Interpretation in *Hymni* 2

The refrain of the second hymn—"Miserere domine! Miserere Christe!" ("Have mercy, Lord! Have mercy, Christ!")—is repeated fifteen times (*Hymn.* 2.2, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31, 35, 39, 43, 47, 51, 55, 59). It clearly echoes Ps 50: "Miserere mihi Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam; et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam" (Ps 50:3 Vulg.).[72] In the psalm we see the prayer addressing "God,"

69."Such is the supreme trinity, such is the supreme unity"; "Triple therefore in each individual, their individuality and triple also their unity in trinity"; "About the triple unity and the one trinity" (translation modified).

70. [Editors' note: Hadot has observed that Victorinus's refrain is borrowed from the liturgical litany, *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison* (*Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 280–81).]

71. See Frassinetti, "Confessioni agostiniane," 50–59. Hadot doubts the direct influence but still recognizes the similarities (*Traités théologiques*, 2:1071).

72. This allusion to Ps 50, which per se is a penitential prayer, can be further on seen also in some of Victorinus's verses relating to his personal life, his story of remoteness from God, and his drive toward his mercy; see *Hymn.* 2.36–38, 40–42, 43–46.

whereas Victorinus has "Lord" and "Christus," to establish a connection between the God of the Old Testament, the Lord (יהוה), with God the Son of the New Testament, Christ. In the penultimate strophe of the second hymn, Victorinus also invokes mercy in connection with the Holy Spirit: "Have mercy Lord! Have mercy Christ! / Now I seek the gates which the Holy Spirit opens, / witnessing to Christ / and teaching what the world is" (*Hymn.* 2.55–58).[73]

4.2. Between Poetry and Prose: *Hymni* 2 and *Adversus Arium* 4

The second hymn is closely related to *Adv. Ar.* 4, because it does not deal anymore with the dyad *esse-motus* but instead with the opposition *vivit-vita*.[74] The most remarkable and evident connection is between *Hymn.* 2.11–34 and *Adv. Ar.* 4.9–10. These parts, through many very closely related ideas, demonstrate a clear correlation.

Victorinus mentions in the hymn that "God lives" (*vivit deus*; *Hymn.* 2.12) and "Christ lives" (*vivit Christus*; *Hymn.* 2.16) but does not mention the Holy Spirit, whereas in the fourth book we read more complex statements about all three divine persons: "Quod vivificat, utique ipsum vivit. Et quod vivit, quia spiritus est, a se vivit. Et quia, quod a se vivit, cum ipsum sit quod est vivit" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.9.11–14); and "Spirat autem spiritus et a se spirat et deus spiritus est. Spirat vero hoc est quod vivit" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.10.1–2).[75] The discourse about the Holy Spirit looks like a later expansion and reformulation in the same manner as it was expressed in the hymn.

A singular usage of the term *consubstantiality* in Victorinus's poetic works is found in the second hymn: "Quod si a semet ipso vivit pater, / Et patre generante a se vivit filius, / Consubstantiale patri est quod ut semper vivit filius" (*Hymn.* 2.24–26).[76] Again we can find some phrases in *Adversus Arium* 4 that resemble the hymnic verses: "Simul ergo et utrumque, et con-

73. "Miserere domine! Miserere Christe! / Iam portas quaero, sanctus quas pandit spiritus, / Testimonium de Christo dicens, / Et quid sit mundus docens." See John 15:26; 16:8.

74. Thus Hadot, *Traités théologiques*, 2:1071.

75. "But the 'Spirit vivifies.' Whatever vivifies certainly itself lives. And that which lives, because it is Spirit, lives from itself. And that which lives from itself is the same as 'he lives'"; "But the Spirit breathes and breathes from himself, and God is Spirit. In fact, 'he breathes' is 'he lives.'"

76. "But if the Father lives from himself, / And by the Father's begetting, the Son lives from himself / As consubstantial with the Father, the Son lives forever."

substantiale. Vivere autem deus est, vita Christus, et in eo quod est vivere, vita est, et in eo quod est vita, vivere" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.13.28–30).[77] A few chapters later this same language from the poetic verses is supplemented by the mention of the Spirit: "cum deus ὁμοούσιον Christo, necessario ut Christus ὁμοούσιον spiritui santo, ac per hoc et per Christum deo" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.17.10–12).[78]

5. *Hymni* 3: *O beata trinitas*

The third hymn *de trinitate*, *O beata trinitas*, "O Blessed Trinity!,"[79] is perhaps the most interesting regarding the Trinitarian doctrine, since already its triadic structure reflects the Trinitarian content. The ecstatic impression made by the sacred, hymnodic poetry is achieved through triadic formulations and designations for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (ll. 1–108). Victorinus uses the classical triad—*substantia*, *forma*, *notio*—for verbalizing the apophatic mystery of the Trinity (ll. 140–251). The hymn includes various symbolic expressions for the economy of Christ's salvific action (ll. 252–269), which are followed by the final prayer (ll. 270–285). The refrain *O beata trinitas* is even more evidently present in the poetic form than in the second hymn,[80] and its echoing between stanzas creates a special liturgical impression.

5.1. Biblical Interpretation in *Hymni* 3

Victorinus opens the third hymn with the verses (ll. 2–4): *Deus, / Dominus, / Sanctus spiritus*, a clear and concise reformulation of the famous passage 1 Cor 12:3–6[81] (referenced in the CSEL apparatus). Another Trinitarian triad, in lines 10–12 of the hymn, is also closely related to this biblical pas-

77. "As both are together, they are also consubstantial. But 'to live' is God, life is Christ, and in 'to live' is life, and in life is 'to live.'"

78. "Since God is *homoousion* (consubstantial) with Christ, necessarily also Christ is *homoousion* with the Holy Spirit, and through that, that is, through Christ, is consubstantial with God."

79. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 294–305.

80. This invocation of Victorinus is perhaps echoed later in the famous hymn *O lux beata Trinitas*, attributed to Ambrose of Milan. See also the end of the first hymn: "Haec est beata trinitas, haec beata unitas" (Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 289.78; "This is the Blessed Trinity, this blessed unity").

81. 1 Cor 12:3–6: "Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are

sage: "Praestator, / Minister, / Divisor" ("Giver, / Minister, / Distributor"). The term *praestator* here represents "Deus, qui omnia in omnibus operator" (1 Cor 12:6: "God, who works all things in all"); and *minister* is a name for the Son, which echoes 1 Cor 12:5 ("divisiones ministeriorum sunt sed idem dominus"). *Divisor* presents a designation for the Holy Spirit, reminiscent of 1 Cor 12:11: "Omnia autem haec operatur unus atque idem spiritus dividens unicuique prout vult."[82]

Toward the end of the first part of the third hymn, Victorinus includes four extremely interesting strophes (translation in the following discussion):

Caritas,
Gratia
Communicatio
O beata trinitas.

Caritas deus est,
Gratia Christus,
Communicatio Sanctus Spiritus
O beata trinitas.

Si caritas est, gratia est;
Si caritas et gratia, communicatio est;
Omnes ergo in singulis et unum in tribus;
O beata trinitas.

Hinc ex deo apostolus Paulus: gratia domini nostri Iesu Christi,
Et caritas dei,
Et communicatio sancti spiritus vobiscum
O beata trinitas. (*Hymn.* 3.42–57)[83]

varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one."

82. [Editors' note: the Latin of 1 Cor 12:11 (and 2 Cor 13:13 below) is cited from the VL text used by Ambrosiaster in his commentaries (generally close to the version Victorinus made the basis of his commentaries); the Latin cited above of parts of 1 Cor 12:3–6 follows Victorinus's own translation of these verses from the Greek in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.19.34–39 (Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 82).]

83. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 296.

In lines 42–44 we read: "Charity, / Grace, / Communication." He then delivers his first brief explanation in lines 46–48: "God is charity, / Christ is grace, / Holy Spirit is communication," which afterward continues with a short logical explication in lines 50–52 ("If there is charity, there is grace, / If charity and grace, there is communication, / All therefore in each and One in Three"). He concludes with the indication of the scriptural inspiration behind lines 54–57: "Hence the apostle Paul, divinely inspired, says 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ / And the charity of God / And the communication of the Holy Spirit be with you.'" The biblical passage, which gave Victorinus a foundation for shaping the short poetical strophes, is easily detectable: 2 Cor 13:13 (VL): "Gratia domini Iesu Christi et dilectio dei et communicatio sancti spiritus cum omnibus vobis" ("The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all").

What Marius Victorinus is doing here is nothing other than reinterpreting and reformulating in poetical form what we find so lucidly written in the Bible—particularly in the Gospel of John and the Pauline epistles—about the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

5.2. Between Poetry and Prose: *Hymni* 3 and *Adversus Arium* 3 and 4

Regarding the relation between the third hymn and *Adversus Arium*, Hadot again did not dare to propound any certain and precise hypotheses. But he nevertheless admitted that contemporaneity between the third hymn and the third and fourth books *Adversus Arium* is plausible.[84] Not many direct citations are found in the third hymn.

One triadic formula reveals the paradoxical and mysterious nature of the divine persons, especially where Christ is called *inpassibilis* because of his divine nature and *passibiliter* because of his human nature: "Inpassibilis inpassibiliter, / Inpassibilis passibiliter, / Passibilis inpassibiliter, / O beata trinitas" (*Hymn.* 3.83–86).[85] This christological expression can be set alongside some other formulations, which demonstrate some variation: "de filio dicitur quod et inpassibilis et passibilis" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.22.49); "inpassibilem et filium dicimus iuxta quod λόγος est; iuxta quod 'caro factus est,' passibilem" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.44.36–37); and once in another place,

84. Hadot, *Traités théologiques*, 2:1079.

85. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 92. "Impassibly impassible, / Passibly impassible, / Impassibly passible, / O Blessed Trinity."

the λόγος is designated also as *inpassibiliter patientem* in his role in creating (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.47.20).[86] The last quotation demonstrates that some variations are possible, but it is very hard to say which expression was prior, although *dicitur* in *Adversus Arium* 1.22.49 indicates the posteriority of this text with respect to some basic ideas.

Probably the most interesting part for our discussion involves lines 141–251, about λόγος and ὄν, since they reflect the discourse in *Adv. Ar.* 4.19 (see also *Ad Cand.* 2–3), but the examination recalls just a fleeting similarity. The quotations of full phrases or expressions are not literal, and that is why it is difficult to affirm definitely that all hymns were written before the dogmatic treatises. As was demonstrated above, it is most probable that the first two hymns preceded *Adversus Arium*, but it still remains only a supposition, perhaps now a little more convincing than before.

6. Conclusion

The present study has attempted to provide a brief examination and a critical reevaluation of Marius Victorinus's theological poetry. We have tried to elucidate and examine some of his interpretive techniques, biblical allusions, and the correlations between his works of prose and his hymnic works.

Some of Victorinus's slightly later colleagues in theological poetry can shed light on his hymns. Synesius saw the role of hymnodic poetry in its complementarity with the *nous*—here meaning the human mind—in order to bring the whole person into relationship with God: Νῦν μοι καρδία, / τοῖς σοῖς ὕμνοις / πιαινομένα, / ἐθόωσε νόον / πυρίαις ὁρμαῖς (*Hymn.* 1.370–374).[87] Ambrose of Milan left us a significant remark about the actual impact of his (anti-Arian) hymns, which could perhaps be true also for those of Marius Victorinus:

86. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 92. "It is said of the Son that he is both impassible and passible." *Adv. Ar.* 1A.44.36–37: "We say that the Son himself is incapable of suffering as *Logos*; but that he is capable of suffering insofar as 'he was made flesh.'" *Adv. Ar.* 1A.47.20: "Experiencing without suffering."

87. Synesius, *Opere*, 748. "And now my heart, made fruitful with hymns to Thee, has exited my mind with fiery impulses" (FitzGerald, *Essays and Hymns of Synesius*, 2:379).

> They declare also that the people have been beguiled by the strains of my hymns [*hymnorum meorum carminibus*]. I certainly do not deny it. There is nothing more powerful than such a great song. For what has more power than the confession of the Trinity, which is daily celebrated by the mouth of the whole people? All eagerly vie one with the other confessing the faith, and know how to praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in verse. So they all have become teachers, who scarcely could be disciples. (*Ep.* 75A [*NPNF*^{2} 10:436, slightly altered])[88]

Paul Henry acknowledges some original approaches in the Trinitarian theology of Marius Victorinus: positive theology, analogy, mutual inclusiveness of perfections, concrete and dynamic outlook, and Scripture as the source of inspiration.[89] Especially through this last characteristic—the biblical basis for his Trinitarian theology—Victorinus demonstrates that his poetry does not just represent the Plotinian *Weltanschaung* but is rather rooted in the deep, personal, Christian involvement in the mystery of the Trinity.[90]

Marius Victorinus was not an inspired poet like Vergil or Horace, nor was he a mystical poet like John of the Cross many centuries later. Even less was he a skillful versifier, such as the numerous medieval verbal craftsmen in monasteries or some Byzantine liturgical poets. But he was able to use words in a poetic setting to achieve his goal: to fight error committed in the field of theological ideas and to transmit this deep theological Trinitarian truth through lyrical theopoetry, on the basis of his personal, intimate experience of the encounter with God.

For Victorinus's contemporaries his three hymns certainly would not have been regarded as poetry in the classical sense. But a modern perspective enables a reestimation of the novel thing Marius Victorinus did, and we can admire his prophetic perception of poetry.

His philosophical, theological, and poetical creation was unique in his time, and for this he surely deserves the title of a pioneer among the early Christian Latin poets. Specifically, he brought into the Latin environment

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88. *Sermo contra Auxentium de basilicis tradendis* 34; Maurist 21a: "Hymnorum quoque meorum carminibus deceptum populum ferunt, plane nec hoc abnuo. Grande carmen istud est quo nihil potentius; quid enim potentius quam confessio trinitatis, quae cottidie totius populi ore celebratur? Certatim omnes student fidem fateri, patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum norunt versibus praedicare. Facti sunt igitur omnes magistri, qui vix poterant esse discipuli" (PL 16:1017c–1018a).

89. Henry, "*Adversus Arium* of Marius Victorinus," 48–52.

90. Thus following Henry's conclusion in "*Adversus Arium* of Marius Victorinus," 55.

quite unusual Eastern—Greek and Semitic—elements of poetry that did not match the expectations of Latin poetical formalism (formal meter); these brought a strength of expression needed to touch and convince the audience, so that it might accept and follow what Marius's bright intelligence could say about the greatest mystery of Christian faith, the Trinity, one God.

Marius Victorinus was a Neoplatonist philosopher who had been approaching the Christian church for quite a long time and finally could not stay outside it. He owed this step also to his intellectual honesty. We can understand how, once inside the church, he employed all possible means at his disposal to fight the improper methods and improper conclusions that he perceived Arianism to represent. The West in general did not understand these Eastern theological impulses. Hilary alone among Latins had brought some knowledge of the problems from his exile, Athanasius in his Western exiles shed some light on the problematic, and both brought an emotional level of focus to the complex of issues. It is rather unexpected that a neophyte Latin convert would jump so deeply into the problematic area. He was able to do it only because of his philosophical learning. And if he wanted to convince his Western and Eastern contemporaries, he could not lean only on theological and philosophical discourse; as he could not and did not want to exercise influence only on emotions, he chose also poetry as a vehicle of his ideas, a vehicle that could enter also into narrower minds, maybe even unconsciously. But he was not the only one to pursue this method. We note a similar tactic in his contemporary Ambrose, who was elected bishop of Milan in a very heated moment of rivalry between the Nicene and Arian parties in the capital. His liturgical hymns brought *homoousion* theology even to uneducated minds.

The same service Marius Victorinus offered to one audience in his extensive and very precise and large works of prose, he also did for another audience in focused and forceful poetic hymns. If his works of prose were intended to wake up the mind and avoid digression, the second genre aimed rather at the heart, at the whole being, but with the same goal: to encourage them not to stray from the faith and from the redemption offered in the church. Marius knew how precious it was, since he had to fight for it, had to renounce many things for it, so he would not want anybody to lose it.

A reevaluation of the poetic hymns of Marius Victorinus shows that his three hymns can really be regarded as poetry. To qualify his hymns as "rhythmical prose" (see §1.1 above) is a clear underestimation and under-

valuation. His linguistic sensitivity, beautiful poetic formulations of the Trinitarian doctrine, combined lyrical expression with the more theological arguments so that his theopoetry would address the whole person. His rhetorical, linguistic, philosophical, and theological skills enabled him to formulate some of the most beautiful poetic expressions of the Christian Trinitarian faith.

"Elegit nos ante mundi constitutionem": Ephesians 1:4 between Victorinus, Origen, and Plotinus

Lenka Karfíková

The hymnic introduction concerned with the election of saints in Christ "before the foundation of the world" in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph 1:3–14) is related—in terms of its content as well as its form of a eulogy—to the Jewish blessing celebrating the precosmic election of Israel. It is not certain, however, whether the author, professing allegiance to the theology of the apostle Paul (Eph 1:1), borrowed it from an older tradition or whether (which is perhaps more likely) he created it himself for an epistolary purpose. In any case, it is among the very old topics in the earliest Christian writings.[1]

In this paper, my aim is to focus on Eph 1:4 as it was interpreted by Marius Victorinus and to compare it with Origen's interpretation, to the extent to which it can be reconstructed. According to the information available to us, Victorinus authored the first Latin commentary on the epistle. The Greek commentary of Origen, written more than one hundred years earlier, is known to us chiefly due to Jerome's generous borrowings from it in his own commentary on Ephesians.[2] Although both Origen and

1. On the hypothesis of an older hymn, see the critical overview in Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 12–14. On the genre of epistolary eulogy following the Jewish blessing, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 10–12; Gerhard Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, KEK 8 (Göttingen:Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 77–83. On the exposition of Eph 1:4 as the universalization of the Jewish faith in precosmic election, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 22–25; Sellin, *Brief an die Epheser*, 90–95. On the extension of the precosmic election of Christ to the church, see Petr Pokorný, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Epheser*, THKNT 10.2 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1992), 53–60.

2. See Jerome, *The Commentaries of Origen and Jerome on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Victorinus discuss the preexistence of souls and the creation of the world for their benefit, their interpretations differ in many respects. In addition to the exegetical writings, what must also be taken into account is each author's systematic work. In order to bring out the main characteristics of the two theologians, I compare their main ideas with Plotinus's interpretation in the concluding part of the paper.

1. Marius Victorinus

1.1. The Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians

In his commentary on Eph 1:4, Victorinus adds an exposition on the nature of souls, which some interpreters regard as quite distant from the meaning of the text in question.[3] Victorinus summarizes the whole "mystery" (*mysterium*) as follows: "that the world has been made, and has been made in Christ or by Christ; that souls have been sent into the world, existed before the world and have again been freed from the world" (*In Eph.* 1:4).[4]

As Victorinus goes on to explain in his commentary, it is through Christ that everything arises from God, and it is also through Christ

3. See Bernhard Lohse, "Beobachtungen zum Paulus-Kommentar des Marius Victorinus und zur Wiederentdeckung des Paulus in der lateinischen Theologie des vierten Jahrhunderts," in *Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum, Festschrift für Carl Andresen zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Adolf Martin Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 359. As Lohse remarks, Victorinus devoted his expositions exactly to those passages in Paul's epistles "which modern historical-critical exegesis regards as non-Pauline" (360).

4. Stephen A. Cooper, *Metaphysics and Morals in Marius Victorinus' Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians: A Contribution to the History of Neoplatonism and Christianity*, AUS 5.155 (New York: Lang, 1995), 47. "Vel mundum factum esse vel in Christo mundum aut a Christo mundum factum vel animas in mundum missas vel ante mundum animas et rursus de mundo animas liberatas." *In epistula Pauli ad Ephesios commentarius* is cited throughout from the critical edition *Opera pars posterior: Opera exegetica*, ed. Franco Gori, CSEL 83.2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986). Victorinus's phrase *vel … vel* refers to a listing of items, not to mutually exclusive alternatives. Similarly on the same verse (ll. 4–6): "quod ante mundum animae et quod dei dispositione mundus et quod dei dispositione animae vel in mundum venerint vel de mundo liberentur": "the souls are anterior to the world, the world has been ordered by God, and the souls have been ordered by God in such a way that they enter the world as well as are being liberated from it" (my trans.).

that everything returns to God. Christ as the divine Logos, or the divine "motion" (*In Eph.* 1:20–23), renounced himself ("emptied himself"; Phil. 2:7) in order to "fill all things" (*In Eph.* 1:20–23; 3:18; 4:10) by this descent and to bring in himself "all things in heaven and on earth" (*In Eph.* 1:4) back to God as saved (see Eph 4:10).[5]

When the author of the eulogy in the epistle to the Ephesians says with self-confidence "he chose us," Victorinus does not really wonder why God chose "us" and not someone else (although he probably did not presume that the election concerns all souls; *In Eph.* 1:9–10; see also *Adv. Ar.* 1A.14); instead, he emphasizes that we must have already existed in order for God to choose us.[6] Together with Christ, we had been "before" (*ante*), that is, from eternity (*ex aeterno*), included in Christ as "spiritual" (*spiritales*) beings (*In Eph.* 1:4; see also 1:11).

"What caused us to have come hither? and why was the world founded?" (*In Eph.* 1:4 [Cooper]) asks Victorinus, and he replies that although souls had existed in Christ from all eternity, they had not achieved full perfection then, because this can only happen in the world:[7]

> Although the souls and other powers of this sort had been established … in Christ, this is a lesser kind of perfection—unless the souls should know by experience all that they are capable of being, and would come to recognize in this way what is to be pursued, would see what is to be chosen, and would follow in the Spirit that is indeed Christ. (*In Eph.* 1:4 [Cooper, modified])[8]

Before their journey to the world, souls have only a certain possibility of receiving the Spirit, but they have not received it yet, have not yet recognized themselves or God, and have not rejected extraneous things. It is

5. On Victorinus's soteriology see Lenka Karfíková, "*Semet ipsum exinanivit.* Der Logos-Erlöser nach Marius Victorinus," in *Für uns und für unser Heil: Soteriologie in Ost und West*, ed. Theresia Hainthaler et al., ProOr 37 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2014), 127–49.

6. *In Eph.* 1:4: "Utique iam cum essemus elegit" (*Opera pars posterior*, 7.31).

7. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 7.40–41: "Quid est causae ut huc veniremus et cur constitueretur mundus?"

8. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 8.46–50: "Animis et ceteris huiusmodi potentiis in Christo … positis perfectio quaedam minor est, nisi omnia quae esse possunt experiantur, cognoscant et sic quid sequendum, quid eligendum sit videant et sequantur in spiritu utique qui Christus est."

only through this process of differentiation that a soul "merits perfection" ("merito fit perfecta"), that is, becomes spiritual (*spiritalis*) and therefore human in the full sense ("omne quod homo est"; *In Eph.* 1:4).

Victorinus also depicts this experience as a differentiation between the intellect (*intellectus*) and sense perception (*sensus*), the latter being an imitation, as it were, or even a "false intellect" that tries to "capture but will never manage to capture" material things and only produces images of them (*In Eph.* 1:4).[9]

Despite Victorinus's distrust of sense perception (and perhaps imagination), the material world that can be captured by the senses does not lose its value. On the contrary, it is the only place where a soul learns to appreciate the intellect and can achieve perfection. Without having experienced the world, a soul would not be what it truly is, that is, a spirit. This is the reason God created the world in the first place, states Victorinus (*In Eph.* 1:4).[10]

The world, however, may be misinterpreted as the goal, not as the means to achieve the aforementioned knowledge; in such a case, the world becomes a prison. Because of its attitude to the world, the soul allowed itself to be imprisoned by the world, but it cannot set itself free and is in need of salvation. Christ the Savior brings the knowledge of the Father to souls and helps them to differentiate between what is spiritual and what is extraneous, between what is to be followed and what is to be avoided (*In Eph.* 1:4; see also 1:7).

The mystery (*mysterium*) of Christ is fulfilled by his death and resurrection, in which souls are included if they participate in it with their faith, if, together with Christ, they set themselves free from the world and matter and are joined with God through Christ (*In Eph.* 1:4; see also 1:23; 4:9). In this respect, Christ is the true, that is, spiritual life of souls, from whom his "fullness" arises (Eph 1:23, 3:19):

> This fullness does not mean anything else than that everything which belongs to it, belongs to Christ. The souls did belong to him, but since

9. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 8.62–76: "Quod imitatur intellectum, non tamen est intellectus.… quasi quidam intellectus … fallax et multiplici fuco decipiens … laedens quodammodo per imagines veritatem.… ut hoc caperet neque aliquando caperetur."

10. This pedagogical value of the experience which the soul gains in the world appears already in Irenaeus of Lyons, *Haer.* 4.39.1.

> they arose from him and departed from him, they shone with less brightness; because of this lesser brightness, they were less perfect. Thus, from contemplating the truth, they could descend to what is only probable, and from there to what is deceptive, i.e., only perceivable by the senses.… Until the soul knew it, it was less perfect and so it would have remained if it had not known it. (*In Eph.* 1:4)[11]

For although the soul has belonged to Christ (*ipsius est*) from all eternity "with its substance," it is also less perfect than he because it can recede from the contemplation of what truly is and descend (*labi*) into what is merely probable or deceptive. Until it recognizes that kind of thing and rejects it, the soul cannot achieve perfection, as we already know: it is only "in adversity that the righteous will prove himself, as in the dark the light, as in deceit the truth" (*In Eph.* 1:4). It is the experience of the world and salvation from it that will render the soul perfect and teach it to know its own origin, its "own parent" (*parentem suum*); it is only when souls are united with their own beginning that they can create perfect unity and fullness (*In Eph.* 1:4; see also 4:13).

This is the destiny to which God predestined souls before the creation of the world: to achieve perfection, thanks to the world, and to create fullness. He chose the souls that already existed in his knowledge (*in dei cognitione*) but lacked the perfection they were yet to achieve. Even before the creation of the world, the souls had possessed "a certain kind of existence" (*certa exsistentia*), though not perfection; this they can only achieve if they prove themselves. According to what is further stated in the eulogy in Eph 1:3–14, God chose them to be "immaculate" (*immaculati*). In other words, they may have been blemished originally, but they were saved from being blemished and thus set free, thanks to Christ (*In Eph.* 1:4).

As we have seen, souls, according to Victorinus, have a certain kind of existence even before the creation of the world, even from all eternity, but to be able to achieve perfection, they have to prove themselves in the material world: they have to learn to differentiate between the ever-imperfect

11. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 10.125–134: "Quae plenitudo nihil aliud est, quam quod omne, quod eius est, ipsius sit. Unde, cum animae gradu progressionis ex ipso, cum ipsius essent, tamen, quia quaedam longinquitate ab ipso minore luce fulgebant et minore lumine non ita perfectae fuerant, id est quia labi ab intellegentia veri poterant in ea quae verisimilia erant et a verisimilibus in falsa, id est in ea quae sensus sunt … haec nesciendo anima minus perfecta esset et tali natura permaneret, si ista non cognosceret."

knowledge of the world and the contemplation of the intellect, and thus come to know their own origin. In Victorinus's view, the world was created so that souls could achieve perfection and create fullness in Christ, which originally they could not create, because they were neither firm in their turn toward God nor unified among themselves.

1.2. Anti-Arian Works

This exposition—unusually clear and simple in the whole context of Victorinus's work—becomes somewhat more complicated if his anti-Arian works are taken into consideration. Although there are many similarities with the aforementioned account in these works, there are also differences.

1.2.1. Ad Candidum

In his reply to the fictitious Candidus, Victorinus argues that the soul is a mere possibility of contemplation ("ad intellegentiam accommodata") until the intellect (ὁ νοῦς) is born in it, which enables it to contemplate that which truly is ("quae vere sunt") and thus brings itself to perfection (*perfectio*). The soul is a "substance" (*substantia*), that is, the bearer (*subiectum*) of the intellect, and it must receive its perfection from the intellect, in other words, "from another" (*de altero*). That is why the soul is not that which is in the true sense, but "that which merely is" (*solum ὄν*), its perfection depending on something else.[12]

12. *Ad Cand.* 7: "Sed quoniam intellegentia talis de altero est, conprehensio et definitio quaedam efficitur alia ὄντα solum ὄντα esse, quoniam in eo quod est alterius, est et aliud, intellectuale ad intellectibile.… Sunt autem ista omnia animarum in natura intellectualium nondum intellectum habentium, sed ad intellegentiam accommodata. Excitatus enim in anima ὁ νοῦς intellectualem potentiam animae inlustrat et inluminat et invultuat ac figurat et innascitur animae intellegentia et perfectio. Et idcirco et substantia dicitur anima, quoniam omnis substantia subiectum est. Subiectum autem alteri alicui subiacet. Subiacet autem anima τῷ νῷ et spiritui." Quoted from Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), 22–23. Translations follow Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatises on Trinity*, trans. Mary T. Clark, FC 69 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001). "But since such understanding is from another, by a certain comprehension and definition it is shown that other *onta* [existents] are that which merely is, since in that which is knowledge of another, the intellect is as another with respect to the intelligible.… But all these

In contrast to the intellectual contemplation of that which truly is, the incarnated soul also has sense perception of material things, which is an imitation of contemplation (*imitatio*, *simulacrum*, or *imitamentum intellegendi*). Sense perception does not grasp the immutable substances of things but only their mutable qualities (*Ad Cand.* 9). The soul itself is also a substance; it is mutable only in the sense that in its self-motion ("semper movetur … a se") it is approached by the mutable qualities (*Ad Cand.* 10).

In many respects, both the account of the soul as a substance that needs to be formed by the intellect and the reference to sense perception, which imitates intellectual contemplation, are similar to Victorinus's interpretation of Eph 1:4; however, nothing is said in *Ad Candidum* about the role of the experience souls need to gain in the world or their going astray and their salvation. The lack of self-sufficiency of the soul is explained here by the fact that it is ontologically derivative and dependent on another. The difference between sense perception and intellectual contemplation is specified as the grasping of qualities, not substances. It was probably with respect to the impossibility of grasping substances by means of sense perception that Victorinus argued in his interpretation of Ephesians 1:4 that the senses will never grasp that toward which they are directed.

1.2.2. Adversus Arium 1A

In *Adversus Arium* 1A Victorinus introduces the soul as a substance shaped by the movement of life and contemplation. It is only in this twofold movement that the soul is what it is, namely, something definite. The substance and its movement are not only simultaneous but also consubstantial. The soul is the movement toward the things of nature that it animates and toward the intelligible objects that it contemplates.[13] In a

latter are in the nature of intellectual souls, not yet having knowledge but disposed for knowledge. For when the *nous* has been aroused in the soul, it illuminates the intellectual potentiality of the soul, enlightens it, giving it face and form, and there is born to the soul knowledge and perfection. And that is why the soul is also called substance, since every substance is a subject. But every subject underlies something else. But the soul underlies the *nous* and spirit" [translation slightly altered]). For the whole passage, see *Ad Cand.* 7–8.

13. *Adv. Ar.* 1A.32: "Simul enim substantia et motus, id ipsum cum sit secundum subiectum anima, iuxta quod vivit et vivificat, et iuxta quod intellegit et intellegentia est, una motione, ut una ipsa cum sit, quae species est ipsius. Definitur enim motione et exsistit unum ὄν, duplici potentia, in uno motu exsistente, vitae et intellegentiae"

double sense, it is dependent on another (*indiget alterius*), that is, on the things of nature to be animated and on the intelligible things to be contemplated, which is why Victorinus points out that in either movement it is "acted upon" (*passio*).[14]

This notion of the self-realization and forming of the soul on account of its animation and contemplation of another seems to be a paraphrase of what in the exposition of Eph 1:4 is depicted as the experience of the soul in the material world, thanks to which it achieves perfection, because it rejects that which it is not and becomes aware of its own spiritual nature. In this case, instead of the original existence of the soul in divine knowledge and its worldly experience, Victorinus refers to the indefinite potentiality of the substance and the perfection of its formation through "another," that is, through the animation of things of nature (even down to the level of minerals, as we will see in the following section) and the contemplation of intelligible objects.

1.2.3. Adversus Arium 1B

Victorinus goes on to argue in *Adv. Ar.* 1B that the soul with its nature of a twofold movement of life and contemplation is the image of the intellect, that is, the Son (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.63). Thus the soul is a certain "image of the image" or an "echo" (ἠχώ) of the Word or voice (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.56).[15] The Son as the "true image" is consubstantial with what it portrays; it is the actualization of its potentiality (*Adv. Ar.* 3.2). By contrast, the soul is not

(*Opera pars prior*, 112.32–37; "For the soul is simultaneously substance and movement; insofar as it is subject the soul is identical with that which lives and vivifies, and with that which knows and is understanding, with one motion which is its species, since it itself is also one. For the soul is defined by movement and exists as one *on* [existent], with a double power, existing in one movement of life and understanding").

14. *Adv. Ar.* 1A.32: "Secundum vitam quidem passio, quod adhuc indiget alterius quod vult vivefacere.… Secundum autem intellegentiam, quoniam et ista indigens est eius quod intellegibile est ut intellegentia subsistat, magis passiones et infirmitates incurrit et volvitur in sensibilibus et per fantasiam in falsam subsistentiam circumducitur" (*Opera pars prior*, 114.65–72; "Indeed there is passion according to life because life always has need of the other which it wishes to vivify.… But there is passion according to understanding since this also is in need of the intelligible to subsist as understanding; it incurs greater passions and infirmities as it becomes both involved in sensible things and is driven through imagination into false reality").

15. Similarly, in *Adv. Ar.* 3.1 the soul is the "image of Logos."

the intellect (νοῦς); it is related to it (*ad* νοῦν) and thus becomes similar to and united with the intellect: it becomes "a quasi-intellect" (*quasi* νοῦς; *Adv. Ar.* 1B.61).

The soul can also choose a direction leading downward (*deorsum*) from the intellect and become the "mother of things above the heavens"; being "petulant" (*petulans*), it can even go further, as far as the animation of the world and its creatures all the way down to the level of minerals ("usque ad lapidem lapidum more"). According to Victorinus, the soul is positioned between the intelligible sphere and matter, and by looking "downward" it first becomes "only intellectual" (i.e., contemplating, *intellegens tantum*), as it preserves a "spark of intellect," but no longer having both the intellectual and intelligible nature (*intellegens et intellegibile*), as the intellect itself (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.61).[16] Then the soul even goes on to "darken" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.61) and animate matter, especially its "purer" part, which is related to the soul (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.61).[17] When the soul develops from its own

16. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 161.7–162.18: "Anima autem cum suo νῷ, ab eo qui νοῦς est, potentia vitae intellectualis est, non νοῦς est, ad νοῦν quidem respiciens quasi νοῦς est. Visio enim ibi unitio est. Vergens autem deorsum et aversa a νῷ, et se et suum νοῦν trahit deorsum, intellegens tantum effecta, non iam ut intellegens et intellegibile. Sed si sic perseveraverit, eorum quae super caelum sunt mater est, lumen, non verum lumen et quidem cum suo proprio νῷ lumen. Si vero in inferiora respicit, cum sit petulans, potentia vivificandi fit, vivere quae faciat et mundum et ea quae in mundo usque ad lapidem lapidum more, ipsa etiam cum νῷ facta" ("But the soul with its own *nous*, which is from the one which is *Nous*, is power of intellectual life. It is not *Nous*, but when it looks toward the *Nous*, it is as if it were *Nous.* For there, vision is union. But if it inclines downward and turns from the *Nous*, it leads itself and its own *nous* below, it then becomes merely intellect, and is no longer both the intelligible and the intellect. But if it will thus persevere, it is the mother of things above the heavens, the light, not the true light, and yet with its own *nous* it is the light. If, indeed, it looks toward inferior things, being petulant, it becomes a life-giving power, making live both the world and those things which are in the world, even the stone according to its proper mode as stone; it becomes this power, along with its *nous*."

17. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 162.19–26: "cumque in medio spirituum et intellegibilium et τῆς ὕλης, proprio νῷ ad utraque conversa, aut divina fit aut incorporatur ad intellegentia. Etenim suae licentiae est et privatione veri luminis propter scintillam tenuem proprii τοῦ νοῦ rursum vocatur, quoniam quidem solum <ὄν> est. Tenebrata autem deorsum ducitur. Etenim summitates τῆς ὕλης puriores, animandi vim habentes, causa sunt lumini, vel ut in sua descenderet" ("Since it [sc. the soul] is situated in the midst of Spirits and the intelligibles and *hule* (matter), turning with its own *nous* toward both, it either becomes divine or becomes embodied for an understanding. Indeed, it is left to its own license, and deprived of true light, on account

substance into the sensible world, it remains "above"; at the same time, however, it "begets souls which come into the world" ("ipsa anima semper quae sursum sit mundanas animas gignens"; *Adv. Ar.* 1B.64).[18]

In this account, Victorinus is probably referring to the world soul, as both the animator of celestial movements and nature, affecting earthly beings even to the level of minerals.[19] In *Adv. Ar.* 4, he calls it "the universal and fountain soul" ("anima … illa universalis atque fontana") to make it clear that this soul, just like the individual one, is vivified by the divine act of life (*vivere*), with which, obviously, its life is not identical (*Adv. Ar.* 4.5).[20] In my opinion, it is not fully accurate to interpret the descent of the soul to the supracelestial realm and later to the cosmic areas as a fall, even though this interpretation prevails with most authors.[21] Instead, Victori-

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of the feeble light of its own *nous*, it is called back, since it certainly is only an *on* (existent). But if it is darkened, it is dragged down below. Indeed, the highest parts of *hule* (matter), which are also the purest, having strength to be animated, give occasion to light, so that, if it wishes, it descends toward what is related to it"). The expression *tenebrata* is translated as "elle est prise de vertige" ("she will be captured by vertigo") by Pierre Hadot. See Marius Victorinus, *Traités Théologiques sur la Trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 2:884. Hadot refers to the usage of the analogous Greek expression *tenebratio* (σκότωσις) in Caelius Aurelianus, *Chron. morbis* 1.2.51 (= *Tard. pass.* 1.2.51), and interprets it as the vertigo from which the soul will suffer when it approaches nonbeing. However, Caelius Aurelianus distinguishes two different states: *visus tenebratio* and *capitis vertigo*.

18. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 166.6–7.

19. On the idea of the world soul, see Plato, *Tim.* 30b; 34b–37c. See Joseph Moreau, *L'âme du monde: De Platon aux Stoïciens* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1939); Luc Brisson, *Le même et l'autre dans la structure ontologique du "Timée" de Platon: Un commentaire systématique du "Timée" de Platon*, 3rd ed., IPlSt 2 (Sankt Augustin: Academia, 1998), 267–354 (here also a short history of the idea from Plato to Proclus: 275–306); Mischa von Perger, *Die Allseele in Platons "Timaios,"* BzAK 96 (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1997); Filip Karfík, *Die Beseelung des Kosmos: Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie, Seelenlehre und Theologie in Platons Phaidon und Timaios*, BzAK 199 (Munich: Saur, 2004), 174–92.

20. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 230.9–11: "Non, inquam, illud vivere in deo est, hoc deus est, quod est vivere animae, aut uniuscuisque, aut illius universalis atque fontanae" ("No, I say, the 'to live' of soul, the 'to live' of each soul, or the 'to live' of the universal and soul-source, is not the 'to live' in God, is not God").

21. See Hubert de Leusse, "Le Problème de la préexistence des âmes chez Marius Victorinus Afer," *RSR* 29 (1939): 224, 227; see also Marius Victorinus, *Traités Théologiques* 2:883–85; Pierre Hadot, "L'image de la Trinité dans l'âme chez Victorinus et chez saint Augustin," StPatr 6 (1962): 419. Probably more appropriately, Massimo Stefani refers to the vivifying "descent." See Stefani, "Sull'antropologia di Mario

nus's theory seems to resemble Plotinus's idea of the world soul, which does not descend either, although it animates the material world, into which it sends "the last of its powers" (*Enn.* 4.8.2.24–33; see also 3.25–30).[22] In its descent, the soul does not cease to inhabit the intelligible sphere; and its animating movement is a development of its own substance: in this, the soul imitates the Son. Unlike the Son, however, the soul only achieves the culmination of its substance through this development.[23]

It must be noted here that the soul imitates the Son not only in his vivifying movement from the Father but also in his return to him in the Spirit, that is, in his contemplation of the Father (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.63). This movement is not carried out by our "material soul" with its "material intellect" (*hylicus* νοῦς)—that is, by sense perception—but by the "celestial" soul, the seat of the "celestial" (*caelestis*) intellect capable of intellectual contemplation, or, in other words, of returning to heaven. According to Victorinus, it is this double intellect that the words of Jesus (see Matt 24:40–41 // Luke 17:34–36) about "two men in the field" concern, "one of whom will be taken and the other left"; and the double soul is similarly indicated by "two women at the mill, one of whom will be taken and the other left" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.62).[24]

Vittorino: La 'discessa' vivificante dell'anima in prospettiva cosmologica," *ScrTh* 19 (1987): 63–111. Werner Erdt rightly remarks that the "fall" only refers to the soul's excessive entanglement in the material world; somewhat inconsistently, though, he also claims that the "fall and descent" was what God himself wished for. See Erdt, *Marius Victorinus Afer, der erste lateinische Pauluskommentator: Studien zu seinen Pauluskommentaren im Zusammenhang der Wiederentdeckung des Paulus in der abendländischen Theologie des 4. Jahrhunderts*, EHS 23, Theologie 135 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1980), 131.

22. See Henry J. Blumenthal, "Soul, World-Soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus," in *Soul and Intellect: Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonism* (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1993); Richard Dufour, "Le rang de l'âme du monde au sein des réalités intelligibles et son rôle cosmologique chez Plotin," *EPl* 3 (2006): 89–102.

23. See Werner Steinmann, *Die Seelenmetaphysik des Marius Victorinus*, HamThSt 2 (Hamburg: Steinmann & Steinmann, 1990), 34.

24. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 163.14–24. In a similar vein, Victorinus mentions a twofold intellect, one "divine" (*divinus*) and another "sensible" (*sensualis*), and a twofold soul, "divine" and "sensible," in *Adv. Ar.* 3.1. This exposition of Matt 24:40–41 is compared by Hadot (Marius Victorinus, *Traités Théologiques*, 2:888) and Stefani (*Sull'antropologia*, 102) with that of Origen, *Comm. Matt.* (Lat.) 57–58 (*Origenes Werke* 11.2, 2nd ed., ed. Erich Klostermann, Ernst Benz, and Ursula Treu, GCS

Only as animating and contemplating is the soul "according to the image" as well as "according to the likeness" of the divine Trinity, because it does not merely portray the animating and the contemplating powers included in the single divine substance, but also imitates the movement of their development and return.[25]

This account deepens the motifs that we have encountered in Victorinus's interpretation of Eph 1:4 in two important aspects. First, we learn how Victorinus understands the creation of the soul "in the image and likeness" of God, that is, not only as an image of the Son included in the Father, but also as a likeness of the Son in his twofold movement of vivifying departure and contemplating return in the Spirit.[26]

Second, Victorinus refers to a twofold possibility of the orientation of the soul: toward contemplation and downward towards the animation of supracelestial beings and later to the material world, even including minerals. In his interpretation of Eph 1:4, this motif is lacking, perhaps because he was solely concerned with individual souls. If we combine the two accounts, the sending out of individual souls into the world (where they too can develop their vivifying potency in order to return with a more

38 [Berlin: Akademie, 1976], 131–33). See also Jacques Dupuis, *"L'esprit de l'homme"*: Étude sur l'anthropologie religieuse d'Origène (Bruges: de Brouwer,1967), 149–51.

25. *Adv. Ar.* 1B.64: "sic anima, trinitas unalis secunda, explicavit imaginationem in sensibili mundo, ipsa anima semper quae sursum sit mundanas animas gignens. Et istud ergo, 'iuxta imaginem et similitudinem'" (*Opera pars prior*, 166.5–8; "so likewise the soul, a unique second trinity, has achieved manifestation in the sensible world, because this soul, while remaining on high, has begotten souls which come into this world. And therefore this is 'according to the image and likeness'"). See also *Adv. Ar.* 1B.63. On the soul as the image and likeness of the Son, both in his inclusion in the Father and his development, see Hadot, "L'image de la Trinité," 412–24.

26. In addition, Steinmann assumes a double preexistence of the soul—in the Logos, as it is in the Father's potency, and in the Logos developed in life and contemplation—unlike Victorinus himself (*Seelenmetaphysik*, 28–32). This assumption is elaborated by Stephen Cooper, who draws a distinction between the preexistence of the souls *substantialiter* in divine knowledge as a "seminal" existence, "not in an individuated and differentiated manner," and *in sua substantia* as independent individualized beings; see *In Eph.* 1:4; Cooper, *Metaphysics and Morals*, 134. In my opinion, this speculation is not grounded in Victorinus's text: here *substantialiter* and *in sua substantia* refer to the distinction between a soul preexisting in divine knowledge and its perfection thanks to its experience in the world. In both cases, the souls are individual—as God's election before the creation of the world only concerns individual souls.

perfect knowledge of their own intellectual nature) would have to follow the exposition of the world soul.

1.2.4. Adversus Arium 3

Because the soul depends on the Son, that is, on the intellect of whom it is an image, the Son also mediates its return, Victorinus argues in *Adv. Ar.* 3. When the Logos "became flesh" (John 1:14), he put on the "universal logos of the flesh" ("universalem λόγον carnis") and the "universal logos of the soul" ("universalem λόγον animae"), that is, the body and the soul, including everything they contain. He thus put on the whole man ("homo totus"), and together with the whole man he purified and saved everything as it was included in him.[27]

The return of souls in Christ, that is, in the Spirit, was mentioned in the exposition of Eph 1:4, where its necessity was justified by reference to the soul's entanglement in the material world, from which it cannot free itself without help. Here we also learn that Christ's acceptance of the universal logos of the soul—the inclusion of everything the soul can be—enables the inclusion of the individual soul in the fullness of Christ. Yet acceptance and return of everything to the Father is not an automatic process but one that presupposes the soul's faith, that is, must be voluntary, as the commentary on the epistle to the Ephesians suggests.[28]

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27. *Adv. Ar.* 3.3: "Sed, cum carnem sumpsit, universalem λόγον carnis sumpsit.… Item et universalem λόγον animae.… Adsumptus ergo homo totus et adsumptus et liberatus est. In isto enim omnia universalia fuerunt, universalis caro, anima universalis, et haec in crucem sublata atque purgata sunt per salutarem deum λόγον, universalium omnium universalem … qui est Iesus Christus" (*Opera pars prior*, 196.30–51; "But when he took flesh, he took the universal logos of flesh.… Likewise he also took the universal logos of the soul.… Therefore the whole man has been taken, both taken and liberated. For in him were all universals, universal flesh, universal soul; and these universals have been raised upon the cross and purified by the Savior God, the Logos, the universal of all universals … he who is Jesus Christ"). See also *Adv. Ar.* 3.12. An interpretation of Victorinus's idea is given by Ellen Scully, "Physicalism as the Soteriological Extension of Marius Victorinus's Cosmology," *JECS* 26 (2018): 221–48.

28. See above, page 218. On the relevance of faith in Victorinus see the discussion since Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1910), 3:35–36 n. 1; criticized by Reinhold Schmid, *Marius Victorinus Rhetor und seine Beziehungen zu Augustin* (Kiel: Uebermuth, 1895), 68–80. See also Erdt, *Marius Victorinus*, 61–78; 139–73; and Vít Hušek, "Human Freedom according to the Earliest Latin Commentaries on Paul's Letters," *StPatr* 44 (2010): 385–87.

2. Origen

2.1. Commentary on Ephesians 1:4

Origen's exegesis of Eph 1:4 is known to us only through Jerome's commentary, which quotes extensively from Origen's lost exposition of this epistle. On the issue of the preexistence of souls, there is a passage containing a paraphrase, if not a quotation, of Origen's interpretation:

> But *another* [alius], who attempts to show that God is just because he chooses each, not on the basis of the prejudgement of his knowledge but on the basis of the merit of those chosen, *says that before there were visible creatures … there had been other invisible creatures in which were also souls which, for reasons known only to God, were cast down into that valley of tears* (see Ps. 83[84]:7).… *Therefore, before souls were cast down into the world, they say, and the world came to be with its inhabitants of living beings, itself cast down to the lowest rank* [in infimum deiectus], *God chose … those … who were holy and unstained before himself. But no one is chosen except out of a larger number, and where some are baser, there election is accomplished.* (Jerome, *Comm. Eph.* 1:4 [Heine])[29]

Also according to this exposition of Eph 1:4, souls as well as other created beings existed prior to the creation of the world. Unlike in Victorinus's account, however, here the world was not created as a place for souls to prove themselves and achieve perfection; it was created as a consequence of the fact that some had not proved themselves. If it had not been for the difference in merits prior to the incarnation of the souls, it would be unjust that rational beings—angels, humans, and the stars—differ from

29. "Alius vero qui Deum iustum conatur ostendere, quod non ex praeiudicio scientiae suae, sed ex merito electorum unumquemque eligat, dicit, ante visibiles creaturas … fuisse alias invisibiles creaturas, in quibus et animas quae ob quasdam causas soli Deo notas deiectae sint deorsum in vallem istam lacrymarum … Itaque priusquam animae, inquiunt, praecipitarentur in mundum, et mundus ex animabus fieret cum habitatricibus suis, in infimum ipse deiectus, elegit … (eos) qui erant sancti et immaculati. Nemo enim eligitur nisi de pluribus, et ubi sunt aliqui viliores ibi electio perpetratur" (PL 26:446d–447b). For the critical text, see Origen, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, in *Exegetica in Paulum Excerpta et Fragmenta*, vol. 14.4 of *Opere di Origene*, ed. Francesco Pieri (Rome: Città Nuova, 2009), 236–38. Italics in the translation signal the passages that Heine thinks are Origen's words.

each other, that people are born into very diverse conditions, or that God chose some people but not others.

> *So also the diversity of those born in this world reproves the justice of God if the merits of the souls have not preceded. For if, they say, we do not take these things in this way … it will [not be] in praise of his glory and grace that some have been chosen before the constitution of the world that they should be holy and blameless and have adoption through Jesus Christ, while others from the earliest creation have also been destined for perpetual punishment.* (*In Eph.* 1:5 [Heine])[30]

Presumably this interpretation can be regarded as generally faithful to Origen. There are two reasons for this claim: first, a very similar account can be found in his treatise *On Principles* (preserved, unfortunately, only in a passage translated into Latin by Rufinus); second, it appears in Rufinus's defense as evidence that Jerome too, who had become hostile toward Origen in the meantime, had originally spread his ideas (Rufinus, *Apol. Hier.* 1.29; 1.27).[31] With respect to the topic of this study, it is the former that is especially worth discussing in greater detail here.

2.2. *De principiis* 3.5.4

In the third book of *De principiis*, Origen interprets Eph 1:4 in order to support his argument that the descent from the original home in "what is invisible and eternal" does not only concern the souls that deserved it but

30. "ita et diversitas in hoc mundo nascentium justitiam Dei arguat, nisi animarum merita praecesserint. Si enim, inquiunt, haec non ita accipimus nec beneplacitum voluntatis Dei erit nec in laudem gloriae et gratiae ejus, alios elegisse ante constiutionem mundi, ut essent sancti et immaculati et haberent adoptionem per Jesum Christum; alios ultimae conditioni, et poenis perpetuis destinasse" (PL 26:449c).

31. Eph 1:4 is also used by the opponent in Origen's treatise *Or.* 5.5 in order to show that prayer is meaningless. In this treatise, Origen replies by referring to God's foreknowledge, not by referring to the precosmic merits of the souls (see *Or.* 6.5). This difference, however, is concerned with a change in Origen's strategy in speaking of preexistence, not merely with the exegesis of the line in question. See Adele Castagno Monaci, "L'idea della preesistenza delle anime e l'esegesi di Rm 9,9–21," in *Origeniana Secunda: Second colloque international des études origéniennes*, ed. Henri Crouzel and Antonio Quacquarelli (Rome: Ateneo, 1980), 76; Marguerite Harl, "La préexistence des âmes dans l'oeuvre d'Origène," in *Origeniana Quarta*, ed. Lothar Lies (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1987), 238–58.

also others—the sun, the moon, the stars, and angels—whose purpose in the world is to serve others (*Princ.* 3.5.4). Thus Origen:

> There has been a descent from higher to lower conditions not only on the part of those souls who have by the variety of their own movements deserved it, but also on the part of those who have been brought down, even against their will, from those higher invisible conditions to these lower visible ones, in order to be of service to the whole world.… And it was for the souls which on account of their excessive spiritual defects required these grosser and more solid bodies and also for the sake of those others for whom this arrangement was necessary that the present visible world was instituted. A descent, therefore, of all alike from higher to lower conditions appears to be indicated by the meaning of this word *katabole*.[32] (*Princ.* 3.5.4 [Butterworth])

The Greek expression καταβολή ("establishing," "founding"), which is used in Ephesians 1:4, was interpreted by Origen in terms of its etymology not merely as the "creation" of the world but literally as its "casting down" (*deicere, deorsum iacere*; *Princ.* 3.5.4). It is possible, though not certain, that this explanatory note was added by Rufinus in the process of translation; we have seen, however, that in his paraphrase of Origen's commentary Jerome too translated καταβολὴ κόσμου as "casting down the world to the lowest rank" ("in infimum deiectus").[33] It is very probable that the etymology comes from Origen himself, together with the whole idea.

In Origen's view, all rational beings were originally of a single nature, but on the basis of their own decision—their perseverance in being attached to the good, or their abandonment of it—they became diverse and received diverse positions in the world and diverse roles (*Princ.*

32. "De superioribus ad inferiora descensum est non solum ab his animabus, quae id motuum suorum varietate meruerunt, verum et ab his, qui ad totius mundi ministerium ex illis superioribus et invisibilibus ad haec inferiora et visibilia deducti sunt, licet non volentes.… (explerent obsequium mundo) et his animabus, quae ob nimios defectus mentis suae crassioribus istis et solidioribus indiguere corporibus, et propter eos, quibus hoc erat necessarium, mundus iste visibilis institutus est. Ex hoc ergo communiter omnium per hanc significantiam, id est per καταβολήν, a superioribus ad inferiora videtur indicari deductio." See the critical text in Origen, *Traité des principes*, ed. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, SC 252–53, 268 (Paris: Cerf, 1978–1980), 3:226.

33. See above, note 29.

2.8.3–4; 2.9.6).[34] Otherwise, such diversity would be unjust. In other words, the world was created as a place for beings that had not proved themselves that they could "practice" (*exerceri*) and then return to the original unity (*Princ*. 3.5.4).[35]

3. Origen and Victorinus Compared

As we have seen, Origen also maintained that the world is a training ground where souls have to prove themselves in order to return to the unity in their original home. Still, Victorinus's account differs from that of Origen: Victorinus does not posit merits (good or bad) according to which souls were diversified before their incarnation, nor does he regard the material world as a certain kind of correctional institution for those souls that failed to prove themselves. According to Victorinus, the world was created as the place where all souls are tested; prior to that, there was no other trial.

In Victorinus's opinion, the nature of the world is ambivalent and deceptive: a soul can be misled by it and forget about its true origin. Still, the material world provides useful, even essential experience, without which the soul cannot achieve perfection because it is not able to develop all its possibilities (see §1.1).

Unlike Origen, Victorinus does not claim that the souls were perfect in the beginning and that they were able lose that perfection and then win it back. The soul, according to Victorinus, is not originally perfect; on the contrary, it has to achieve perfection: it is not a mere substance in the divine knowledge but a substance that is completed and shaped by a relationship with another, which it animates and contemplates (see §1.2.3).

When explicating the verse in question, Victorinus is not worried about the justice of God, who chose only some souls. Instead, his interpretation seems to suggest that all souls had been sent into the world, but only some of them will allow Christ to save them, that is, free them from the imprisonment into which they had got themselves. Presumably, the ones that are chosen are those who, thanks to their faith, accept salvation and make it happen. By contrast, the question why souls and other rational beings have

34. On the reasons for abandoning the good, see Marguerite Harl, "Recherches sur l'origénisme d'Origène: la satiété (κόρος) de la contemplation comme motif de la chute des âmes," StPatr 8 (1966): 373–405.

35. See also Peter Heimann, *Erwähltes Schicksal: Präexistenz der Seele und christlicher Glaube im Denkmodell des Origenes*, TBF 5 (Tübingen: Katzmann, 1988), 162–66.

different destinies is crucial for Origen. God would be unjust if he did not respect the freedom of these beings, that is, if he did not take their previous (not future) merits into consideration. The souls that are guiltless are sent into the world to help those that have gone astray. In this respect Victorinus is much less concerned with moral issues than his predecessor.

I cannot confirm whether Victorinus was familiar with Origen's exposition of Eph 1:4.[36] I have not observed any formal correspondences during my analysis, but it must be noted that the comparison is complicated by the fact that the original of Origen's Greek exposition (which Victorinus, as a translator of Greek, could indisputably have read) is not available to us. The general similarity between the two conceptions—the original unity of the souls and other rational beings, their descent into the world, and their return to the beginning—can easily be accounted for by the Platonic-gnostic inspiration both authors shared.[37] What I find interesting is the difference between the two authors I have tried to show here.

4. Conclusion: Plotinus Compared with Origen and Victorinus

As for the troublesome paradox posed in the Platonic tradition by the question why the souls are incarnated,[38] both Origen and Victorinus attempted to find a Christian solution, although each provided a slightly different one. In the conclusion, I will compare their answers with the ideas of Origen's younger contemporary Plotinus, as they appear in his treatise "On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies" (*Enn.* 4.8). This will help us to understand better the differing emphases of our two authors.

In the first place, Plotinus points out the divergence in Plato's opinions regarding this issue (Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.8.1.23–50)[39] and posits three possible

36. De Leusse also does not presuppose Victorinus's familiarity with Origen ("Problème de la préexistence," 227–30).

37. See André-Jean Festugière, *Les doctrines de l'âme*, vol. 3 of *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1953), 63–96; Heimann, *Erwähltes Schicksal*, 13–122. I have tried to summarize the discussion concerning Victorinus's possible Neoplatonic and gnostic sources in Lenka Karfíková, "Victorinus, (Marius—)," in *d'Ulpien à Zoticus*, vol. 7 of *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, ed. Richard Goulet (Paris: CNRS, 2018), 162–66.

38. In addition to the work by Festugière cited in the previous note, see Émile Bréhier, *La philosophie de Plotin*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 2008), 78–82.

39. See Plato, *Phaed.* 62b3–6; 67c6–d2; *Crat.* 400c1–9; *Phaedr.* 246b6–c6; 248c5–8; *Resp.* 514a2–b6; 619d1–7; *Tim.* 34a8–35a1.

answers to the question: the soul is either incarnated voluntarily (ἑκοῦσα), from necessity (ἀναγκασθεῖσα), or in still another way (*Enn.* 4.8.2.5–6). As we have seen, Plotinus's own analysis shows that the world soul is not truly incarnated; instead, it sends into the animated universe "the last of its powers" and organizes the universe without yielding to it.[40] By contrast, individual souls become particular in their concern, because it is difficult for them to stay together with the others. During their struggle for the particular instead of the whole, they become weaker, close themselves off, and isolate themselves, yielding to the part they were supposed to maintain guard over; in this part, they are imprisoned. This is what Plotinus calls the descent or the fall of the individual soul; and it is difficult for the soul to set itself free from the prison of the body and of sense perception and to rise to contemplation. Even the particular soul, however, is a being that has a double life, contemplating and embodied, and it will never yield to the body completely (*Enn.* 4.8.4.10–35, 8.1–23).

According to Plotinus, it is possible for the descent to be both voluntary and necessary. These do not exclude each other because the soul descends into something worse only involuntarily, but at the same time, this movement is carried out by the soul itself (*Enn.* 4.8.5.3–4, 7–10). On one hand, it can certainly be argued that God sends souls into bodies, because it is for the benefit of the animated universe, and, at the same time, it is natural for each thing to create and give rise to other things (*Enn.* 4.8.5.10–14, 6.1–28). On the other hand, individual souls descend to the body voluntarily (ῥοπῇ αὐτεξουσίῳ; *Enn.* 4.8.5.26); this is probably the reason why they commit a "transgression" (ἁμαρτία), which remains a minor one if they do not immerse themselves in the body more than is necessary for its animation. In this way, the souls gain different degrees of dignity (ἀξία) and have different standings before the divine judgment (*Enn.* 4.8.5.16–20).

Plotinus thinks positively of the experience of the descent, arguing that a being that is too weak cannot pursue good determinedly unless it gains knowledge of evil. He even claims that otherwise the soul cannot make use of all its capacities:

> If it escapes quickly it takes no harm by acquiring a knowledge of evil and coming to know the nature of wickedness, and manifesting its powers, making apparent works and activities which if they had

40. See above, page 225.

> remained quiescent in the spiritual world would have been of no use because they would never have come into actuality; and the soul itself would not have known the powers it had if they had not come out and been revealed. Actuality everywhere reveals completely hidden potency, in a way obliterated and non-existent because it does not yet truly exist.[41] (*Enn.* 4.8.5.27–35 [Armstrong])

The experience of the material world and the evil present in it, in Plotinus's understanding, makes it possible for a soul to acquire better knowledge of what is good and learn to appreciate the original home in the intelligible sphere if the soul is too weak to appreciate it without such an experience:

> It is possible for it [the soul] to emerge again having acquired the whole story of what it saw and experienced here and learnt what it is like to be There, and, by the comparison of things which are, in a way, opposite, learning, in a way more clearly, the better things. For the experience of evil is a clearer knowledge of the Good for those whose power is too weak to know evil with clear intellectual certainty before experiencing it.[42] (*Enn.* 4.8.7.11–17 [Armstrong])

By no means is it my intention to plunge into the difficult issues regarding the two Origens and their relationship to Plotinus or the Greek sources of Marius Victorinus (although it cannot be ruled out that he translated also this treatise of Plotinus into Latin).[43] What I would like to point out is the

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41. κἂν μὲν θᾶττον φύγῃ, οὐδὲν βέβλαπται γνῶσιν κακοῦ προσλαβοῦσα καὶ φύσιν κακίας γνοῦσα τάς τε δυνάμεις ἄγουσα αὐτῆς εἰς τὸ ἃ ἐν τῷ ἀσωμάτῳ ἠρεμοῦντα μάτην τε ἂν ἦν εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ἀεὶ οὐκ ἰόντα, τήν τε ψυχὴν αὐτὴν ἔλαθεν ἂν ἃ εἶχεν οὐκ ἐκφανέντα οὐδὲ πρόοδον λαβόντα· εἴπερ πανταχοῦ ἡ ἐνέργεια τὴν δύναμιν ἔδειξε κρυφθεῖσαν ἂν ἀπάντῃ καὶ οἷον ἀφανισθεῖσαν καὶ οὐκ οὖσαν μηδέποτε ὄντως οὖσαν.

42. ἄλλως τε καὶ δυνατὸν αὐτῇ πάλιν ἐξαναδῦναι, ἱστορίαν ὧν ἐνταῦθα εἶδέ τε καὶ ἔπαθε προσλαβούσῃ καὶ μαθούσῃ, οἷον ἄρα ἐστὶν ἐκεῖ εἶναι, καὶ τῇ παραθέσει τῶν οἷον ἐναντίων οἷον σαφέστερον τὰ ἀμείνω μαθούσῃ. Γνῶσις γὰρ ἐναργεστέρα τἀγαθοῦ ἡ τοῦ κακοῦ πεῖρα οἷς ἡ δύναμις ἀσθενεστέρα, ἢ ὥστε ἐπιστήμῃ τὸ κακὸν πρὸ πείρας γνῶναι.

43. The content of the "books of the Platonists," which Augustine read in Marius Victorinus's translation (*Conf.* 8.2.3), is unfortunately not known. Robert J. O'Connell includes *Enn.* 4.8 in the collection. See O'Connell, *Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386–391* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1968), 9, 154–61. This, however, is a rather solitary opinion; see, e.g., an overview by Olivier Du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin: Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966), 70. According to Du Roy, the similarities between *Enn.* 4.8 and Augustine's works are quite indistinct (*L'intelligence de la foi*, 65 n. 1; 257 n. 1; 274 n. 3;

systematic way in which Victorinus's idea of the incarnation of souls can be linked to that of Plotinus in two aspects: in the presupposition of the world soul, which is not embodied in the true sense—it definitely does not fall into the body; and in the conviction that experiencing the material world is useful for the soul, which would not develop all its possibilities otherwise, being too weak to understand its intelligible nature.[44] Both these motifs also appear in Porphyry, the latter even in a fragment, which was very probably translated by Victorinus into Latin, because it is quoted by Augustine: "(Porphyry) also says that God put the soul into the world so that it could learn the evil of matter and return to the Father" (Augustine, *Civ.* 10.30).[45]

474, 476). I tried to summarize the discussion concerning the content of the "books of the Platonists" in Karfíková, "Victorinus, (Marius—)," 157–58. On the two "Origens," is very probable that the Christian theologian Origen is not the same person as Origen the disciple of Ammonius, who—together with Plotinus and Erennius—agreed to keep secret the teaching of their teacher and who authored the treatises *On Demons* and *That the King Alone Is Creator* (Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 3.24–32; 20.41). According to Porphyry's testimony, Plotinus was too shy to speak when Origen visited his school one day (*Vit. Plot.* 14.20–25); Longinus, again according to Porphyry's testimony, called Origen—together with Ammonius—a distinguished Platonist, who does not entrust his teaching to writing (*Vit. Plot.* 20.36–39). Eusebius of Caesarea (*Hist. eccl.* 6.19.2–10) recorded Porphyry's testimony to the effect that as a young man he knew Origen; and he also recorded his statements about Origen's originally Greek education and his conversion to Christianity, as well as his teacher Ammonius's originally Christian orientation (the last two pieces of information are challenged by Eusebius as erroneous, because Origen had been Christian from his childhood and Ammonius remained Christian: among other works, he wrote the treatise *The Harmony of Moses and Jesus*). An overview of the opinions regarding whether there were one or two Origens and the mysterious Ammonius can be found in Frederic M. Schroeder, "Ammonius Saccas," *ANRW* 36.1:493–526. A systematic comparison of Origen and Plotinus on the teaching of the soul is provided by René Cadiou, *La jeunesse d'Origène: Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie au début du IIIe siècle* (Paris: Institut Catholique de Paris, 1935), 224–27; Henri Crouzel, *Origène et Plotin: Comparaisons doctrinales* (Paris: Téqui, 1992), 179–404.

44. That Victorinus stands very close to Plotinus on the second point was already pointed out by de Leusse ("Problème de la préexistence," 230–35). However, he interprets the first point quite differently (225–27).

45. "Dicit etiam ad hoc Deum animam mundo dedisse, ut materiae cognoscens mala ad Patrem recurreret." For the critical text, see Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 2 vols., ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, CCSL 47–48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955). On the world soul, which does not turn towards what it begot, see Porphyry, *Sent.* 30.

What also becomes apparent over the course of the comparison with Plotinus is the difference in the emphasis we saw in Origen's conception (even though it probably cannot be presumed he was familiar with Plotinus), also in two aspects. (1) Plotinus posits both the free choice of a soul, which leads to its embodiment, and a divine intention to send souls into bodies for the benefit of the whole universe. Origen, on the other hand, seems to have divided these roles between two groups of souls: those deserving incarnation, and those who do not descend voluntarily but in order to serve others. (2) Unlike Origen, Plotinus seems to have wondered about the fact that a single soul can include diverse souls, that is, that there can be souls endowed with contemplation actualized in different degrees, just as a single genus includes diverse species, some better and some worse (*Enn.* 4.8.3.10–13). These two aspects of the fellowship of souls, namely, their unity and diversity, are again split by Origen: in this case, between the original single nature of all spiritual beings, and their diversification that they merited on the basis of their choice. As we can see, in both cases, (1) and (2), for the sake of moral clarity Origen tries to keep separate what Plotinus keeps together—surely at the expense of comprehensibility, but, at the same time, in the interest of the greater richness of his account.

In conclusion, what has become more apparent through the comparison with Plotinus is the contours of both Christian conceptions discussed in this study: Origen's concern for the moral justice of God and of the universe; and Victorinus's belief in the value of the created world, in which the soul, having experienced another, may fulfill its potential and become fully itself.

On the possibility that Augustine read Porphyry in Victorinus's translation, see Pierre Courcelle, *Les lettres Grecques en occident: De Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris: de Boccard, 1948), 167; Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire: Antécédents et postérité* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1963), 39–42.

Epistolarity, Commentary, and Profession of Faith: Reading Marius Victorinus's Fictional Exchange with Candidus in the Context of His Conversion

Josef Lössl

Marius Victorinus's anti-Arian works have been frequently studied, either from a historical-theological (history of doctrine) perspective (as interventions in a particular phase of the Arian controversy or as contributions to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity), or from a philosophical perspective, as a highly original contribution in the history of Western metaphysics.[1] All recent studies, moreover, the present one included, are profoundly indebted to the monumental groundwork laid by Pierre Hadot in his landmark volumes.[2]

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1. These volumes include *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem de generatione divina epistula*, *Marii Victorini rhetoris urbis Romae ad Candidum Arrianum*, *Candidi Arriani ad Maruim Victorinum rhetorem epistula* 2, *Adversus Arium* 1A, *Adversus Arium* 1B, *Adversus Arium* 2–4, *Hymni de trinitate primus, secundus, tertius*. Citations in this essay follow Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971); see also Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques sur la Trinité*, 2 vols., trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960); and Marius Victorinus, *Afri Opera theologica*, ed. Albrecht Locher, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1976). For a recent summary of the state of research see Volker Henning Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:122–47. For historical-theological perspectives, see, e.g., Richard P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 531–56; Jörg Ulrich, *Die Anfänge der abendländischen Rezeption des Nizänums*, 2nd ed., PTS 39 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 244–63. For a philosophical perspective, as a relatively recent contribution, see Matthias Baltes, *Marius Victorinus: Zur Philosophie in seinen theologischen Schriften*, BzAK 174 (Munich: Saur, 2002).

2. The most important contributions are Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*; Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2 vols., CEAug 33 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes,

Slightly less attention perhaps than to the philosophical and theological *content* of the anti-Arian works has been paid to the way in which Victorinus employed in them certain literary-rhetorical and philosophical-commentarial techniques. To be sure, this aspect has been covered, too, for example by Hadot, who detected great amounts of Porphyrian sources in the texts, which would link Victorinus with the philosophy of the commentators and gnostic-hermetic traditions, or by Manlio Simonetti and Pierre Nautin, who first interpreted the correspondence between Victorinus and Candidus as a fictional construct devised by Victorinus.[3] This latter hypothesis also, if correct, has implications for the understanding of Victorinus's compilation of anti-Arian treatises as commentarial works. Recent research on the *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, an earlier work

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1968); Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971); and Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus: Questions et hypothèses," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 115–25. For the latter item, see also the review article by Luise Abramowski, "Nicänismus und Gnosis im Rom des Bischofs Liberius: Der Fall des Marius Victorinus," *ZAC* 8 (2005): 513–66.

3. Manlio Simonetti, "Nota sull'Ariano Candido," *Orpheus* 10 (1963): 151–57; Pierre Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien," in *L'homme devant Dieu: Mélanges offerts au Père Henri de Lubac, Exégèse et Patristique*, Théologie 56 (Paris: Aubier, 1963), 1:309–20. It is possible to qualify this exchange as "epistolary" and "dialogic." Victorinus himself, in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.1, refers to Candidus's first "letter" as *sermo*, which can mean a voice in an epistolary exchange or a dialogue. He also refers to this *sermo* as part of his own work (*huius operis*), and as a form of speech in which arguments are put forward (*proposita*) and commented on (*tractata*). See *Adv. Ar*. 1A.1: "In primo sermone huius operis et multa et fortiora quaedam etiam horum, o amice Candide, proposita atque tractata sunt abs te" (*Opera pars prior*, 54.4–6; "My dear Candidus: In the first discourse of this work, you proffered and developed many arguments, and some of them are stronger than the arguments of these men"). English translations of *Adversus Arium* 1A–4 follow Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatises on the Trinity*, trans. Mary T. Clark, FC 69 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981). Links to gnostic-Hermetic traditions have been pursued by Michel Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 7–114, as well as Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus: Questions"; see also Abramowski, "Nicänismus und Gnosis," and the contributions by Chiara Tommasi and John Turner in the present volume. On Victorinus's role in the tradition of "philosophy of the commentators," see Richard Sorabji, "The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle," in *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. Richard Sorabji (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 19–20. Porphyrian sources are collected in Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, vol. 2; see also Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus: Questions."

of Victorinus, has thrown additional light on his activity and competence as a commentator, which has also implications for the understanding of his anti-Arian works.[4]

The present essay intends to draw out some of the observations made by the studies mentioned above and explore further some of the possible implications of recent findings. It suggests that while the philosophical-commentarial character of Victorinus's anti-Arian works has of course long been recognized, there continues to be room for studies that attempt to develop a better understanding of what this means regarding their immediate context and purpose as well as the biographical and social-historical situation of their author.

Accordingly, the essay will consider three aspects. It will first of all focus on the biographical and social-historical context of Victorinus's anti-Arian works, in particular the epistolary exchange with Candidus.[5] This perspective will remain a live one throughout the chapter. Second, it will identify and discuss the use and function of commentarial elements in the exchange. And third, revisiting some historical-critical questions regarding the exchange, it will discuss how epistolary-dialogic elements are used together with other commentarial elements employed in the exchange to commend to its readers specific philosophical-theological insights, insights of Victorinus, which originated in a very specific biographical and historical context but then also resounded in a much wider historical-theological and intellectual-historical space.

4. See for this now the oeuvre of Thomas Riesenweber: Marius Victorinus, *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, ed. Thomas Riesenweber, BSGRT (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013); Riesenweber, *C. Marius Victorinus, Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, vol. 1, *Prolegomena*, vol. 2, *Kritischer Kommentar und Indices*, UALG 120 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015). For a concise and compressed analysis of the commentarial elements in the *Commenta in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, see Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:124–27.

5. This exchange, understood here as a fictional epistolary dialogue, constitutes the first part of the oeuvre and consists of *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem de generatione divina epistula*, *Marii Victorini rhetoris urbis Romae ad Candidum Arrianum*, *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem epistula* 2, and *Adversus Arium* 1A (= *Adv. Ar.* 1.1–47). It is understood to have been completed by 358.

1. Rhetor of Rome: Reception-Historical and Bioprosopographical Aspects

Marius Victorinus is known as a difficult and obscure, even opaque, author, of whose life relatively little is known. Yet his role in shaping the Western mind is fundamental, if we think, for example, of his influence on Western Platonism through his translations of Neoplatonic authors (Augustine's *libri platonicorum*, *Conf.* 7.9.13), on Augustine's Trinitarian thought, or on Boethius's philosophical and theological endeavours.[6] His works extend across a wide range of disciplines, grammar, rhetoric, philosophy,[7] biblical exegesis, and theology. However, in the areas of philosophy and theology he is eclipsed by two later figures, Boethius and Augustine. In many respects his works were absorbed into theirs, so that only traces remain.[8]

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6. On the first two accounts see Volker H. Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *AugLex* 3.7–8 (2010): 1181–85. Drecoll is skeptical about any direct influence of Marius Victorinus on Augustine's Trinitarian thought but emphasizes Victorinus's importance for fourth-century Latin Neoplatonism and sees him as a "catalyst" for the reception of Neoplatonism in Latin theology (1184). On Boethius, see now Claudio Moreschini, *A Christian in Toga: Boethius, Interpreter of Antiquity and Christian Theologian*, BERg 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), *passim*.

7. See *Christlicher Platonismus: Die theologischen Schriften des Marius Victorinus*, trans. Pierre Hadot and Ursula Brenke, BAW.AC (Zurich: Artemis, 1967), 26: "The structure of the full oeuvre corresponds to the *trivium*—grammar, rhetoric, dialectic—and arises from Victorinus's effort to make Greek dialectic and philosophy available to the Latin-speaking world."

8. Telling in this regard are the remains of his translation of Porphyry's *Eisagoge*, which were first collected by Lorenzo Minio-Paluello and then again by Hadot. See Aristotle, *Latinus I 6–7: Categoriarum Supplementa*, ed. Lorenzo Minio-Paluello (Bruges: de Brouwer, 1966), 63–68, Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 371–80. Hadot believes he can add some further fragments to those already collected by Minio-Paluello (*Marius Victorinus*, 367–68). The reason these fragments are extant is that they are cited by Boethius in the first edition of his commentary. Later Boethius replaced Victorinus's translation with his own translation, which he used for the second edition of his commentary. As a consequence, Victorinus's translation as a whole was lost. Only fragments remain. From the way Boethius refers to Victorinus's text it is apparent that he was not satisfied with Victorinus's translation. Boethius's approach to translation was more philosophical and conceptual than that of Victorinus, which was more rhetorical. Boethius translated word-for-word, where Victorinus tended to render longer syntactic units, which led to a more literary translation. Tellingly, Boethius refers to Victorinus as a *rhetor*, who translated the *Isagoge* before him, and finds fault with Victorinus's philosophical understanding of his source text in a

His anti-Arian works, dating from the late 350s and early 360s, were written before the crucial doctrinal developments of the fourth century (in the run-up to the Council of Constantinople in 381); they were also written by a layperson with no apparent immediate ecclesiastical impact,[9] and they were written in Latin. The main theological contributions to the debate in the second half of the fourth century were written in Greek, and by bishops with at least some clout within the church and the civil administration.[10]

As a biblical exegete with extant commentaries on three Pauline epistles (Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians), Victorinus was soon superseded by later authors, for example by Ambrosiaster, whose commentary on the Pauline epistles remained extant in its entirety. Perhaps this is also due to the influence of Jerome's negative verdict, who called into question Victorinus's competence as a biblical exegete, describing him as engrossed in secular learning (that is, in grammar and rhetoric) and ignorant of Holy Scripture.[11] Matthias Baltes, on the other hand, a modern admirer and systematizer of his philosophical thought, sees him more as a

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number of places. See, e.g., Boethius, *In Isag. Porph. sec.* 5.24, 347.25–348.1 (cited in Minio-Paluello, *Latinus I 6–7*, xxxvi): "huius libri seriem primo quidem ab rhetore Victorino, post vero a nobis, latina oratione conversam." And see, e.g., *In Isag. Porph. pr.* 2.6, 95.14–96.2 (cited in Minio-Paluello, *Latinus I 6–7*, xxxviii): "quod Victorinus intellexisse minus videtur … in loco ubi habet hoc modo scriptum: 'omnes namque res ex forma et materia consistunt, ipsa autem forma inrationabilis est'; tollendum est 'inrationabilis est' et dicendum 'proportionabilis est'" ("it seems that Victorinus understands [Aristotle] less well … where he writes: 'All things consist of form and matter; but the form itself is irrational.' 'Is irrational' needs to be replaced with 'is proportional'"). For the critical text, see Boethius, *In Isagogen Porphyrii commentaria*, ed. Georgio Schepss and Samuel B. Brandt, CSEL 48 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1906). For a detailed comparison of Victorinus's and Boethius's translations see Sten Ebbesen, "Boethius as Translator and Aristotelian Commentator," in *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity: The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition between Rome and Baghdad*, ed. John Watt and Josef Lössl (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 122–28.

9. On the limited reception of Victorinus's work in his lifetime and immediately afterward, see Ulrich, *Anfänge der abendländischen*, 244–45.

10. Compared to that of a bishop such as Hilary of Poitiers, Victorinus's profile was low; for Hilary's profile as a shaper of doctrine and church life and opposition leader against Constantius II, see Hanns Christof Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers und die Bischofsopposition gegen Konstantius II: Untersuchungen zur dritten Phase des arianischen Streites (337–361)*, PTS 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011).

11. Jerome, *Comm. Gal.* 1, prol.; discussed by Andrew Cain, "Jerome's Pauline Commentaries between East and West: Tradition and Innovation in the Commentary on Galatians," in Lössl and Watt, *Interpreting the Bible*, 91–110, 95.

commentator and criticizes him for that, for being a writer who ever only tackled individual questions and was only interested in answering *them*. Nowhere in his work—thus Baltes—can we find an attempt at a comprehensive, systematic, and coherent summary of his philosophical outlook.[12]

The impossibility of finding the "whole" (Baltes: "den ganzen") Victorinus is already mentioned by Hadot in his monumental *Porphyre et Victorinus*, under a chapter heading that reads "Le problème de Victorinus: *Quellenforschung* et comprehension."[13] Hadot presents it like a quantum problem: when we focus on sources, we lose sight of Victorinus's own thought. But if we focus on the latter, we run the risk of losing sight of his sources and of his literary techniques. In an attempt to tackle this challenge, the present essay takes its starting point from Victorinus's biography and social-historical context. There are limitations to this approach, posed by the available sources and their bias, but there may also be the opportunity of a reappraisal.

Most of the limited biographical knowledge that we have of Victorinus we owe to Jerome and Augustine.[14] The reports of both these authors need

12. Baltes, *Marius Victorinus*, 2–3. For a more positive evaluation of Victorinus's philosophical exegesis (viz. its systematic merits), focusing on his Pauline commentaries, see Stephen Cooper, "Philosophical Exegesis in Marius Victorinus's Commentaries on Paul," in Watt and Lössl, *Interpreting the Bible*, 67–89. For an appreciation of the systematic character of Victorinus's reflections on the Trinity see Werner Beierwaltes, "Trinitarisches Denken. Substantia und Subsistentia bei Marius Victorinus," in *Platonismus im Christentum*, PhAb 73 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998), 43. Already Paul Henry had called Victorinus's Trinitarian works "the first systematic exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity." See Henry, "The *Adversus Arium* of Marius Victorinus, the First Systematic Exposition of the Doctrine of the Trinity," *JTS* NS 1 (1950): 42–55. But although Hadot confirms this when he says that Victorinus is unique among early Christians in drawing out the inner logical necessity of the Trinitarian relations (*Christlicher Platonismus*, 17), he also observes that Victorinus's theological work as a whole lacks an overall conception but rather is a series of repeated attempts at discussing the problem at hand (35), which confirms Baltes. No doubt Victorinus's work contains systematic elements, but they are scattered and need to be collected and arranged by a systematic interpreter.

13. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:11–38, esp. 34–38.

14. Jerome, *Vir. ill*. 101; *Chron*. 354; *Comm. Gal*. praef.: "qui Romae me puero rhetoricam docuit." For the critical text, see *In Epistulam Pauli ad Galatas*, ed. Giacomo Raspanti, CCSL 77A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006). Cain translates this: "who taught Rhetoric at Rome when I was a boy" ("Jerome's Pauline Commentaries," 95). The Latin here does not necessarily entail that Jerome was a student of Victorinus; *Chron*

to be treated with caution. Jerome has a somewhat brief entry on Victorinus in his *De viris illustribus*. After what we heard already about Jerome's lack of appreciation of Victorinus's competence as a Christian (patristic)—as opposed to a classical, or pagan, literary-rhetorical—exegete, its brevity should not come as a surprise. Jerome labels him *Afer*, "originating from the province of Africa." We are informed that "he taught rhetoric in Rome under the princeps Constantius and, handing himself over, in extreme old age, to the Christian faith, wrote several quite impenetrable books *Against Arius* in the dialectical manner, which can only be understood by the erudite, and commentaries on the Pauline epistles" (*Vir. ill.* 101).[15]

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354 rather suggests that only Donatus (the grammarian) was his teacher ("Donatus grammaticus praeceptor meus"; Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2). For the critical text see *Confessionum libri XIII*, ed. Luc Verheijen, CCSL 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), 114–16. The epitaph of a granddaughter, Accia Maria Tulliana, refers to Victorinus as *rhetor* (*CIL* 6.31934), i.e., a professor of rhetoric. For the expression *rhetor* (a mere teacher of rhetoric) as opposed to the more honorable *orator* (a man of action who uses rhetoric, e.g., in law and politics), see now Thomas Habinek, "Was There a Latin Second Sophistic?," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic*, ed. Daniel S. Richter and William A. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 43–45. On the other hand, the expression *rhetor urbis Romae* (to be found in Augustine) was an official title, which distinguished its owner as the holder of the city's *prima cathedra*. Other testimonies are less reliable. Whether the fellow sophist (if this is how ὁ ἐμαυτὸς πολίτης can be understood here) to whom Libanius, *Ep*. 1493 (dated 365), refers (τὸν γενναῖον Βικτωρῖνον τὸν ἐμαυτοῦ πολίτην) is identical with our Victorinus is doubtful. For the critical text see Libanius, *Opera*, vol. 11, *Epistulae*, ed. Richard Foerster, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1927). Πολίτης is usually understood to be a fellow citizen. Cassiodorus's assumption (*Inst*. 2.5.3) that Victorinus later joined the ranks of bishops (*ex oratore episcopus*) is mistaken and probably made under the impression of his theological writings; or else Cassiodorus confused Marius Victorinus with Victorinus the bishop of Pettau in the late third and early fourth century; thus already Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 21; see also 13–43, a comprehensive discussion of ancient sources and testimonies.

15. Jerome, *Vir. ill*. 101: "Victorinus, natione Afer, Romae sub Constantio principe rhetoricam docuit et in extrema senectute Christi se tradens fidei scripsit *Adversus Arium* libros more dialectico valde obscuros, qui nisi ab eruditis non intelleguntur, et commentarios in Apostolum." For the critical text, see *De viris illustribus*, ed. and trans. Aldo Ceresa-Gastaldo, BPat 12 (Florence: Nardini, 1988), 206–7. (All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.) Ceresa-Gastaldo here seems to assume that Jerome understood *Adversus Arium* and *Commentarii in Apostolum* as proper titles, and Jerome may indeed have done so (*De viris illustribus*, 206). But in the case of *Adversus Arium* at least he may thus have been guilty of oversimplification. Clearly, not all parts of the work (if any), let alone the work as a whole, would have borne this

In the *Chronicle* Jerome notes for the year 354 that the rhetor Victorinus and the grammarian Donatus—only the latter of whom he identifies as his teacher[16]—received special honors for their outstanding achievements. Of the two, however, only Victorinus was also found deserving of having a statue erected—presumably of himself—on the forum of Trajan (*Chron*. 354).[17]

Much information also relevant for our topic can be gleaned from these texts. The epithet *Afer* could be designed to align Victorinus with several other great Christian rhetors who originated from Africa, Arnobius and Lactantius, perhaps even Augustine.[18] The principate of Constantius II in the West, if intended to mean his undivided rule, cannot date back to before 350. From 337, the date of Constantine the Great's death, to 350, Constantius's brother Constans had been Augustus in the West.[19] In 350, Constans was killed when the commander of the imperial guard in Gaul, Magnentius, usurped the throne. A war with Constantius II ensued, which

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title. Nor is the title attested in the manuscripts. For a detailed discussion see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 255.

16. On the basis of this testimony therefore it would be incorrect to assume (as has unfortunately been done in some studies) either that Jerome was taught rhetoric by Victorinus (see n. 14) or that Victorinus was a grammarian. That he wrote an *Ars grammatica* does not make him a grammarian but must be seen in context with all the other sources cited in note 14.

17. Jerome, *Chron.* 354: "Victorinus rhetor et Donatus grammaticus praeceptor meus Romae insignes habentur. E quibus Victorinus etiam statuam in Foro Traiani meruit." For the critical text see Jerome, *Chronicon Eusebii a Graeco Latine redditum et continuatum*, 2nd ed., ed. Rudolph Helm, GCS 47, Eusebius Werke 7 (Berlin: Akademie, 1956), 239. Augustine reports that the statue was erected on the Forum Romanum (*Conf.* 8.2.3). For the implications and significance of this honor see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 32–33. It would have distinguished Victorinus even among the senatorial ranks, to which he seems to have belonged. For the title *clarissimus* attributed to him in the manuscript tradition of the anti-Arian works see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 31–32. Apart from his renown as a rhetor, however, we do not know of anything that would have prompted these honors. Hadot's account suggests that the honors came late in Victorinus's life and marked the end of his career, not the beginning of a highly active role in government, as for example in Themistius's case (more on whom below).

18. If we go back further in time, we could add Cyprian, Tertullian, and the pagan Apuleius as notable Latin prose authors of African origin.

19. There was a third brother, Constantine II, who had ruled in the extreme west. But he was killed in 340 after invading Constans's territory (Aurelius Victor, *Caes*. 41.21).

only ended in 353 with the defeat of Magnentius. In fact, it seems that after a brief reprieve in 354 it was not until 356 that Constantius II gained full control of the West, as he had to put down another military revolt in Gaul under Silvanus in mid-355, after which he put Julian in charge of Gaul as Caesar.[20] It was only after these events, in spring 357, that he was able to visit Rome, for the first and indeed only time.[21] His preferred base was, of course, Constantinople, which emerged around this time as the new or second Rome.[22]

Now, if Victorinus received such high honors in the year 354, as reported by Jerome and later confirmed by Augustine, his activity in Rome must have stretched back some considerable time before then, years, certainly, if not decades. Why does Jerome refer to that period as the principate of Constantius? Leaving aside the fact that talk of a principate does sound a bit old-fashioned for that period, Jerome may have done this from hindsight, projecting Constantius's sole rule back to the death of Constantine. Perhaps Jerome was referring from hindsight to that entire period as Constantius's principate, that is, from the death of Constantine the Great in 337 to Constantius's death in 361. What may also be worth mentioning is that Jerome refers to Constantius in a fairly neutral way, not showing any sign of the invective often evident in later sources as well as in much modern scholarship.[23]

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20. See for this Glen L. Thompson, "Constantius II and the First Removal of the Altar of Victory," in *A Tall Order: Writing the Social History of the Ancient World; Essays in Honor of William V. Harris*, ed. Jean-Jacques Aubert and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi (Munich: Saur, 2005), 86.

21. The main source for the visit is Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gest.* 16.10.1–20; for a discussion of the visit (and current literature) see Thompson, "Constantius II."

22. See for this now Lucy Grig and Gavin G. Kelly, "Introduction: From Rome to Constantinople," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin G. Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1–30, esp. 12–25. See also the essay by John Vanderspoel in that volume, "A Tale of Two Cities: Themistius on Rome and Constantinople," 223–40. The expressions "new Rome" (νέα Ῥώμη) and "second Rome" (δευτέρα Ῥώμη) were in fact first used around this time by Themistius, *Or.* 3.42a (delivered in 357) and *Or.* 14.184a.

23. Influential hostile contemporaries include Athanasius (with his *History of the Arians*) and, from ca. 360, or even later, Hilary of Poitiers (with his invective *Against Constantius*). Jerome believed that the latter work was written after the death of Constantius, which fits with his generally neutral stance (*Vir. ill.* 100). See for this Ilona Opelt, "Hilarius von Poitiers als Polemiker," *VC* 27 (1973): 208 n. 24. Until ca. 359 Hilary had tried to remain on good terms with the emperor. Marius Victorinus in his

Based on the entry in Jerome's *Chronicle*, therefore, we cannot know exactly when Victorinus was "rhetor of Rome," or how old he was when Jerome referred to him as *in extrema senectute* (*Vir. ill*. 101), which was sometime between 354 and 359. Speculations that he could have been born in the 280s or early 290s and that he would therefore have been in his seventies—or even eighties!—when he was honored with a statue (354) and converted to Christianity, two or three years later (356 or 357), are not entirely groundless.[24] However, they are, especially when considered narrowly, with a view to an assumed precise meaning of *in extrema senectute*, as was done by Albert H. Travis in a famous study, nevertheless largely speculative.[25]

For the years following Constantius's death, a note in Augustine's *Confessions* suggests that Victorinus gave up his chair of rhetoric under the reign of Julian, in response to Julian's law prohibiting Christians from holding public teaching posts, issued in 362.[26] The exact nature, extent, and

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anti-Arian works did not directly criticize the emperor, although he attacked the theological parties whom he supported. Later in the fourth century pagan critics emerged too, e.g., Ammianus. This latter criticism also influenced modern scholars. Only occasionally attempts are made to present alternative views; for an example see, notably, Richard Klein, *Constantius II und die christliche Kirche* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977).

24. See the discussion on the date of birth in Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 24–25.

25. Albert H. Travis, "Marius Victorinus: A Biographical Note," *HTR* 36 (1943): 83–90. This is not to say that Travis's study is not extremely useful. Nevertheless, it has to be treated with caution. For a cautious note, see also Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *AugLex*, 1181: "Die von Hadot etablierte Chronologie ist mit erheblichen Unsicherheiten belastet. Schon die Lebensdaten von M. V. sind ungewiss" ("The chronology established by Hadot is burdened with considerable points of uncertainty. Even the dates of Victorinus's life are not certain").

26. See Cod. theod. 13.3.5; Julian, *Ep*. 61. The intention of the legislation is not clear from the wording of the edict. It only becomes clear when put in the context of Julian's writings. Augustine relates that it was Simplicianus, the later bishop of Milan, who reported him "quod imperatoris Iuliani temporibus lege data prohibiti sunt christiani docere litteraturam et oratoriam—quam legem ille amplexus loquacem scholam deserere maluit quam verbum tuum" (*Conf.* 8.5.10; "In the time of the emperor Julian when a law was promulgated forbidding Christians to teach literature and rhetoric, Victorinus welcomed the law and preferred to abandon the school of loquacious chattering rather than your word"). For the critical text see Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*. Translations follow *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

impact of that law, including questions such as whether it was only one law or whether there were several laws, or whether it only affected teachers, or whether students were affected as well, are disputed. On the face of it the law targeted all those who in their practice rejected the religious traditions underpinning classical education, in other words, those who did not, ethically and cultically, live up to what they taught.[27] In practice, this affected mainly Christian professors,[28] though to what extent remains doubtful. In a recent essay Neil McLynn has suggested that Victorinus's resignation in 362 might have been compelled not so much by the direct force of the law but indirectly by moral pressure that had begun building up since his conversion: Should he as a Christian continue to enjoy the privileges of a rhetor of Rome, or should he not rather adopt a more austere ethical code?[29] However, we do know from other cases that in the context of what Peter Brown once called "a drift into respectable Christianity," it was imaginable for high-profile (aristocratic) pagan converts to continue in their traditional roles and thus gradually secularize ancient pagan civic traditions.[30] A scenario such as that suggested by McLynn also presupposes a

27. Literally, Cod. theod. 13.3.5: "magistros studiorum doctoresque excellere oportet moribus primum, deinde facundia" ("Masters of studies and teachers must excel first in character, then in eloquence"). For the critical text, see *Codex Theodosianus*, ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer (Berlin: Weidmann, 1904–1905), 1.2:741. Translation follows Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions: A Translation with a Commentary, Glossary and Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 2:388.

28. See for this Neil McLynn, "Julian and the Christian Professors," in *Being Christian in Late Antiquity: A Festschrift for Gillian Clark*, ed. Carol Harrison, Carolyn Humfress, and Isabella Sandwell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 120–38, esp. 130–31.

29. McLynn, "Julian and the Christian Professors," 131. Comparing Victorinus with other high-ranking male converts during that period (e.g., Iunius Bassus or Firmicus Maternus), Michele Renee Salzman does not agree that they were under pressure to radically change their lifestyle. She speaks of "accommodation." See Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 224–25. The question is difficult to answer. Augustine was motivated by drawing a comparison between himself and Victorinus (*Conf.* 8.5.10). He had given up is chair of rhetoric in Milan even before his baptism in 387. Victorinus, in contrast, by Augustine's own account, would have held on to his position for several years after his baptism.

30. See for this the classic study by Peter Brown, "Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman Aristocracy," *JRS* 51 (1961): 9–10. Brown speaks of a "drift into a

much sharper division between pagan and Christian than might actually have existed, while it does not take into consideration allegiances to ecclesiastical factions, which played a role in Victorinus's case.

If the "books against Arius" that Jerome mentions are the same as the ones that are extant today, they were written no sooner than 358 and no later than 363.[31] At some time, therefore, after 354 and before 358 Victorinus must have converted to Christianity. A number of factors seem to narrow the window down further to the years between 355 and 357.[32] We have heard that Victorinus was honored with a statue in 354.[33] The way in which Augustine's report in *Confessions* confirms this fact suggests that it is unlikely that he was already Christian at this point.[34] At that time

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respectable Christianity … which may have begun as early as the reign of Constantius II—which explains how a Christianized Roman aristocracy was able to maintain, in Italy, up to the end of the sixth century, the secular traditions of the City of Rome." This view has been confirmed by more recent studies; see, e.g., Thomas Jürgasch, "Christians and the Invention of Paganism in the Late Roman Empire," in *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome*, ed. Michele Salzman, Marianne Sághy, and Rita Lizzi Testa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 129–30. There it is said of Victorinus that life before and after his conversion "proved relatively similar."

31. For a detailed discussion on this see Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 275–80. The use of the title "books against Arius," coined by Jerome, is of course problematic; see above, note 15.

32. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 28–33.

33. See above, note 17.

34. Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.3: "Habet enim magnam laudem gratiae tuae confitendam tibi, quemadmodum ille doctissimus senex et omnium liberalium doctrinarum peritissimus quique philosophorum tam multa legerat et diiudicaverat, doctor tot nobilium senatorum, qui etiam ob insigne praeclari magisterii, quod cives huius mundi eximium putant, statuam Romano foro meruerat et acceperat, usque ad illam aetatem venerator idolorum sacrorumque sacrilegorum particeps, quibus tunc tota fere Romana nobilitas inflata spirabat populo Osirim et 'omnigenum deum monstra et Anubem latratorem' quae aliquando 'contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Minervam' tela tenuerant [see *Aen.* 8.698–700] et a se victis iam Roma supplicabat" ("For the story gives occasion for me to confess to you in great praise for your grace. Victorinus was extremely learned and most expert in all the liberal disciplines. He had read and assessed many philosophers' ideas, and was tutor to numerous noble senators. To mark the distinguished quality of his teaching he was offered and accepted a statue in the Roman forum, an honour which the citizens of this world think supreme. Until he was of advanced years, he was a worshipper of idols and took part in sacrilegious rites. At that time almost all the Roman nobility was enthusiastic for the cult of Osiris and 'Monstrous gods of every kind and Anubis the barking dog, Monsters who once

("usque ad illam aetatem"), Augustine writes (*Conf.* 8.2.3), he was still a worshiper of idols and member of sacrilegeous cults (*venerator idolorum sacrorumque sacrilegorum particeps*).[35] And he was not alone in that. Almost the entire Roman nobility (*tota fere Romana nobilitas*), many of them Victorinus's former students,[36] had fallen under the spell *not* of the old Roman paganism, but of the esotericism of ancient Egypt. This was not ancient Egyptian religion proper but a popular philosophical reinterpretation of ancient Egyptian myth and cult that was then perceived as locked in battle with traditional Roman religion, "Neptune, Venus and Minerva" (*Conf.* 8.2.3), as already Vergil had written in *Aen.* 8, alluding—then, during the early principate—to the danger that had emerged for Rome from the liaison between Antony and Cleopatra.[37]

With the partial citation of Vergil, Augustine possibly alludes to two religious traditions in Rome of his time, the annual festival of the *navigium Isidis*, the so-called vessel of Isis, celebrated annually on 5 March, and, more importantly in the present context, Hermetism. Anubis was from Ptolemaic times identified with Hermes, the god who led the souls of the departed into the afterlife; and a cult of Hermanubis is attested in Rome since the second century at the latest.[38] Not only the entire Roman nobil-

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bore arms against Neptune and Venus and against Minerva' (Vergil, *Aen.* 8.698–699), gods that Rome once conquered but then implored for aid"). The reading *populo Osirim* is conjectural. [Editors' note: see Max Ihm, "Zu Augustins Confessiones," *RhM* 51 (1896): 638.] The dominant reading is *popiliosiam*. For the many possibilities of interpreting the phrase, see James J. O'Donnell, ed., *Augustine: Confessions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 3:17. Whatever the correct reading of that individual phrase, the sentence overall clearly seems to be about the antagonism between Egypt and Rome and the danger posed by fashionable Egyptian esotericism.

35. Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 115.19–20.

36. For possible candidates see Hadot (*Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 34–35), though no certain evidence of any one individual exists, and Augustine's remark (tot) is suggestive and vague.

37. See Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.3 (above n. 34). The "monsters, made up of all kinds of gods and the barking [dog-headed] Anubis," who "hurl their weapons against Neptune, Venus and Minerva" are from *Aen.* 8.698–700, where they signify Cleopatra's troops at Actium. Cleopatra herself is cast as Isis wielding the sistrum and calling together her hellish host. The metaphor, depicting a sea battle, evokes a popular ritual, the so-called vessel of Isis, *navigium Isidis*, which had been celebrated in Rome every year on 5 March since early imperial times (Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 43).

38. Both the *navigium Isidis* and the Hermanubis rituals are described in Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.16–19. See, e.g., Josef Lössl, "Religion in the Hellenistic and Early

ity was in its thrall, Augustine writes, but it was even making headway among ordinary people (*populus*). There were forms of Hermetism that were related both to Middle and Neoplatonism, in particular Porphyry, and to Christianity, at popular and intellectual levels as well.[39] As can still be gleaned from his writings, Victorinus was steeped in both. It seems to be this type of paganism Augustine was alluding to when he referred to Victorinus as at that time still "venerator idolorum sacrorumque sacrilegorum particeps" (*Conf.* 8.2.3).

His association with Hermetism shortly before his conversion to Christianity would explain why Victorinus was already researching the Bible and other early Christian writings, thinking of himself as a crypto-Christian.[40] His works against Arius, written only a few years later, contain evidence of such research, including the study of obscure nonorthodox (apocryphal and gnostic-Hermetic) alongside philosophical (Platonist) material.[41] It is interesting that he considered himself already a kind of

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Post-Hellenistic Era," in *A Companion to Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. Josef Lössl and Nicholas J. Baker-Brian (Chichester, UK: Wiley, 2018), 44; Sarolta A. Takács, *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 123–25. For the link to Hermetism, see Claudio Moreschini, "Hermetism," in Lössl and Baker-Brian, *Companion to Religion*, 369–89, esp. 373.

39. See Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 137 (on Porphyry); on Christianity, see Claudio Moreschini, *Hermes Christianus: The Intermingling of Hermetic Piety and Christian Thought*, trans. Patrick Baker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), esp. 27–82.

40. Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.4: "Legebat, sicut ait Simplicianus, sanctam scripturam omnesque christianas litteras investigabat studiosissime et perscrutabatur" (Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 115.30–31; "Simplicianus said Victorinus read holy scripture, and all the Christian books he investigated with special care"). Hadot in his study of 1971 still tended to keep Victorinus's "paganism" and "conversion" strictly apart and did not acknowledge that Hermetic, Platonist, and biblical sources could be jointly studied by a non-Christian without a view toward conversion to Christianity. A similar approach appears in an even more recent study, Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 135 (Victorinus declaring himself only in secret to Simplicianus because it was "hard" for "Roman aristocrats" to declare themselves publicly as Christian), 184 (Augustine's reference to popularity of Egyptian religion designed to "shock"). These interpretations are not consistent with Cameron, *Last Pagans of Rome*, 218–20 (explanation of Victorinus's reference to Christian belief in virgin birth in *Comm. Cic. Rhet*. 1.29.44 as proof of a gradual acquisition of Christian knowledge on Victorinus's part).

41. See for this especially the debate following the discovery, by Michel Tardieu, of parallels between the gnostic apocalypse of Zostrianos, extant (in fragments) in

Christian for that, although he would declare himself to Simplicianus only, as Augustine puts it, "secretius et familiarius" ("rather in secret and in strict confidence") (*Conf.* 8.2.4).[42] "Surely, it is not the walls [of the church] that make the Christian" ("ergo parietes faciunt christianos?"), he is supposed to have said to Simplicianus, who, of course, disagreed. Only when Victorinus declared, after a lot more intensive reading and studying, "Let's go to Church, I wish to become a Christian" (*Conf.* 8.2.4), that is, to profess the faith and get baptized,[43] was his conversion held to be acceptable by Simplicianus. Interestingly, at this stage, Augustine reports, it was the presbyters at church who advised him to profess the faith in secret (*secretius*), by which they seem to have meant in the vestry rather than in front of the whole congregation.[44] This option, Augustine adds, was usually offered to people whose voice might be at risk of failing when they had to speak in public.[45] In Victorinus's case, of course, this could not have been the reason. But what could have been the reason?

At one level, Augustine contrasting Victorinus first wanting to be a Christian in secret without professing his faith and then professing his faith openly against the wishes of the priests but to the emphatic acclamation of the congregation could be explained as a narrative device, deployed by Augustine to create an opportunity to reflect on the contrast between

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Coptic among the Nag Hammadi writings (NHC VIII.1), and Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 1.49.7–50.21. Even before the Nag Hammadi discovery it was known from Porphyry (*Vit. Plot*. 16) and Eusebius (*Praep. ev*. 11.19.1) that Neoplatonic authors such as Porphyry and Amelius critically engaged with gnostic writings such as the works of Zoroaster/Zostrianos. See Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," and the review by Abramowski, "Nicänismus und Gnosis"; for the links with Hermetism in this context, see Moreschini, "Hermetism," 373; see also the relevant essays in the present volume.

42. Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.4: "et dicebat Simpliciano non palam, sed secretius et familiarius: 'Noveris iam me esse christianum'" (Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 115.32; "he said to Simplicianus, not openly but in the privacy of friendship, 'Did you know that I am already a Christian?'").

43. Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.4: "Subitoque et inopinatus ait Simpliciano, ut ipse narrabat: 'Eamus in ecclesiam: christianus volo fieri.'" *Conf.* 8.2.5: "Denique ut ventum est ad horam profitendae fidei" (Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 116.47–49; "Finally the hour came for him to make the profession of faith").

44. Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.5: "oblatum … Victorino a presbyteris, ut secretius redderet" (Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 116.58–59; "the presbyters offered him the opportunity of affirming the creed in private").

45. Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.5: "qui verecundia trepidaturi videbantur" (Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 116.59–60; "people who felt embarrassed and afraid").

rhetoric and professing the faith, also with a view to his own life story. But there are historical circumstances that lend credibility to Augustine's account. Victorinus's conversion took place in a complicated church-political and doctrinal context.[46] The controversy about the ὁμοούσιος would not have been something Victorinus encountered only after he converted. It could well have been a factor already when it came to him professing his faith and stepping inside those church walls (*parietes*). On the other hand, being a prominent exponent of a kind of Hermetic Gnosticism in Rome might also have required explanation in an orthodox Christian context after his conversion.

2. Victorinus's Conversion and His Correspondence with Candidus

In an attempt to address this latter question I will now consider some aspects of the social-political situation in Rome around the presumed time of Victorinus's conversion (356–357) and in this connection also look at the first part of his anti-Arian *opus*, his correspondence with Candidus. This, in the wake of Simonetti and Nautin, I take to be an artfully constructed fictional epistolary dialogue ending—interestingly—in a profession of faith.[47] The joint reading of these two sets of data may lead to

46. For an overview see Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers*. For a brief and more recent account also Hanns Christof Brennecke, "Introduction: Framing the Historical and Theological Problems," in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, ed. Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 1–19, esp. 16; furthermore, with a focus on the Nicene formula and an excellent summary on Victorinus, Ulrich, *Anfänge der abendländischen*, esp. 244–61.

47. For the fictionality of the correspondence with Candidus see Simonetti, "Nota sull'Ariano Candido"; Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien." It was accepted by Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 34 n. 43. Recently, doubts have been expressed by Volker Henning Drecoll, who thinks that because there are some discrepancies between Victorinus and Candidus in their biblical citations and because Victorinus does not fully refute Candidus's theses, it is possible to think of Candidus as a rare representative of a Latin form of "Anhomoianism" (*Anhomöertum*), who is also very close to Victorinus (Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:130–32; see also the contribution of Drecoll in this volume). For the profession of faith see *Adv. Ar.* 1A.47: "Confitemur igitur deum patrem omnipotentem, confitemur illum unigenitum Iesum Christum … simul cum patre consubstantiatum, quod Graeci ὁμοούσιον appellant … λόγον qui sit omnium universalis λόγος, λόγον autem ad Deum [John 1:1], λόγον in postremis temporibus incarnatum … semper cum patre consubstantialem et ὁμοούσιον … ininmutabilem iuxta quod λόγος est et quod semper λόγος est, iuxta autem quod est creare omnia …

a better understanding of both Victorinus's conversion and the nature of this first part of his anti-Arian oeuvre.

Regarding the profession of faith found in Victorinus's second reply to Candidus (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.47, dating from 358), it is of course not possible to tell with certainty that it is identical, or even similar, with that which he orally delivered in front of his church congregation, as reported by Augustine in *Conf.* 8.2.5. What Augustine's report suggests, however, is that Victorinus did not just deliver a predictable, generic statement.[48] Rather, to cause that rapturous response of the crowd he may have put to

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inmutabilis, inpassibilis.… Et isto huius modi modo et simul confitemur esse haec tria et isto quod unum et unum deum et ὁμοούσια ista et semper simul et patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum.… Ἀμήν.… sic ista confitenti in omnia saecula saeculorum" (*Opera pars prior*, 139.27–141.46; "We confess therefore God, the all-powerful Father. We confess the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ … consubstantial together with the Father, that which the Greeks call *homoousion* … *Logos* who is the universal *Logos* of all existents, but the *Logos* with God, the *Logos* who in latter times was incarnate … always consubstantial with the Father and *homoousion* … without alteration insofar as he is *Logos* and that he is always *Logos*, but insofar as he is to create all things … he is without alternation, without suffering.… And in this way we confess that these Three are together, in this way we confess that they are one and one God, *homoousion* and always together, Father and Son and Holy Spirit.… Amen. … to whomever in this way confesses these things" [translation modified]).

48. See Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.5: "Non enim erat salus quam docebat in rhetorica, et tamen eam publice professus erat. Quanto minus ergo vereri debuit mansuetum gregem tuum pronuntians verbum tuum, qui non verebatur in verbis suis turbas insanorum? Itaque ubi ascendit, ut redderet, omnis sibimet invicem, quisque ut eum noverat, instrepuerunt nomen strepitu gratulationis. Quis autem ibi non eum noverat? Et sonuit presso sonitu per ora cunctorum conlaetantium: 'Victorinus, Victorinus.' Cito sonuerunt exultatione, quia videbant eum, et cito siluerunt intentione, ut audirent eum. Pronuntiavit ille fidem veracem praeclara fiducia, et volebant eum omnes rapere intro in cor suum. Et rapiebant amando et gaudendo: hae rapientium manus erant" (Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 116.61–72; "For there was no salvation in the rhetoric which he had taught; yet his profession of that had been public. How much less should he be afraid in proclaiming your word, when he used to feel no fear in using his own words before crowds of frenzied pagans. When he mounted the steps to affirm the confession of faith, there was a murmur of delighted talk as all the people who knew him spoke his name to one another. And who there did not know him? A suppressed sound came from the lips of all as they rejoiced, 'Victorinus, Victorinus!' As soon as they saw him, they suddenly murmured in exaltation and equally suddenly were silent in concentration to hear him. He proclaimed his unfeigned faith with ringing assurance. All of them wanted to clasp him to their hearts, and the hands with which they embraced him were their love and their joy").

use his genius as rhetor and delivered an extensive and substantial rhetorical display, which, given the church-political context, may well have contained an explicit commitment to the ὁμοούσιος plus some experimental reflections on its meaning and implications. Already Hadot suggested many years ago that Victorinus may have attended the congregation that was in direct contact with Athanasius.[49] There is evidence in the treatises *Adversus Arium* that Victorinus was familiar with Greek liturgical *formulae*.[50] Obviously, we know from his extant oeuvre generally (his use of Greek sources in his own works as well as his translations) that he was bilingual, in a similar way as his near contemporary Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (ca. 320–384) was, of whom it was said that his translations into Latin (prose and verse) were of a higher literary quality than his Greek source texts.[51]

Considering all this, it is difficult to imagine that any catechetical instructions that Victorinus received in preparation for his baptism and enrollment would have been comparable to those offered to an uneducated person (*rudis*), who needed to have explained the basics of church doctrine. Rather, it seems that Victorinus knew exactly which faith he firmly professed. The ὁμοούσιος was a nonnegotiable component of it, as is repeatedly stated in his profession of faith in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.47.

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49. "Communauté égyptienne qui, elle-même, aurait été en contact direct avec Athanase d'Alexandrie" (Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 252). As for Athanasius himself, he had been repeatedly condemned by several Western synods between 351 and 355 but refused to stand down. Early in February 356 he escaped arrest and went into hiding. He returned to Alexandria in February 362. See Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 1.10 and 81, *Fug.* 24; and *Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites 318–328: Bis zur Synode von Alexandrien*, in vol. 3.1.4 of *Athanasius Alexandrinus: Werke*, ed. Hanns Christof Brennecke et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 367.

50. *Adv. Ar.* 2.8; Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 251. Note also the use of the Greek Ἀμήν at the end of the profession of faith in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.47.

51. Thus his famous epitaph, *CIL* 1779: "tu namque quidquid lingua utraquest proditum | cura soforum, porta quis caeli patet, | vel quae periti condidere carmina, | vel quae solutis vocibus sunt edita, | meliora reddis quam legendo sumpseras" ("For you return whatever has been put out in either tongue, with the care of wise men, for whom the door of heaven stands open, whether poems which experts composed, or [prose] which is edited with looser rhythm, better than it was when you picked it up and read it"). There is a possible allusion here to a passage in Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.1: "sed meum semper iudicium fuit omnia nostros [Romanos] … accepta ab illis [Graecis] fecisse meliora" ("but it was always my considered opinion that our countrymen have … made better what they took over from the Greeks" [King]).

The four pieces of the correspondence with Candidus introduce material from a range of sources. This offers opportunities for comment on specific issues, though not necessarily exhaustive; for example, the core thesis of Candidus's first letter, that the relation between Father and Son cannot be described as a *generatio* but only as an *operatio*, is only somewhat indecisively rebutted toward the end of Victorinus's first reply.[52] The earlier parts of Victorinus's first reply contain long introductory passages on naming and knowing God, on questions regarding Being (τὸ ὄν), on the Logos and on the ὁμοούσιον, for which various sources have been identified, for example Porphyry.[53] This combination of approaches, dialectics by Candidus and detailed commentary by Victorinus supplying ample Greek source material, does not necessarily indicate that Candidus, as Volker Drecoll argues, may have been a real person distinct from Victorinus.[54] Rather, it may attest to a specific method, as applied by Victorinus: dialectic, yes, but also accumulation of additional source material and commentary. If we go into details, we discover all the elements of commentary that Drecoll also finds in the *Commentary on Cicero's Rhetoric*:[55] cross-references, direct address of the correspondent (which is here at the same time an epistolary conceit),

52. *Cand.* 1.1 and 10: "Omnis generatio, o mi dulcis senectus Victorine, mutatio quaedam est. Immutabile autem est omne divinum, scilicet deus.… Quid autem ex istis omnibus cogitur atque colligitur, o mi dulcis Victorine? Quoniam dei filius, qui est λόγος 'apud deum, Iesus Christus, per quem effecta sunt omnia et sine quo nihil factum est,' neque generatio a deo, sed operatione a deo, est primum opus et principale dei" (*Opera pars prior* 1.4–6; 12.1–5; "My dear old Victorinus, every kind of begetting is some sort of change. But whatever is divine, namely God, is unchangeable.… What conclusions are we to allow from all this, my dear Victorinus? That the Son of God, who is the '*logos* with God,' Jesus Christ, 'through whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made,' is, not by God's begetting but by God's operation, the first and original effect of God"). See *Ad Cand.* 30: "Dicis enim, quoniam fecit Iesum deus. Quid deinde? Facere non est motus? Nihilo minus quam agere. Inmutatio igitur et in faciendo, si motus in agendo" (*Opera pars prior*, 45.8–10;"For you say that 'God made Jesus.' What then? Is not making a movement? No less than acting. There is, therefore, change also in making, if there is motion in acting").

53. See the texts collected in Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:13–55; for fuller citations of *Marii Victorini rhetoris urbis Romae ad Candidum Arrianum* and probable sources see below, note 62.

54. See Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:131 (as well as his essay in this volume).

55. See Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:124–27.

use of obscure sources, paraphrases, citation of Greek terminology, use of etymology, frequent use of definitions and handbook knowledge, lexicography, excurses, digressions, and prayers.

The two letters cited in *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem epistula* 2, by Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia and by Eusebius of Nicomedia to Paulinus of Tyre (both dating from an early phase of the Arian controversy), fulfill a similar function.[56] As the beginning of *Adv. Ar.* 1A illustrates, they provide lemmatic material for the commentarial engagement that ensues.[57] In *Adv. Ar.* 1A.1 Victorinus refers to Candidus's first letter as a discourse (*sermo*), and to the entire exchange with Candidus (consisting of four pieces) as one work (*huius operis*). What Candidus had done in his first letter, according to Victorinus, was "proffering" (*proposita*) and "developing" (*tractata*) arguments, some of them stronger

56. The first letter is by Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia, the second by Eusebius of Nicomedia to Paulinus of Tyre. For the chronology of these letters and where they belong among the extant documents of the early phase of the Arian controversy see Brennecke et al., *Urkunden zur Geschichte*, xxix–xxxiii. Interestingly, it appears that Arius's letter dates later than that of Eusebius: Eusebius asks Paulinus to make his position clear; Arius reports that Paulinus was condemned for doing precisely that. Thus, while the second letter reflects a second phase in which the controversy is about to spill over to areas outside Alexandria, the first letter reflects a third phase when this has happened and a first wave of "condemnations" of bishops outside Alexandria has taken place.

57. See *Adv. Ar.* 1A.1: "In primo sermone huius operis et multa et fortiori quaedam etiam horum, o amice Candide, proposita atque tractata sunt abs te quae, quamquam ut oportuit dissolute sunt, tamen idcirco ista ex eorum epistulis audire voluimus, ut dum haec omni refutatione convincimus, illa quoque ex istorum refutatione vincamus. Et primum definiendae sunt Arrii Eusebiique sententiae, in quo nobis consentient, in quibus discrepent, in quibus sibi ipsi videantur adversi. Arrius ait: 'Quoniam filius non est ingenitus.' Item Eusebius hoc idem, quod duo non sunt 'ingenita.' Nobis quoque ista sententia est" (*Opera pars prior*, 54.4–14; "In the first discourse of this work, you proffered and developed many arguments, and some of them are stronger than the arguments of these men, i.e., Arius and Eusebius. However, although their arguments have been aptly demolished, we were desirous of hearing them from their own letters, so that, while we are exposing their falsity by a complete refutation, we may also disprove your arguments by a refutation of theirs. First of all, the opinions of Arius and Eusebius must be definitively established in order to see on what points they are in agreement with us, on what points they disagree, and on what points they seem to be in mutual agreement. Arius said: 'That the Son is not unbegotten.' Likewise Eusebius said what amounts to the same thing: there are not two 'unbegotten.' This is likewise our opinion").

(*fortiora*) than those in Arius's and Eusebius's letters, as cited in Candidus's second letter.[58] Nevertheless, Victorinus concludes, these documents too need to be taken into consideration (*audire voluimus*), so that a more comprehensive refutation of the heresy in its entirety (as well as—that must be the implication—a constructive alternative!) can be provided.

Victorinus thus also plays in a certain way with the monumentality that was attached to letters (by all parties) during the entire Arian controversy.[59] Letters by the arch-heretic himself and his foremost sponsor in Constantinople—what could be more fundamental? Moreover, the letters may have been, as other material as well, translated directly from the Greek. The entire collection of Victorinus's anti-Arian works, therefore, including (fictional) letters (that is, those by Candidus), other documentary evidence (for example, the authentic letters by Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia), philosophical as well as biblical commentarial material, even hymns and prayers, not to forget Victorinus's own profession of faith, display numerous and very strong characteristics of commentarial literature. And in the proximity of Victorinus's conversion—the exchange with Candidus may have been composed within two years of the conversion—they may as such constitute even more than that. They could represent a kind

58. Victorinus here acknowledges what has also been observed by Drecoll: that *Marii Victorini rhetoris urbis Romae ad Candidum Arrianum* had only just begun to refute the arguments of *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem de generatione divina epistula I* ("Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:135). Further arguments were still needed. Thus when we look at this in context of the exchange with Candidus as a whole, there is no evidence here of any compositional flaws—as has been suggested by Drecoll—that would call in doubt the fictionality of the exchange ("Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:135).

59. Here I make use of an observation made by Nicholas J. Baker-Brian specifically with regard to letters by emperors and their role in the Arian controversy. See Baker-Brian, "'I Have Taken Pains to Get Copies of Them' (Athanasius, *De Synodis* 55): Epistolary Relations between the Sons of Constantine and the Christian Church," in *The Sons of Constantine, AD 337–361: In the Shadows of Constantine and Julian*, ed. Nicholas J. Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 347–87. Baker-Brian departs from an observation made in Eusebius, where Eusebius, in the context of preserving a set of letters by Constantine, explains his intention in doing so as wanting to "engrave them as in a sacred stele" (ἐγχαράξαι ὥσπερ ἐν ἱερᾷ στήλῃ; *Hist. eccl.* 10.2.2). For a similar observation in a somewhat wider context, see Josef Lössl, "An Inextinguishable Memory: 'Pagan' Past and Presence in Early Christian Writing," in Harrison, Humfress, and Sandwell, *Being Christian in Late Antiquity*, 74–89.

of theological testament, of an apologetic nature, similar to certain second-century Christian apologies, which, as Wolfram Kinzig has argued, could also have functioned as theological testimonies of newly converted sophists or philosophers, which would have been deposited in church as well as potentially published more widely (depending on the ambitions of their authors), though not necessarily taken too much notice of, as their purpose was limited by being the personal statements of newly converted individuals.[60] That way the more tentative, experimental, and potentially heterodox nature at least of some of the content may have been more tolerable than it would have been had it been disseminated in heated polemical debates and politically highly charged contexts. To apply this to Victorinus's personal situation in 357/8: he was then probably not in a position to make himself as notorious, by writing and publishing a homoousian pamphlet, as Athanasius, Hilary of Poitiers, or even his bishop, Liberius of Rome. He was just a new convert, albeit highly educated and of high social rank, who took an accentuated, courageous, personal stance.

Moreover, to appreciate the experimental, tentative, potentially heterodox, and therefore also somewhat risky nature of Victorinus's undertaking, we might also consider that in the first few lines alone of his first reply to Candidus (*Ad Cand.* 1) it is possible to identify allusions to the Chaldaean Oracles (πατρικὸς νοῦς, "paternal intellect") and to the Corpus Hermeticum ("difficile intellegere solum, edicere autem impossibile"), followed by two biblical citations (Rom 11:33; Isa 40:13).[61] Could it be that by formu-

60. On the limited immediate reception of Victorinus see Ulrich, *Anfänge der abendländischen*, 262. I am alluding here to a suggestion made by Wolfram Kinzig with regard to Tatian's *Ad Graecos* and similar apologetic works. See Wolfram Kinzig, "Überlegungen zum Sitz im Leben der Gattung πρὸς Ἕλληνας, *Ad Nationes*," in *Rom und das himmlische Jerusalem*, ed. Raban von Haehling (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), 152–83. Although I do not agree with Kinzig regarding Tatian's *Ad Graecos* and a deposit in the church as the exclusive purpose of such works, the fact, for example, that Victorinus's work contains a profession of faith may point to a church-related function of his work. Obviously, the target of Victorinus's refutation are no longer pagans but "Arians." An earlier critique of Kinzig's paper can be found in Josef Lössl, "Zwischen Christologie und Rhetorik: Zum Ausdruck 'Kraft des Wortes' (λόγου δύναμις) in Tatians 'Rede an die Griechen,'" in *Logos der Vernunft –Logos des Glaubens*, ed. Ferdinand R. Prostmeier and Horacio Lona (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 132 n. 14.

61. *Ad Cand.* 1: "Magnam tuam intellegentiam, o generose Candide, quis fascinavit? De deo dicere super hominem audacia est. Sed quoniamsi inditus est animae nos-

lating, in Candidus's first letter, a strongly accentuated, antihomoousian position, which needed to be refuted, Victorinus felt that in response to this he could more freely introduce his own philosophical approach to the problem under discussion, that is, the relationship between God and Logos, which draws quite heavily on Hermetic and Neoplatonic sources?[62]

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trae νοῦς πατρικός et spiritus desuper missus figurationes intellegentiarum inscriptas ex aeterno in nostra anima movet, ineffabiles res et investigabilia mysteria dei voluntatum aut operationum quasi quaedam mentis elatio animae nostrae vult quidem videre et etiam nunc in tali sita corpore difficile intellegere solum, edicere autem impossibile. Dicit enim beatus Paulus: 'o altitudo divitiarum et sapientiae et cognoscentiae dei, quomodo investigabilia sunt iudicia dei et sine vestigiis eius viae' [Rom 11:33]. Dicit etiam Esaias: 'quis enim cognovit domini mentem aut quis fuit eius consiliator?' [Isa 40:13]" (*Opera pars prior*, 15.4–16.16; "Your great intelligence, O noble Candidus, who has bewitched it? To discourse on God is an audacity too great for man. Yet because the *nous patrikos* (paternal nous) is innate to our soul and the spirit sent from heaven arouses analogies of ideas which have been engraved within our soul from all eternity, our soul by a kind of spiritual elevation wishes to see ineffable things and the inscrutable mysteries of the will or works of God. And yet, dwelling in this body it is difficult for the soul to understand this things, but impossible to express them. For the blessed Paul says 'O the depths of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are the judgments of God and how unsearchable his ways.' And Isaiah also says, 'Who then has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his conselor?'"). See Orac. chald. 109; Porphyry *apud* Augustine, *Civ*. 10.23, 28, 29; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:194 n. 5, 266, 310 n. 2; Corp. Herm., frag. 1.1.1: θεὸν νοῆσαι μὲν χαλεπόν, φράσαι δὲ ἀδύνατον ᾧ καὶ νοῆσαι δυνατὸν ("It is difficult to understand God. Even for the person who can understand, to speak of God is impossible"). For the critical text, see *Corpus Hermeticum*, ed. Arthur D. Nock and André-Jean Festugière, Budé 119 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1954–1960), 3:2. Translation follows *Hermetica II: The Excerpts of Stobaeus, Papyrus Fragments, and Ancient Testimonies in an English Translation with Notes and Introductions*, trans. M. David Litwa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 27. *Ad Cand*. 2–15 sets out the different modes of being (being, nonbeing, transcendent being), for which Hadot identifies Porphyry as a source and which are used here to define the begetting of the Son as an act of the transcendent being, which means that the Son is of the same being as the Father (*Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:13–55).

62. After all, it was the Arian party who first drew attention to the alleged Manichaean origin of the term ὁμοούσιος. See Arius, *Ep. Alex*. 3.1: οὐδ' ὡς Μανιχαῖος μέρος ὁμοούσιον τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ γέννημα εἰσηγήσατο ("Nor is the offspring a consubstantial part of the Father, as Manicheus proposed"). For the critical text, see Arius, *Epistula ad Alexandrum Alexandrinum*, in *Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites 318–328*, ed. Hans-Georg Opitz, AW 3.2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1934), 12.11–12. In *Adv. Ar.* 4.18, Victorinus writes that both philosophers and biblical exegetes (*philosophi et*

3. Extent and Limit of Victorinus's Intervention in the Arian Debate in 357/358

If, as is usually assumed, Victorinus did convert and profess his faith in Rome in 356 or 357, he did so in a church that was in turmoil. Its bishop, Liberius, was in exile for refusing to join in the condemnation of Athanasius;[63] and there were tensions when Constantius II visited Rome in May 357. Liberius was allowed back later in 357, or in 358, but had by then compromised himself by signing the second Sirmian formula, which condemned the use of the concepts ὁμοούσιος and ὁμοιούσιος,[64] marking the beginning of the so-called homoean theology. However, incensed as Victorinus may have been by this development (his style in his second response to Candidus seems to betray some emotion), he seems to have been less concerned by Liberius's lapse, or for that matter by the machinations of the emperor, and more by the (in his view) insincere attempts of Basil of Ancyra to replace the term ὁμοούσιον

docti ad legem viri) inquired (*quaesierunt*) about the nature (*substantia vel exsistentia*) and location (*ubi*) of ὄν and λόγος, whether they were in or outside God, or in both places and therefore everywhere (*utrum in deo an extra et in omnibus reliquis an in utroque et ubique*).

63. In the years between 351 and 355 Liberius (alongside other bishops) had repeatedly tried to reverse the condemnation of Athanasius but failed. When he refused to sign the condemnation by the Synod of Milan of 355, he was summoned to the imperial court at Milan in 356, and, when he still refused to sign, exiled to Berea in Thrace. He was allowed to return to Rome after he signed the second Sirmian formula in late 357 or 358. See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gest.* 15.7.6–10; Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 36; 37.3; 40; 41.3; *Apol. sec.* 89.3; Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 2.16, 17; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 4.11.3–9, 15.3–4; Brennecke et al., *Urkunden zur Geschichte*, 367.

64. See Second Formula of Sirmium: "quod vero quosdam aut multos movebat de substantia, quae graece usia appellatur, id est (ut expressius intelligatur), 'homousion,' aut quod dicitur 'homoeusion,' nullam omnino fieri oportere mentionem" (Brennecke et al., *Urkunden zur Geschichte*, 377–78; "But what upsets some, or rather, many, about the word 'substance,' which in Greek is called 'usia,' is—in order that it may be better understood—[the formation of the word] *homousion*, and also that which is called *homoiousion*: One must not make mention of it at all"—because, so the text continues, it is not biblical). For the exact timing of Liberius's return to Rome, over which there is some disagreement (2 August 357, or 358?), see Thompson, "Constantius II," 99 n. 68, for the earlier date and Brennecke et al., *Urkunden zur Geschichte*, 376, for the later date.

with ὁμοιούσιον, declaring the latter to be an ancient concept.[65] In this context he also mentions Constantius II's visit to Rome as an event of the recent past.[66] By rejecting the ὁμοιούσιον as the model closest to the ὁμοούσιον, Victorinus threw out all alternative models.[67] Whether Paul of Samosata, Marcellus, Photinus, Valens, or Ursacius, "each of these had his own blasphemy for which he was excommunicated."[68] In Liberius's absence a new bishop, Felix, had been installed under Constantius's pressure.[69] During his visit, Constantius seems to have been lobbied "by

65. *Adv. Ar.* 1A.28: "Si ista sic sunt, hoc deest solum quomodo intellegendum ὁμοούσιον aut ὁμοιούσιον esse filium patri. Hoc enim dogma nunc expergefactum est et quidem olim rumoribus iactatum, quod non oporteat dici ὁμοούσιον sed magis ὁμοιούσιον. Nunc inventum hoc dogma. Audent autem et hoc dicere quod olim … datum sit.… Ubi latuit, ubi dormiit, ante quadraginta annos, cum in Nicaea civitate fides confirmata.… Si non fuit, non victum est et nunc coepit.… Forte et tunc tu, patrone dogmatis, non solum in vita, sed episcopus fuisti.… Et toto tempore postea, usquequo imperator Romae fuit, praesens audisti multa contraria, conviva exsistens istorum hominum quos nunc anathematizas" (*Opera pars prior*, 103.8–104.27; "If these things are so, there is lacking only this: how to conceive the Son; is he *homoousion* [consubstantial] or *homoiousion* [like in substance] to the Father? For this doctrine is a current opinion and was for a long time rumored, that it is not obligatory to say *homoousion* (consubstantial) but rather *homoiousion* (like in substance). Now this doctrine has been invented. But they also dare to say this that for sometime … the word *homoiousion* was permitted.… But then, forty years ago, where was it hidden, where was it dormant when, in the city of Nicea, the formula of faith … was approved.… But if it did not exist, it was not condemned, and then it must be a recent doctrine! … And perchance then you, the defender of this doctrine, were not only alive but already a bishop! … And during the whole time that followed, as long as the Emperor was in Rome, you heard said in your presence many things contrary to this doctrine, living in communion with those men whom now you anathematize").

66. *Adv. Ar.* 1A.28: "Et toto tempore postea, usquequo imperator Romae fuit" (*Opera pars prior*, 103.24–104.25; "And during the whole time that followed, as long as the Emperor was in Rome …"). The visit took place from around 20 April to the end of May 357.

67. *Adv. Ar.* 1A.28: "Eadem fides in destructionem aliarum αἱρέσεων effecta est" (*Opera pars prior*, 104.30–31; "The same faith has been established for the annihilation of all *haireseōn* [heresies]").

68. *Adv. Ar.* 1A.28: "Propria ergo blasphemia, propter quam eiecti sunt" (*Opera pars prior*, 104.41; "Therefore each had his own blasphemy for which he was excommunicated").

69. Thus Athanasius, *H. Ar*. 35–59; Theodoret, *Hist. eccl*. 2.16; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl*. 2.11; Thompson, "Constantius II," 87.

a great number of the people" to allow Liberius to return.[70] After Liberius's return there seems to have been an attempt to allow both bishops to take the see, but eventually Felix had to leave, and Liberius continued as sole bishop (Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 2.14).

As Victorinus's text in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.28 also seems to suggest, there appear to have been quite a few bishops in Rome in connection with Constantius's visit, most of them on Constantius's side and for the new homoean theology, which was to be ratified in Sirmium later that year. Presumably Victorinus himself was in Rome too, witnessing events, though we have no evidence of any actions of his.

In the admittedly limited sources on Constantius's visit (mainly Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gest.* 16.10.1–20), there is no trace of him either. Considering Victorinus's profile, it would not be inconceivable for him to have been mentioned in some context, the current *rhetor Romae* with a statue on the Forum Traianum. Although at that time the *fora* of Rome were probably veritable forests of statues, it seems in reality to have been quite rare to be awarded such an honor, as Hadot too emphasizes.[71] Victorinus therefore must have stood out, and there were occasions on which he as *rhetor Romae* might have delivered orations. Ammianus's report suggests that as the imperial procession was approaching the city, the emperor was greeted by a civic delegation.[72] It has been suggested that this could have been an occasion on which a

70. See Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 4.11.12; *Quae gesta sunt* 3 (Coll. Avell., *Ep.* 1.3); see Thompson, "Constantius II," 98 n. 62.

71. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 32: "En la voyant, il pouvait avoir le sentiment d'être parvenu au sommet de sa carrière." Augustine is scathing about the obsession of Roman nobles to have statues of themselves erected on *fora*. See *Conf.* 8.2.3: "quod cives huius mundi eximium putant, statuam Romano foro meruerat et acceperat" (Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 115.17–19; "he was offered and accepted a statue in the Roman forum, an honour which the citizens of this world think supreme"). The word *eximium* is significant here; compare Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gest.* 14.6.8: "Ex his quidam aeternitati se commendari posse per statuas aestimantes" ("Of these some think that through statues they can attain eternity" [Rolfe]). See also *Res gest.* 16.10.15 for the overwhelming impression the Forum of Trajan made on Constantius on the occasion of his visit: "haerebat attonitus, per giganteos contextus circumferens mentem" ("he stood stunned, casting his mind around the colossal surroundings" [Rolfe]).

72. See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gest.* 16.10.5: "Cumque urbi propinquaret [sc. Constantius], senatus officia, reverendasque patriciae stirpis effigies, ore sereno contemplans" ("And as he [sc. Constantius] approached the city, he contemplated with

senatorial orator could have delivered a panegyric, an "arrival speech."[73] Admittedly, no other figures, more high profile than Victorinus, are mentioned either, for example members of the family of Symmachus, who wrote about the visit some decades later (Symmachus, *Relat*. 3.7), or Praetextatus.[74] Just as there were tensions between the emperor and the church, there were also tensions between the emperor and the largely pagan senate. Although Constantius visited pagan temples and confirmed many of the privileges of the old religion, he had, at least temporarily, the Altar of Victory removed from the senate house when he gave his address there.[75]

Probably more problematic for the leaders of the city in the long term was the commitment of the emperor to develop Constantinople as his new capital with its own new senate.[76] It may be that Ammianus simply did not mention Victorinus or any other orator delivering a panegyric to Constantius on the occasion of his visit in 357, or that Victorinus indeed did not deliver a speech. Interestingly, no speeches held by Victorinus are extant, only theoretical or didactic works of his. However, the reason this is worth considering here at all is that there was in fact a rhetor, of whom we do know that he did produce even several orations in connection with the visit, only that these were not held in Rome, but a thousand miles to the

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a serene gaze the official attendance of the senate and the reverent expressions of the patrician race" [Rolfe]).

73. See Thompson "with a reference to the discussion of the "arrival speech," ὁ ἐπιβατήριος λόγος in Menander Rhetor's *On Epideictic* (Thompson, "Constantius II," 94 n. 42).

74. On Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, see PW 1:722–24; see also above, note 51.

75. In the previous year he had also issued laws outlawing sacrifices and closing down temples across the empire; see Cod. theod. 16.10.6 (19 February 356); 16.10.4 (1 December 356). According to Symmachus, Constantius confirmed the privileges of the Vestal virgins ("nihil ille decerpsit sacrarum virginum privilegiis"), appointed nobles as priests ("decrevit nobilibus sacerdotia"), and renewed the commitment of the state to fund the traditional state cults ("Romanis caeremoniis non negavit inpensas"; *Relat*. 3.7). For the critical text, see Symmachus, *Relationes*, in *Q. Aurelii Symmachi quae supersunt*, ed. Otto Seeck, MGH 6.1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1961), 281. His decision to erect an Egyptian obelisk on the spina of the Circus Maximus, too, was a nod to a pagan tradition. See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gest.* 16.10.17. The description of the obelisk (*Res gest.* 17.4.1–23, especially 18–23 of the inscription) clearly shows that there was also a religious dimension to that decision.

76. See for this Grig and Kelly, "Introduction," 14–15.

east, in Constantinople, and not in Latin but Greek. The reference here is, of course, to Themistius.[77]

Briefly contrasting Themistius with Victorinus may help elucidate a bit further what Victorinus was and what he was not. Themistius, originally a philosophical commentator (known for his Aristotelian paraphrases), had also made himself a name as a rhetor and delivered panegyrics in honor of Constantius, since about 347, or, according to a more recent study, 342, when he probably delivered an arrival speech for the emperor on his visit to Ancyra (Themistius, *Or*. 1, *On Philanthropy*).[78] Probably through imperial favor he was subsequently called to Constantinople, appointed rhetor, and elevated to the senate (in 355).[79] His fame grew, as did the new imperial capital as a center of intellectual culture. In 356 he was honored by the emperor with a bronze statue,[80] although he is said to have refused other gifts and privileges and did not accept a salary, only the customary *annona*, to which every citizen was entitled. He considered this in tune with being a philosopher.[81] Themistius was and remained a pagan throughout his life. He died in the 380s.

Thus while Victorinus's career was nearly at its end around this time—Hadot assumes that the award of the statue was the peak of his career—for Themistius his elevation to the senate and bestowal of a bronze statue was only the beginning of a long career (from 348 to 384) as "the official orator at Constantinople."[82] From him we have a considerable body of orations

77. Themistius, *Or*. 3 and 4. For *Or*. 3 see Peter Heather and David Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy and Empire in the Fourth Century: Select Orations of Themistius*, TTH 36 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 114–36; for both speeches, now see also Simon Swain, *Themistius, Julian, and Greek Political Theory under Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 63–64, 72.

78. See Alexander Skinner, "Violence at Constantinople in A.D. 341–2 and Themistius, *Oration* 1," *JRS* 105 (2015): 234–49; John Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court: Oratory, Civic Duty and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 76–77. For an overview of Themistius's philosophical works see Inna Kupreeva, "Themistius," in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1:397–416.

79. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 83–84, 87.

80. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 96.

81. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 89–94. Compare this with McLynn's assessment of Victorinus's motifs for resigning his chair in 362, above n. 28.

82. John H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, review of *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, by John Vanderspoel, *JRS* 86 (1996): 237; Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 32.

extant; from Victorinus we have none. Themistius was writing and speaking in Greek, Victorinus in Latin. Themistius was producing works in philosophy, his famous paraphrastic commentaries on works of Aristotle. Victorinus was translating Greek philosophical works, both Aristotelian and Platonist, into Latin and commenting on them. His works were successful in his time but eclipsed later. Themistius made his career in the new Rome, Constantinople, greatly favored by a series of emperors. In Rome, where emperors only occasionally visited, Victorinus's career relied on senatorial advancement. His statue was granted by the *curator statuarum*.[83] Themistius, the pagan, was favored by Christian emperors in Constantinople and enjoyed a long and successful career. Marius Victorinus, the Christian convert, was favored by the predominantly pagan senate of Rome, but not much more was heard of him after his conversion.

Overall, if we undertake such a comparison, Victorinus seems to come across as a minor figure compared to Themistius: no major philosophical works, no orations, not as close to the emperor, not as influential in politics and history, Latin, not Greek, living in a Rome in decline, not in a Constantinople on the rise.

But such a comparison may also reveal some characteristics of Victorinus and his work that commend him: his Latinity, his interest in religion, and the way he uses philosophy to inform his theological questions. From this emerges a certain originality of thought, an originality to which modern philosophical studies such as those of Ernst Benz, Hadot, Werner Beierwaltes, and Baltes pay witness.[84] Naturally, as a Latin, Victorinus could not have had the same kind of profile as a philosopher as Themistius had.[85] Instead he could perhaps also be compared with a man such as Praetextatus.[86] Only a comparison with Christian episcopal authors such

83. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 32.

84. Ernst Benz, *Marius Victorinus und die Entwicklung der abendländischen Willensmetaphysik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932); Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*; Baltes, *Marius Victorinus*; for Werner Beierwaltes, see, e.g., *Platonismus im Christentum*, 25–43.

85. For the complicated relationship of the Latin tradition with Greek philosophy see Michael Trapp, "*Philosophia* between Greek and Latin Culture: Naturalized Immigrant or Eternal Stranger?," in *Three Centuries of Greek Culture under the Roman Empire*, ed. Francesca Mestre and Pilar Gómez (Barcelona: University of Barcelona Press, 2013), 29–48.

86. For Praetextatus, see above nn. 51 and 74; see also the comprehensive study by Maijastina Kahlos, *Vettius Agorius Praetextatus: A Senatorial Life in Between*, IRF

as Hilary of Poitiers seems less appropriate. Victorinus was different from those ecclesiastical participants in the Arian controversy. He was a fresh convert writing in his own right. In the way he uses philosophical and esoteric Greek material, we might compare him with a Christian author such as Lactantius.[87] In these respects he is much closer to the second- and third-century apologists than to the orthodox church fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries.

4. Conclusion

The intention of this essay was to throw new light on the context and purpose of Marius Victorinus's anti-Arian works and the possible function of the literary and commentarial techniques employed in them. To this end the essay revisited and discussed some of the main sources documenting Victorinus's conversion to Christianity, also in relation to the first part of the anti-Arian *opus*, the fictional correspondence with Candidus, dated circa 358. I concluded that on the assumption that Victorinus's conversion can be dated circa 356, his correspondence with Candidus can be linked to his conversion. His intervention in the Arian debate and his commitment to the ὁμοούσιος seem to be linked to his preconversion interest in gnostic, Hermetic, and Neoplatonic thought. His interest in the term ὁμοούσιος as a means to explain inner-divine relations could even predate his conversion. The confession of faith in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.47 could be read in light of Augustine's report of his profession of faith in front of his church congregation in *Conf.* 8.2.5 ("ascendit ut redderet").[88] It might even be that profession. This links the correspondence with Candidus with the conversion and it might be possible to understand it as a kind of *apologia*, in which Victorinus, as a new convert, publicized his doctrinal position using all the philosophical, biblical, and contemporary theological material available to him at the time.

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26 (Rome: Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae, 2002), with references to Victorinus on 140 and 240.

87. See for this Antonie Wlosok, *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis: Untersuchungen zu Geschichte und Terminologie der gnostischen Erlösungsvorstellung* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1960).

88. Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XIII*, 116.65; "He mounted the steps to affirm the confession of faith."

Candidus—Fiction or Reality?

Volker Henning Drecoll

Since Pierre Nautin and Manlio Simonetti developed the hypothesis according to which the *Epistula Candidi* was a fake, written by Marius Victorinus himself for refuting Arianism more convincingly, this assumption has become a kind of *communis opinio*.[1] The hypothesis of Nautin is important not only for Marius Victorinus himself but also for the history of Latin Arianism, especially for the question whether something like heterousianism existed in the Latin West. The present article aims to reconsider the hypothesis of Nautin by pursuing three questions: (1) Does the transmission of the *Epistula Candidi* and *Ad Candidum* in the manuscripts support the hypothesis of pseudepigraphy? (2) Which arguments based on lexicography and style could be used in favor of Victorinus's authorship? (3) Is it plausible that Victorinus produced the argumentation

1. Pierre Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien," in *L'homme devant Dieu: Mélanges offerts au Père Henri de Lubac*, *Exégèse et Patristique*, Theólogie 56 (Paris: Aubier, 1964), 309; Manlio Simonetti, "Nota sull'Ariano Candido," *Orpheus* 10 (1963): 156; see also Michel Meslin, review of *Marius Victorinus, Traités théologiques sur la Trinité*, by Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, *RHR* 164 (1963): 96. Skeptical remarks in Anton Ziegenaus, *Die trinitarische Ausprägung der göttlichen Seinsfülle nach Marius Victorinus*, MTS 2.41 (Munich: Hueber, 1972), 74–76; Volker Henning Drecoll, "Marius Victorinus," *RAC* 24:131. Thus Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), 272. Hadot accepted the hypothesis after a short period of skepticism (see the remarks of Hadot quoted by Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien," 319–20). See also Jörg Ulrich, *Die Anfänge der abendländischen Rezeption des Nizänums*, PTS 39 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 245 n. 7; Stephen Gersh, "Marius Victorinus," in *Philosophie der Kaiserzeit und der Spätantike*, vol. 5.3 of *Die Philosophie in der Antike*, ed. Christoph Riedweg, Christoph Horn, and Dietmar Wyrwa, GGPh (Basel: Schwabe, 2018), 1648.

of the *Epistula Candidi* as an anvil in order to stamp his anti-Arian argument more distinctively?

1. The Transmission in the Manuscripts

The manuscript tradition of the theological works of Marius Victorinus is quite problematic.[2] No manuscript contains the theological works together as they are now found in the critical edition of Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot.[3] The work titled *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem de generatione divina* is transmitted by seven manuscripts. One of these manuscripts (Tournai 74) was lost in a 1940 fire caused by German airstrikes during the Second World War; another (Worcester Bibl. Capituli Q81, a manuscript that is important for the Latin Avicenna) is mutilated at the beginning and does not contain the reply of Marius Victorinus. Jean Mabillon in 1675 used a further, now lost manuscript, the codex of Saint Ulrich Augsburg, that was also mutilated at the beginning.[4] In none of these manuscripts is another work of Marius Victorinus preserved. The link between Candidus's letter and Victorinus's reply is evident by several turns of address. The letter addresses "my dear (old) Victorinus" (*o mi dulcis senectus Victorine or o mi dulcis Victorine*, *Cand.* 1.1); note also Victorinus's response in *Ad Candidum*: *o generose Candide or o mi dulcissime Candide*, *Ad Cand.* 1; 3).[5] This link is confirmed by several imperatives and verbs in the second-person singular in Victorinus's writing.[6]

The four books *Adversus Arium* are transmitted independently from Candidus's letter and Victorinus's *Ad Candidum*. Only one manuscript

2. See P. Justinus Wöhrer, "Studien zu Marius Victorinus," in *II. Jahresbericht des Privat-Untergymnasiums der Zisterzienser für das Schuljahr 1904/1905* (Wilhering: Verlag des Privat-Untergymasiums, 1905), 5–44; Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 254–55; Pierre Hadot, "Prolegomena," in *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), vii–xxxiv, vii–x.

3. First printed in the series Sources Chrétiennes (68–69; the second volume containing textual notes by Hadot) and then, with a slightly revised text, for the Vienna Corpus (*Opera pars prior*). This latter has been used here, as also the translation by Mary T. Clark, *Marius Victorinus*: *Theological Treatises on the Trinity*, FC 69 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001).

4. See Hadot, "Prolegomena," xi–xviii.

5. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 1.4; 15.4; 19.1.

6. See Wöhrer, "Studien zu Marius Victorinus," 24–25.

survives for this work, Berlin Phillipps 1684 (siglum A in Hadot's edition). A short compilation, conventionally titled *Candidi Epistula II*, consisting of a letter of Arius and one of Eusebius of Nicomedia, is given directly before the four books.[7] Only two references to Candidus can be found in this manuscript: (1) a corrector (described as "second corrector" by Henry and Hadot, A^2)[8] added "Candidus's preface to Victorinus" (*praefatio Candidi ad Victorinum*) to the short compilation of Arian texts; (2) Victorinus starts his refutation of this compilation with the address *O amice Candide* (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.1). It is unclear whether the corrector in MS A added his title by reading this address at the beginning of Victorinus's work. The title *Ad Candidum Arrianum* for *Adv. Ar.* 1A was invented by Justinus Wöhrer only in the late nineteenth century.[9] In MS A the work is titled *De trinitate* (or *De ὁμοουσίῳ*).[10]

The title *Adversus Arium* goes back to Johannes Sichard, who used a "very old exemplar" ("vetustissimo exemplari") for his edition of the four books of Victorinus in 1528, made after a journey to various archives, including at Strasbourg, Lorsch, and Fulda.[11] Sichard numbered these four books *Against Arius* in spite of the fact that book 1 consists of two books (numbered as IA and IB today). He apparently took the title *Adversus Arium* from Jerome's entry about Marius Victorinus in his *De viris illustribus*.[12]

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7. These pieces are numbered as Urkunde 1 and Urkunde 8 (§§3–8) by Opitz (see Hans-Georg Opitz, ed., *Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites 318–328*, AW 3.2 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1934], 1–3, 15–17) and as Dokument 1 and Dokument 4 by Brennecke (see Hanns Christof Brennecke et al., eds., *Dokumente zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites*, AW 3.1.3 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007], xxxii–xxxiii).

8. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, xviii–xix.

9. Wöhrer, "Studien zu Marius Victorinus," 17.

10. A confusion may have occurred in the incipits and explicits of the second and the third book. Thus Henry and Hadot interpreted the incipit of the third book as the explicit of the second book, using the explicit of the third book as title of the third book; see *apparatus criticus* to *Adv. Ar.* 2.12 (Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 190.37) and *Adv. Ar.* 3, tit. (*Opera pars prior*, 191.1–3).

11. Sichard became a professor of jurisprudence in Tübingen in 1535. See Johann August Ritter von Eisenhart, "Sichardt, Johannes," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 34:143–46, https://tinyurl.com/SBL4214c.

12. Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 101: "scripsit adversus Arium libros more dialectico valde obscuros." For the critical text, see Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Carl A. Bernoulli, SAQ 11 (Leipzig: Mohr, 1895), 49.3–4. "Victorinus … wrote books against Arius, extremely obscure and written in a dialectical style." Translation follows *Saint Jerome:*

The compilation of the letter of Arius and the letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia is introduced by five lines of the aforementioned *praefatio Candidi* that address Victorinus (*o amice Victorine*), but neither the manuscript nor Sichard offers any title. There is no evidence for the title *Candidi Epistula* 2 used as short title by Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot.[13]

Thus, in the manuscript tradition the *Epistula Candidi* and Victorinus's *Ad Candidum* are transmitted separately from the four (or five) books *De trinitate* (this would be the more adequate title, based on MS A). The beginning of book I of this latter work refers to a former book: "in the first discourse of this work" (*in primo sermone huius operis*). The address "o dear friend Candidus" (*O amice Candide*) belongs to this reference to a former book. Victorinus does not say, however, that the two excerpts he refutes in book IA were sent to him or used by Candidus. Thus, we should carefully distinguish between (1) the *Epistula Candidi* and the reply of Marius Victorinus, who names Candidus as author, and (2) the compilation (= *Cand.* 2) that introduces Victorinus's first book *De trinitate* (= *Adv. Ar.* 1A). Victorinus himself says that he wants to refute the excerpts from the two letters in addition to what he said in his former reply to Candidus (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.1).[14] It is, however, far from being certain that the compilation of the excerpts of the two letters has anything to do with Candidus. In fact, a direct use of Arius's letter as authoritative text seems highly improbable for the middle of the fourth century. Since the connection of these two pieces with Candidus is not attested by the manuscripts, we should distinguish the authenticity of Candidus's letter from the authorship of the two Latin Arians' excerpts prefixed to *Adv. Ar.* 1A.

On Illustrious Men, ed. and trans. Thomas P. Halton, FC 100 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 135. See Hadot, "Prolegomena," xxi.

13. This short title can only be found in the heading of the text in Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 51–53.

14. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 54.4–9: "tamen idcirco ista ex eorum epistulis audire voluimus, ut dum haec omni refutatione convincimus, illa quoque ex istorum refutatione vincamus" ("we were desirous of hearing them from their own letters, so that, while we are exposing their falsity by a complete refutation, we may also disprove your arguments by a refutation of theirs"). The use of *Ad Candidum* and *Adversus Arium* 1A (*De trinitate*) by Alcuin is no evidence for a separate collection of a Candidus correspondence, as Pierre Hadot argues in "Marius Victorinus et Alcuin," *AHDL* 21 (1954): 15–18. Neither the *Epistula Candidi* nor the compilation of the two "Arian" letters were used by Alcuin. Since Alcuin did not use *Adv. Ar.* 1B–4, but the hymns, it is improbable that he had a correspondence dossier.

2. Lexicographic and Stylistic Arguments

Simonetti and Nautin have provided a list of lexicographic and stylistic characteristics intended to demonstrate the linguistic closeness of *Candidus's Letter* with Victorinus's works. The two lists are considerably different. The telltale characteristics, however, are not as specific as both scholars maintain.

To the observations of Simonetti[15] can be replied as follows:

- a predilection for of short, elliptical phrases, sprinkled into the argument or used in summaries: ellipses are among the most common stylistic techniques, especially for summaries, so this can hardly be estimated as a stylistic characteristic of Victorinus that excludes a different author;
- the presence of comparatives with *a*, *ab* instead of *quam*: this is regular in late antique Latin, already present in the VL;[16]
- a noticeable use of *quoniam*:[17] in fact Candidus uses *quoniam* quite often (*Cand.* 1.2.19; 6.14; 7.1, 23; 8.10, 15; 9.16; 10.2, 8; 11.3) but avoids *quia*. This, however, is not a characteristic of Victorinus, who uses, for example, *quia* thirty-five times and *quoniam* just once in the hymns. *Quoniam* does not disappear generally in late Latin; for example, in Augustine it can be found over five thousand times, according to the Corpus Augustinianum Gissense;
- regular use of *neque*, while *nec* is not used: this is not characteristic of Victorinus, who uses *nec* regularly (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.10.18; 15.36; 17.35; 18.16; 19.11; etc.);
- *etenim* not used at the beginning of a phrase: not characteristic of Victorinus's language, as in *Adv. Ar.* 1A he uses *etenim* only once in the middle of a phrase (18.47) but thirteen times at the beginning of a phrase (3.20; 12.16, 29; 13.27; 19.33; 21.41; 25.5; 26.10; 32.30; 37.26; 39.19; 41.52; 42.18);

15. See Simonetti, "Nota sull'Ariano Candido," 153–55.

16. See Alexander Souter, *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 AD* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949), 1 (s.v. *a*, with abl.).

17. The following references to Candidus's letter and to Victorinus's works are given with chapter and line according to the edition in Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*.

- frequent use of substantival infinitives: common in Latin texts in which a philosophical Greek background is given, it is not a specific characteristic of Victorinus alone;
- *nullus* instead of *nemo*: one occurrence of substantival *nullus* in Candidus's letter is no evidence for Victorinus's authorship; in *De homoousio recipiendo*, for example, only *nemo* is used (in biblical quotations: *Hom. rec.* 4.5, 28, 29 and independently 1.26), and *nullus* does not occur (thus this is not a convincing argument against Victorinus's authorship of the writing);
- frequent use of *semet*, only rarely *se*: this is wrong for Candidus's letter, where *se* (*Cand.* 1.1.9; 2.22; 3.1; 6.4; 9.14) occurs as often as *semet* (1.28; 5.9, 16; 6.9; 9.3);
- a preference for *sicuti* and *veluti* over *sicut* and *velut*: *sicuti* occurs twice in Candidus's letter (*Cand.* 1.7.16; 10.20), and Victorinus uses *sicuti* (*Ad Cand*. 8.13; 14.6; 18.8; 22.16; 26.14; 31.6) as often as *sicut* (*Ad Cand*. 2.35; 7.2; 10.19; 11.9; 16.4; 17.12; 30.13; 31.8)—nothing specific enough;
- *sed enim* at the beginning of a phrase: this is rather an influence of Greek (ἀλλὰ δέ), rather than a characteristic of Victorinus, who uses it rarely (just one occurrence in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.7.3, with no occurrence in *Adv. Ar.* 2–3);
- use of *iuxta* but never *ex* with *ablative* "per esprimere l'idea di conformità" (but *iuxta* is as normal for this meaning as is *secundum* with accusative);
- *praestare* with its regular meaning "produce" is lacking: but the meaning of *praestare* as "give" or "provide" is regular already in classical Latin;
- *etsi* instead of *quamquam* and *quamvis*: not characteristic of Victorinus, who does not use *etsi* in *Adv. Ar.* 1B–4, but *quamquam* seven times in *Adv. Ar.* 4;
- *omnimodis perfectus*: *omnimodis* is common in classical Latin (Plautus, Lucretius) and in authors such as Apuleius and Ambrose; here perhaps it is the Latin translation of παντέλειος.

For the observations of Nautin,[18] the following remarks may be taken into account:

18. See Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien," 310–12.

- *quid deinde*?: already regular in classical Latin, but it does not appear, for example, in *Adv. Ar.* 1B and 3; thus it is no specific phrase in favor of Victorinus's authorship;
- *si istud sic est*: used only once in Candidus's letter and not very common in the works of Victorinus (no occurrence in *Adv. Ar.* 2 and 4, only one in *Adv. Ar.* 3.6.31), who uses also similar phrases as *hoc si ita est*, and so on;
- *huc accedit*: regular in classical Latin, for example, Cicero;
- *quomodo*: common in Latin, too, especially in combination with adverbs as *quomodo igitur*? *quomodo ista*? and so on;
- *videamus*: very common in many authors (e.g., seven hundred occurrences in Augustine);
- *ex quibus apparet*: no specific phrase of Victorinus (no occurrence in *Ad Candidum*, *Adv. Ar.* 1B–3, and the rhetorical works); in *Adv. Ar.* 1B Victorinus uses *ex his apparet* (55.12; 59.13), but *apparet* in combination with *ex* with ablative is no extraordinary expression; thus one occurrence in Candidus's letter (*Cand.* 1.7.1) cannot be used in favor of Victorinus's authorship;
- *quae causa*: *quae* as adjectival interrogative pronoun is common in classical Latin; the "esse deum qualis aut quae causa" (*Cand.* 1.3.10–11) does not hint at Victorinus as the author;
- *causa ad id ut* (*Cand.* 1.3.14): no specific use of Victorinus can be shown;
- *ista eadem*: not used by Victorinus, who uses *eadem ipsa* (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.41.1) or *haec eadem* (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.1.28; 4.18.13); that *ista eadem* is used in Candidus's letter (*Cand.* 1.2.14) and once in *Ad Candidum* (16.18) is no proof for Victorinus's authorship;
- Translations of substantival infinitives with relative clauses: Nautin mentions "in eo quod est potentialiter esse" in Candidus's letter (*Cand.* 1.1.30) as an example. In fact, this can be easily understood as translation of ἐν τῷ δυνάμει εἶναι, but this is a common translation technique. It shows that the author of Candidus's letter is familiar with Greek or texts translated from Greek into Latin but is no proof for Victorinus's authorship;
- *hoc ipsum quod ipsum est* (*Cand.* 1.3.13–14), that is, "hoc ipsum quod deus est" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.16.6–7): the same may be true for relative clauses that may be go back to substantival participles (or relative clauses) in Greek.

In addition to his own observations Nautin adds some made by Hadot.[19] Especially the use of neologism is important. Nautin mentions *discernibilis*, *effulgentia*, *identitas*, *potentificare*, and *unalitas* (we should leave aside *imaginalis* because it occurs also in the Latin version of Irenaeus, *Haer.*, 1.14.5; 5.8.3; etc.). Four of these five terms occur in *Adv. Ar.* 1B, where the use of a Platonic source is very probable; hence the terms could go back to Platonic language but do not show the specific creative language of an individual.

Thus the lexicographical and stylistic arguments of Simonetti and Nautin are far from being conclusive. Candidus's letter and Victorinus's authentic works are close to each other by their use of expressions that derive from translations of Greek terms. Both use philosophical terminology, including abstract substantives such as *substantialitas* or *exsistentialitas* (*Cand.* 1.1.12–13; *Adv. Ar.* 3.7.11) but also *praeexsistens* (*Cand.* 1.2.24; *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.1–2) and so on. This does not prove that both works are written by the same individual, but only that both texts belong to a similar milieu or share a discourse in which technical philosophical language (such as *substantia*) was common and applied to Trinitarian theology. The use of these concepts, therefore, is quite important for the question whether Candidus's letter and Victorinus's reply can be ascribed to the same author.

3. Internal Evidence

Let us have a short look at the Arian excerpts that precede *Adv. Ar.* 1A in the manuscript A (Phillipps 1684). These two excerpts are no independent work, as it seems. In addition to the two excerpts (from the correspondence of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia), this text consists of just five introductory lines belonging to the *praefatio Candidi* (*Cand.* 2.1.4–8) and a very short connecting text between the two documents (*Cand.* 2.2.1–2). It looks rather like a document or a record than a letter or real treatise. This is true despite the addressee—"o amice Candide"—that is mentioned at the beginning (*Cand.* 2.1.5). Victorinus's *Adv. Ar.* 1A opens by stating his intention to refute these two excerpts (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.1.7–11), and he even quotes several phrases of them; thus it is clear that the documents belong to *Adv. Ar.* 1A (see below).

19. See Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien," 319.

The introduction of *Adv. Ar.* 1A (1.4–9) refers to a "primus sermo huius operis," in which Victorinus notes that the addressee, Candidus, has already mentioned several arguments and "some of them stronger than the arguments of these men" ("fortiora quaedam etiam horum").[20] Leaving this aside, Victorinus wants to focus on *ista*—that is, the two excerpts from the Arian letters—in order also to refute *illa*—that is, the arguments of Candidus himself. We have several pronouns here, "primus sermo huius operis" being the most unclear. Thus, the writing to which Victorinus refers could mean (1) the prefixed documents themselves, but since Victorinus mentions that he already rejected the arguments of this work, this seems implausible; (2) a former book of Victorinus in which he refuted Candidus's arguments and which belongs together with *Adv. Ar.* 1A; or (3) a former book of Candidus that preceded the excerpts of the two Arian texts, which could figure as part of the second book. Because of the verbs "proposita atque tractata sunt abs te" ("were put forward and developed by you"),[21] Candidus should be the author of the former writing; thus it could well refer to Candidus's *De generatione divina*.

The wording *audire voluimus*,[22] however, shows that it is not Candidus but Victorinus who is responsible for introducing the two excerpts as a preface to *Adv. Ar.* 1A. Either he selected them from a bigger work—for example, a kind of appendix to *Candidus's Letter* where several documents were included—or he himself introduced it in order to brand Candidus as a real Arian. From an historical point of view, it seems implausible that Candidus would have tried to confirm his theology by a lengthy quotation of Arius and his defense by Eusebius of Nicomedia, especially for the time between 350 and 370, when Arius was already a heresiarch rejected by all parties and groups.[23] Therefore, such a reference is highly suspect. Furthermore, the two supposedly Arian documents do not fit exactly the theology developed in Candidus's letter. Its most specific argument consists of the rejection of generation as something that could take place in God. Arius, however, not only stated that the son was created (in a special sense, of course, that has to be distinguished from regular creation) but also called him *genitus*, "begotten," in his letter to Eusebius (in *Cand.* 2.1.39). Candidus in his *De generatione divina* does not take

20. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 54.4–5.
21. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 54.5–6.
22. Text quoted at n. 14 above.
23. See Ulrich, *Anfänge der abendländischen*, 222–23.

into consideration any element of these two texts. Admittedly, the introductory lines of the *Praefatio Candidi* suggest that somebody—named Candidus in Victorinus's reply—wanted to react to Victorinus's reply to a former work (that is, *Ad Candidum*) by quoting Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia. But since this seems highly implausible,[24] we could allow the hypothesis that the combination of these two Arian texts is a literary trick, a fake produced by Victorinus himself, who added the introductory lines with himself as the addressee.

This does not mean, however, that the same is true also for *De divina generatione*, especially because this writing is independent of *Adversus Arium* and its preface with the two Arian documents. The manuscript transmission of *De divina generatione* does not confirm the link between Candidus's letter and the excerpt of the two Arian documents. Thus, the claim that Candidus's letter *De divina generatione* is a fake produced by Victorinus has to be questioned.

For this question, the observation is crucial that Candidus's *De divina generatione* contains many arguments that are not picked up by Victorinus in his reply. A detailed comparison of Candidus's letter with Victorinus's reply leads to the following observations.

The main argument of Candidus's *De divina generatione*, the rejection of any generation for God, is based on the presupposition that God does not suffer *mutatio* or *inversio*. Especially the latter term is remarkable, because it occurs again and again (*Cand.* 1.3.29–40; 4.7, 14, 17; 5.3; 7.9, 28). Like *mutatio* (only used twice 1.5, 11), it means a change, but *inversio* stresses the aspect that the subject of the change is dragged into it: it bows to the activity and suffers it. To assume generation in the case of God would mean God suffers something and has to submit to this process of change. Interestingly, *inversio* can be replaced by *conversio* (*Cand.* 1.7.2, 13), even if *conversio* means exactly the way back to the former or appropriate own state. Thus *Cand.* 1.9.14, where *conversio* means the same as "it retreats in itself" ("in semet ipsum residit"; *Cand.* 1.9.3). Without *mutatio* and *inversio*, a *generatio* cannot exist (*Cand.* 1.1.10–11).

In Victorinus's reply the term *inversio* does not occur, nor does it appear in any of the treatises *Adversus Arium*. While Candidus ends his list of negative attributes of God with *inversibile*, *inmutabile* (*Cand.* 1.3.27–29), Victorinus drops these expressions in a similar order (*Ad.*

24. See Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien," 312–13.

Cand. 13.8–10). The most important argument of Candidus's *De divina generatione* that God cannot suffer generation because of his immutability is picked up in *Ad Candidum* only late and in a short manner *(Ad Cand.* 30). Victorinus refers to other books for a more detailed explanation of the modus of generation that can be ascribed to God *(Ad Cand.* 31.1).

Before Candidus explains the impossibility of divine generation in detail, he rejects the idea that there could exist any *potentia* or kind of existence, substance, or being before God (*Cand*. 1.2). The distinction between perfect and imperfect becomes crucial for his argument. Any mode of "to be" (*esse*) that could be assumed as something before God cannot be perfect, it cannot constitute itself; these things are not "sui ipsa substitutiva" (*substitutivus* does not occur *Ad Candidum*), therefore they are *inperfecta* (*inperfectus* is absent from *Ad Candidum*). It is impossible that something imperfect produces something perfect (as God is), therefore also a generation of a God is impossible (*Cand.* 1.1.18–25). To assume something similar for perfect modes of To Be is simply superfluous. Thus, any kind of generation is impossible in the case of God. This argument is absent from Victorinus's reply.

As a further step, Candidus deals with the various terms, that is, *potentia*, *exsistentia*, *substantia*, and ὄν (*Cand.* 1.1.14–15.). First, *potentia* as something that precedes God is excluded, because as a mere potential it would never become a real action, as generation indeed would be (1.26–32). Then the author deals with the three ontological terms, on *substantia* (2.4–13), the terms *existentia* and *existentialitas* (2.14–27), and finally ὄν and ὀντότης (3.1–9, which picks up the terms *existens* and *essentitas* mentioned in 12–13). A *substantia* would presuppose a *subiectum* that could receive anything else, which does not fit with the concept of God. Thus, a *substantia* cannot preexist before God (2.4–13). While *substantia* includes always a certain amount of specific qualities, *exsistentia* means exclusively the mere existence, *exsistentialitas* the possibility of existence (2.18–23). Both terms, however, are not appropriate for God because God's actions presuppose more than mere existence. Thus, any *actio* or *agendi vis atque virtus* would not be possible (2.23–27). The area of beings can be easily excluded, because this area consists of *multiplica et conposita* that presuppose already combinations of *substantia* and *qualitas* (3.1–3). All these things cannot be ascribed to God or assumed as preexistent; rather, they are *postgenita* (3.6–9).

This argumentation is not really refuted by Victorinus's reply. Instead of a refutation, Victorinus describes his own concept of four levels of being

and nonbeing (*Ad Cand.* 3–16).[25] Not only are the specific terms of the argument of Candidus's letter missing (*substantialitas*, *essentitas*, or *existentialitas*; the latter occurs in a different context in *Ad Cand.* 7.5), but also the central arguments as to the difference between *substantia* and *existentia* (Victorinus seems to use the two terms as synonymous in *Ad Cand.* 28.10). The idea that a *substantia* presupposes always a *subiectum alteri* occurs in *Ad Candidum*, but this idea is referred to soul *(Ad Cand.* 7.19–12; 9.23–25; see 10.22–24).

In what follows, Candidus's letter describes God as a cause that constitutes itself. It is *esse solum* but contains three aspects that are described by the verbs *est*, *vivit*, and *intellegit.* In each element of this triad the other two are present; thus it is in fact a henad. The triad *est–vivit–intellegit* is not mentioned in *Ad Candidum* in exactly the form in which Candidus's letter had introduced it (but see the allusion in *Ad Cand.* 28.6–12); Victorinus develops his own triad that is not a verbal one but a substantival one: *exsistentia–vita–intellegentia* or *cognoscentia* (see *Ad Cand.* 7.4–6; 13.7–8).

A quite lengthy part, the center of Candidus's letter, consists of the discussion of all imaginable modes of generation (*Cand.* 1.4–9). Victorinus does not reply to this central part of the argument. While Candidus's letter discusses eleven modes that could be used for the description of generation, Victorinus picks up only some of them, and not in a systematic order. In this respect, Victorinus does not react exactly to the argument of Candidus's letter but raises the more fundamental question how to conceive "to be." This is the basis for a negative theology that describes God as not-being (while in Candidus's letter this is true only for the application of the term substance; see *Cand.* 8.27); then, in a second part, Victorinus discusses how to understand Jesus as λόγος (a term that occurs in Candidus's letter only in 10.2; see also the *apparatus criticus* that shows that also the Latin rendering *verbum* is attested) and defends the ὁμοούσιος (note *consubstantiale* in *Cand.* 6.11; 7.1, 7, 13, 29; 8.13, 28). By doing so, Victorinus in his reply picks up the last two chapters of Candidus's letter, but at the same time he apparently left out a huge portion of its argument.

For the eleven modes of generation Candidus discusses, the following observations may confirm this overall impression:

25. For discussion, see Hadot's commentary in Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques sur la Trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 2:700–701.

- *iuxta effulgentiam = refulgentiam* (*Cand* 1.4.9–17): absent from *Ad Candidum*;
- *iuxta radii emissionem* (5.1–5): absent from *Ad Candidum*;
- *iuxta puncti fluentum* or *liniamentum* (5.6–14): absent from *Ad Candidum*;
- *iuxta emissionem* (5.15–25): absent from *Ad Candidum*;
- *iuxta imaginem* (6.1–7): the term *imago* occurs once in Victorinus's reply *(Ad Cand.* 15.10), but the term is mentioned in passing without any refutation of the argument of Candidus's letter that distinguishes *imago* and *imaginalis* and refers *imago* to a different substance;
- *iuxta characterem* (6.8–12): absent from *Ad Candidum*;
- *iuxta progressum et iuxta motum* (6.13–7.14): even if the term *progressus* occurs once in *Ad Candidum* (15.11), the negation of this concept is really short: "insofar as he remains always in himself with no progression" ("secundum nullum progressum, semper in semet manens").[26] The concept of motion is discussed by Victorinus (*Ad Cand.* 30), who asserts that any *progressio*, *descensus*, or *regressio* must be referred to the *triplex unitas* and *unalis trinitas* (*Ad Cand.* 31.1–3); Candidus's argument that any progress presupposes imperfectness (*Cand.* 1.6.19–22), however, is not discussed by Victorinus;
- *iuxta quod superplenum est* (7.15–32): absent from *Ad Candidum*;
- *iuxta actionem* and *iuxta voluntatem* (8.1–29): This argument is refuted by Victorinus, who rejects the distinction between *voluntas* and *actio* (*Ad Cand.* 22.7–14; see 27.13–17);
- *iuxta nominatum typum* (*Cand.* 1.9.1–17): absent from *Ad Candidum*.

This means that Victorinus has picked up two of eleven modes of generation: *iuxta motum* and *iuxta voluntatem et actionem*. The greater part of Candidus's arguments are simply absent from Victorinus's reply. This is the case even for biblical expressions such as *imago* or *character*, which could have been suitable starting points for Victorinus.

In the last two chapters, Candidus's letter describes Jesus as "primum opus et principale dei" (*Cand.* 1.10.5), "the first and primordial work of

26. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 33.11–12.

God" (translation modified). The titles *filius* and *unigenitus* are awarded to him by God. Through Jesus everything is made (John 1:3), even if this is not the same perfect "making" by which God made Jesus. The Son agrees with the Father's will perfectly, but this does not eliminate the difference between both. For example, the Son is *passibilis*, the Father *impassibilis*. This difference is based on the Son being an *opus in substantia*, a *substantia,* however, that can receive various, even opposite qualities (*Cand.* 1.10.25–27). The biblical witnesses Candidus cites to support this concept are the traditional verses Acts 2:36; Prov 8:22; and John 1:3–4. If anything that is operated in him ("quod effectum in eo") is life (John 1:3–4), this is a clear proof for the fact that the Son is a kind of instrument, thus necessarily made by the Father. This being made, however, is really a perfect one. Jesus, then, is also perfect: he is an "opus dei omnimodis perfectum," he is "omnis et prima substantia," *initium* and *finis*, therefore also "the preprinciple or the precause, and production capacity and effector" ("praeprincipium aut praecausa et praestatio et effector"; *Cand.* 1.11.17).

The biblical witnesses are picked up by Victorinus in *Ad Cand.* 29.1–19, but Victorinus cites a different biblical text for both verses, Acts 2:36 and Prov 8:22.[27] Proverbs 8:22, according to Candidus's letter, reads "fecisti me praepositum ad omnes vias" (*Cand.* 1.11.5), but Victorinus reads "et fecisti me supra vias tuas" (*Ad Cand.* 29.6–7). According to Candidus's letter, Acts 2:36 reads "certissime autem sciat omnis domus Israhel quoniam fecit nobis deus dominum Iesum Christum, quem vos crucifixistis" (*Cand.* 11.2–4); Victorinus, however, reads "certissime igitur cognoscat domus Israhel, quoniam istum Christum deus fecit, quem in crucem tulistis" (*Ad Cand.* 29.14–16). It is highly improbable that the same author uses these two famous biblical verses in such a different form in the same context.

This comparison between Candidus's letter and Victorinus's reply makes the hypothesis of Candidus as a fictitious literary persona highly questionable. If an author produces a fake to refute all the better, he would have written an argumentative treatise whose individual arguments would be picked up and rejected in his refutation. That he produced a treatise with many arguments absent in his own response does not fit with the idea of a fictitious opponent whose writing would make his own argument more convincing. Thus, it is highly implausible to assume that Victorinus

27. See Nautin, "Candidus l'Arien," 320.

is in fact the author of Candidus's letter. This may be different in the case of the two Arian documents presented directly before *Adv. Ar.* 1A, but for Candidus's letter itself, Victorinus can nearly be excluded as author.

Certainly, in Candidus's letter some terms are conspicuous that recall Victorinus's own theology, as the following:

- Candidus's letter distinguishes *substantia* and *substantialitas*, *exsistens* and *essentitas*, *existentia* and *existentialitas* (1.11–13; 2.1–3, 14–17, 24–25; 3.3–7): Some of these terms are absent from *Ad Candidum,* such as *substantialitas* and *essentitas*; others occur at least in Victorinus (*existentialitas* in *Ad Cand.*, 7.5; *substantialitas* in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.18, *essentitas* in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.16);
- Candidus's letter offers Greek words, as ὄν and ὀντότης (*Cand.* 1.3.1–6; see *exsistens* and *essentitas* in 1.11–14);[28] Greek ontological terms become crucial in the latter half of Victorinus's reply (*Ad Cand.* 14–28), but exactly ὀντότης is absent (but occurs in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.31.34);
- There is the rejection of a distinction between *deus* and *deum esse*, because God is *simplex* (*Cand.* 1.2.8); see *Ad Cand.* 19.6–10;
- Several terms with the prefix *prae* occur, as *praeexisto* (*Cand.* 1.2.9, 11, 24; see *Ad Cand.* 30, 22), *praeprincipium*, *praecausa* (*Cand.* 1.11.17), both absent from *Ad Candidum* (see *praeprincipium* in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.28, and *praecausa* in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.3.24–25 and Zost. 65.5–8);
- The triad *esse–vivere–intellegere* (*Cand.* 1.3.17–20)[29] occurs in *Ad Candidum* only in the substantival form *exsistentia–vita–intellegentia* (*Ad Cand.* 2.29), but verbs and substantives can be distinguished by Victorinus as in *Adv. Ar.* 4;
- Jesus is named *prima substantia* (*Cand.* 1.11.12): Victorinus names Jesus *principium substantiarum (Ad Cand.* 16.3–4) and *perfectum* ὄν (*Ad Cand.* 15.3);
- The two adjectives *intellectibilis* and *intellectualis* are distinguished (*Cand.* 1.11.15), as in Greek νοερός and νοητός; this distinction is present also in Victorinus (*Ad Cand.* 7.13–14).

28. See John D. Turner, introduction to *Zostrien (NH VIII,1)*, ed. Catherine Barry et al., BCNH, Textes 24 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 90.

29. See Turner, introduction, 91–94.

These terms, however, are no proof for Victorinus's authorship of Candidus's letter, because they belong to the Platonic philosophical material and language used also by Victorinus.[30] Especially they are close to the language of the so-called Sethian Platonizing treatises Zostrianus, Allogenes, and Three Steles of Seth. Some of these texts—of course in their original Greek form that may have appeared less gnostic—were present in Rome since Plotinus's school, as we know from Porphyry's *Vit. Plot.* 16. This is especially true for triads as *esse–vivere–intellegere* or *exsistentia–vita–intellegentia* (or *cognoscentia*), but also for creating differences by substantival and verbal forms and abstract nouns with -τηϛ, as well as with the use of the prefixes *prae* or *pro-*.

5. Conclusion

To sum up the results arrived at here:

- The manuscript tradition warns us against conjoining the two Arian documents prefixed to *Adv. Ar.* 1A to Candidus's letter *De divina generatione*.
- The beginning of *Adv. Ar.* 1A does not presuppose that the two Arian documents were really introduced by Candidus.
- The lexicographical and stylistic proximity of Candidus's letter to Victorinus's language is not specifically high. The details of the lists of Nautin and Simonetti are for the most part simply wrong.
- Many arguments of Candidus's letter are not mentioned in *Ad Candidum*. Victorinus reacts to the question of whether a divine generation can be conceived, but he does not deal with the arguments of Candidus's letter in detail. This is especially true for the eleven modes of generation discussed by Candidus's letter.
- The biblical text of Candidus's letter is different from that used by Victorinus, even for very important verses such as Prov 8:22 or Acts 2:36.

30. For the parallel between Marius Victorinus and Zostrianus, see Michel Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation de l'apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 7–114; Volker Henning Drecoll, "The Greek Text behind the Parallel Sections in *Zostrianos* and Marius Victorinus," in *History and Interpretation from the Old Academy to Later Platonism and Gnosticism*, vol. 1 of *Plato's "Parmenides" and Its Heritage*, ed. John D. Turner and Kevin Corrigan, WGRWSup 2 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 195–212.

- Both texts share philosophical, especially Platonizing language that resembles that of the Platonizing Sethian treatises to a certain extent. Many of the terms of Candidus's letter, however, do not occur in *Ad Candidum* but only in *Adversus Arium* or nowhere in Victorinus.

These observations necessitate giving up the hypothesis that Candidus's letter is a mere fake, a fictitious literary product, produced by Victorinus himself in order to frame his anti-Arian argument in a more convincing manner. If the text of Candidus's letter was not written by Victorinus, we should try to place it in the fourth-century context of Latin theology. Three details may be revealing for this:

- Candidus uses Platonizing language. Thus he is an important witness to the reception of Platonism in the Latin theology alongside Victorinus, Ambrose, and others. This Platonism is not necessarily post-Plotinian.
- If the two Arian documents prefixed to *Adv. Ar.* 1A can be left aside, the theological profile of Candidus has to be analyzed on its own. It is remarkably different from what is otherwise called Arianism in the West. Especially it is no type of homoean theology, with its emphatic rejection of any kind of divine generation.
- Candidus and Victorinus presumably knew each other. Even if we do not know any details of their relationship, we may keep the hypothesis in mind that Candidus wrote to a much older colleague or friend (see Candidus's letter 1.1.4: *o mi dulcis senectus Victorine*; 10.2), perhaps even a teacher.

For the profile of Candidus's Trinitarian theology, Hadot already noticed some similarities to Hilary's descriptions of his opponents' view.[31] Hilary says that the supporters of the *anomoeusion* denied that there could be kind of similarity between the *substantia dei* and anything else. From this they concluded that any generation *de deo* is impossible. That is why Christ is a creature, to whom the category of *nativitas* can be applied not in its proper sense, but only as analogy and as description of his being

31. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches*, 274 n. 112.

created. Hilary concludes polemically from this that Christ would not then be a Son, nor similar in any respect to God.[32]

This description is close to, though not identical with, the position presented to the Synod of Seleucia 359 by Aetius and Eunomius.[33] Both asserted that the ingenerate Father is above all origin (γένεσις) and generation (γέννησις).[34] Of course, these expressions emphasize the transcendence of the Father, whose specific character is to be ἀγέννητος, "ingenerate." Aetius and Eunomius did not deny any generation to the Son but present him as γέννημα, "a generated thing" dissimilar to the Father according to its substance and not existent until the Father decided consciously to make him.[35] This ambivalence—the rejection of any generation but with the assertion that the Son is made and thus originated by God—is present in the letter of Candidus, who rejects any generation as unfitting to God being *inversibilis* and *inmutabilis*, but who describes Jesus as first product—*genitum est*—in the sense of being produced. Thus *Epistula Candidi* 1.8.11–14, especially 8.28–29: "nothing is consubstantial with God even if it either manifests or is born of God" ("nullum ergo consubstantiale cum deo est, etiamsi a deo aut appareat aut natum sit").[36]

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32. Hilary, *Const.* 12; see also Hilary, *Trin*. 8.3.

33. See Hanns Christof Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer: Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, BHT 73 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), 15–16.

34. Aetius names the Father γενέσεως κρείττων in *Syntagmation* 2, at Epiphanius, *Pan.* 76.12.2 = Dokument 61.1.3 in *Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites 318–328: Bis zur Synode von Alexandrien*, vol. 3.1.4 of *Athanasius Alexandrinus Werke*, ed. Hanns Christof Brennecke et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 506.20–21; *Syntagmation* 18, at Epiphanius, *Pan.* 76.18 = Dokument 61.1.19 in Brennecke et al., *Urkunden zur Geschichte*, 511.22–24. Eunomius says in his *Liber apologeticus* 9 that the Father is ἀγέννητος and states: οὐκ ἄν ποτε πρόσοιτο γένεσιν, "he could never undergo a generation." See Eunomius, *The Extant Works*, ed. and trans. Richard Vaggione, OECT (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 42.1–2.

35. See Eunomius, *Liber apologeticus* 12.8–14, 17–18; Aetius, *Syntagmation* 8, at Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.12.8 = Dokument 61.1.9 in Brennecke et al., *Urkunden zur Geschichte*, 508.14–509.3; *Syntagmation* 16 at Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.12.16 = Dokument 61.1.17 in Brennecke et al., *Urkunden zur Geschichte*, 511.4–6.

36. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 10.28–29. According to Gregory of Elvira, his opponents maintained that the Son is *natus* only in the sense of being "made." Thus, the Son is either made *ex nihilo* or *ex patre*, but *ab alia substantia*, namely, by a voluntarily action of God (*Fid.* 35). Any attempt to make the Father's substance (not his creative power) to be the origin of the Son would touch his immutability (*Fid.* 74–75). Similarly, Lucifer of Calaris presents as Arius's opinion that the Father is not

If there were some Nicene circles in Rome who used Platonizing language for the purpose of better explaining the ὁμοούσιος (as Luise Abramowski proposed),[37] Candidus did exactly the opposite. He used a similar philosophical language in order to deny any generation and to describe Jesus as the first, though very special and perfect product of God. There may have not been many heterousians in the Latin West, but Candidus was *ex hypothesi* one of the exceptions. He could be regarded as the proponent of a specific form of Latin anomoeousianism or (better) heterousianism, one who used a Platonizing language for his purposes. Like Aetius and Eunomius, he would have belonged to the group of such theologians who did not use Arius as authority, as their views differed considerably from Arius's biblical theology. Exceptions such as Candidus, however, show that it is inappropriate to pursue the heresiological strategy of authors such as Victorinus or Ambrose and categorize any kind of non-Nicene theology as "Arian." The author of *De divina generatione* would never have accepted the homoean creed.[38] Also in the Latin West we have to distinguish carefully the specific profiles of the non-Nicene theologies. Candidus should be placed in this spectrum. He was no mere invention of Victorinus, but presumably a real person who tried to find his own theological and philosophical way in the complex discussions of the 50s of the fourth century. Not fiction but reality.

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really father, Christ not really son but *factum ex nihilo* (*Conv*. 9). The problem is, however, absent from the *Fragmenta Arrianorum*, where the order *fundavit*, *genuit*, *fecit* is used without hesitance (frag. 2; see also frags. 5, 17). The same is true for the designation of Father and Son as *unigenitus* and *qui genitus est* (frag.17; see also *Cand.* 1.8.16; 10.6–7): the Son exists "in sua propria ac singulare (sic!) genita natura" (frag. 14). For the critical text, see *Fragmenta Arrianorum*, in *Scripta Arriana Latina, Pars 1*, ed. Roger Gryson, CCSL 87 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), 202.35–38; 285.30–31; 72.41–42; 71.10–12; 282.24–30. For the profile of the *Fragmenta Arrianorum*, see Uta Heil, "The Homoians," in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, ed. Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher (Farnham, UK: Routledge, 2014), 105–6.

37. Luise Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius und die römischen Gnostiker," *ZNW* 74 (1983): 108–28.

38. See Jörg Ulrich, "Einleitung," in *Phoebadius: Contra Arianos, Streitschrift gegen die Arianer*, ed. and trans. Jörg Ulrich, FonChr 38 (Freiburg: Herder, 1999), 48–49; see also Heil, "Homoians," 93, 98.

The Intelligible Triad in the Sethian Platonizing Apocalypses, Plotinus, the Anonymous *Parmenides* Commentary, and Marius Victorinus

John D. Turner†

This essay is an attempt to synthesize nearly forty years of observations concerning the origin, development, and various ontological and ontogenetic implementations of the well-known intelligible triad of Being–Life–Mind as reflected in the Sethian Platonizing treatises Zostrianos (NHC VIII 1) and Allogenes (NHC XI 3), Plotinus, the anonymous Turin commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*, and the theological treatises of Marius Victorinus. As a relative newcomer to Victorinus's thought, I will begin on territory more familiar to me, namely, the metaphysics of the Sethian Platonizing treatises, and then move on to Plotinus, the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*, and finally Victorinus—especially the material he shares in common with Zostrianos—and conclude with the question of the origin and use of the intelligible triad in what seem to be late antique metaphysical interpretations of Plato's *Parmenides*.

1. The Metaphysics of the Sethian Platonizing Treatises

The metaphysical hierarchy of the Platonizing Sethian treatises is headed by a supreme and preexistent Unknowable One, the Invisible Spirit, who, as in Plotinus, is clearly beyond Being and is therefore most properly conceivable through negation and cognitive vacancy. Below the supreme One, at the level of determinate being, is the Barbelo aeon, conceived along the lines of a Middle Platonic tripartite divine Intellect.[1] It contains

1. See Gerald Bechtle, "The Question of Being and the Dating of the Anonymous Parmenides Commentary," *AncPhil* 20 (2000): 393–414 n. 74: "Barbelo really

three ontological levels, conceived as subintellects or subaeons of the Barbelo aeon: first, one that is contemplated (νοῦς νοητός), called Kalyptos or "hidden," which contains the authentic existents (τὰ ὄντως ὄντα), roughly Plato's intelligible forms; second, one that contemplates those intelligibles (νοῦς θεωρῶν), called Protophanes Nous or "first appearing Intellect"; and a third, a demiurgic intellect (νοῦς διανοούμενος) that governs the cosmos called Autogenes or "self-generated." The figures of the Invisible Spirit, Barbelo, and Autogenes are familiar from many Sethian treatises, where they are portrayed as a supreme Father–Mother–Child trinity, a concept probably inspired by Plato's family triad of principles (the Forms, the receptacle, and the imitations) in *Tim.* 50c–d, but the unexpected appearance of the figures of Kalyptos and Protophanes superimposed above Autogenes as members of an intelligible triad calls for comment. Already in the mid-third century, Plotinus himself confirms in *Ennead* 2.9.6 that the system of the gnostics with whom he was acquainted had indeed tripartitioned the intelligible realm into a supreme, quiescent intellect (νοῦς … ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ) associated with Being (τὸ ὄν), another intellect that contemplates (θεωροῦντα) the former, and finally a third intellect that deliberates discursively, the νοῦς διανοούμενος, associated with either the cosmic Soul or the Demiurge.[2] This tripartition also resembles not only that of that of Plotinus's disciple Amelius[3] but especially that of Numenius:

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is equivalent to mind. It is the first thought of the Invisible Spirit and it has, principally speaking, three levels: Kalyptos, the hidden One, Protophanes, the first appearing One, Autogenes, the self-begotten One. At first this triad is an emanative triad: it represents the stages of the unfolding and proceeding of the aeon of Barbelo from its source in the Invisible Spirit. In the beginning Barbelo is hidden as purely potential intellect in the Invisible Spirit. Once Barbelo is constituted, Kalyptos will represent the realm of that which truly exists, i.e., the ideas. Next, Barbelo first appears as the male intelligence which is then conceived of as those which exist together, those which are unified (perhaps mind and ideas which are unified through intellection), represented by Protophanes who thinks the ideas of Kalyptos, on the one hand, and acts on the individuals, on the other hand. Finally, Barbelo becomes the selfbegotten demiurgical mind which can be identified with the rational part of the world soul."

2. *Enn.* 2.9.6.14–21: "And their making of multiplicity among the intelligibles—(1) Being, and (2) Intellect, and (3) another Demiurge, and (4) the Soul—has been taken from what is written in the *Timaeus*: for he [Plato, *Tim.* 39e3–40a2] says about it, 'The one who made this All thought that it should contain *the Forms which the Intellect surveys in the "living thing that is.*'" But they did not understand, and took it to mean that there is (1) one (intellect) in a state of quietude having within it all the things that *are*, and (2) another intellect different from that one that contemplates

> Numenius ranks the First according to the "living thing that is," and says that it intelligizes by using the Second, and [he says that] the Second corresponds with the Intellect, and that this one [the Second], yet again, by using the Third, undertakes demiurgy; and that the Third corresponds with the deliberative intellect. (Proclus, *In Tim*. 3.103.28–32 = frag. 22)[4]

As a reader and critic of Zostrianos and Allogenes, Plotinus recognized that, as in Numenius, this tripartition of the divine intellect was based on a reading of Plato's *Tim*. 39e7–9: "According, then, as Intellect perceives [καθορᾷ] Forms existing in the Living-Thing-that-Is [ὅ ἔστιν ζῷον], such and so many as exist in it he decided [διενοήθη] that this cosmos should also

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(the intelligibles) in the former, and yet (3) another (intellect) that deliberates—but frequently, according to them, the (4) Soul is the demiurge instead of the deliberating intellect—and they suppose this to be the Demiurge according to Plato, (thus) distancing themselves from (actually) knowing who the Demiurge is" (my trans.). Compare *Enn.* 3.9.1.15–20: "The [1] intelligible object is also an intellect at rest and in unity and quietness, but the nature of [2] the intellect which sees that intellect which remains within itself is an activity proceeding from it, which sees that intellect; and by seeing that intellect it is in a way the intellect of that intellect, because it thinks it; but that thinking intellect itself too is intelligent subject and intelligible object in a different way, by imitation. This, then, is [3] that which 'planned' to make in this universe the four kinds of living creatures which it sees in the intelligible." Unless otherwise noted, translations of the *Enneads* follow Plotinus, *Enneads*, 7 vols., ed. trans. Arthur H. Armstrong, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966–1968). I owe this insight to Zeke Mazur, "Intimations of the Pre-Plotinian Gnostic Use of the Noetic (Existence–Life–Intellect) Triad in Chapter 6 of Plotinus's Treatise *Against the Gnostics*, II.9 [33]" (paper presented at Université Laval, March 6, 2014).

3. Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.306.1–14: "Amelius makes the Demiurge triple and says that there are three Intellects and three Kings, one who is, one who has, one who sees.… He assumes, then, that these three Intellects and Demiurges are [to be identified with] the three Kings in Plato (*Ep*. 2, 312e1–4) and the three in Orpheus—Phanes, Ouranos and Kronos—but the one for him who is the Demiurge in particular is Phanes." Translations of *In Platonis Timaeum commentarius* follow Proclus, *Book 2: Proclus on the Causes of the Cosmos and Its Creation*, vol. 2 of *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, trans. David T. Runia and Michael Share (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

4. For the critical text, see Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, 3 vols., ed. Ernst Diehl, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1906); Numenius, *Fragments*, ed. Édouard des Places, Budé 226 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973), 61. All translations of Coptic sources are my own. Those of Marius Victorinus are from Mary T. Clark, *Marius Victorinus: Theological Treatises on the Trinity*, FC 69 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1979), with occasional minor modifications, unless otherwise noted.

possess."[5] Thus he recognized that Kalyptos corresponds to the paradigmatic Living-Thing-That-Is,[6] Protophanes to the contemplating demiurge, and Autogenes to the resulting world soul that governs the cosmos. By way of confirmation, pages 113 to 126 of Zostrianos characterize the Kalyptos subaeon as the domain of the "authentic existents" (τὰ ὄντως ὄντα)—essentially the Platonic Forms—where "all the living things exist, individually yet joined together," in precisely the terms by which Plato characterizes this Living-Thing-That-Is: "We shall affirm this (cosmos) to be most similar to that (living) thing of which all other living things are parts, both individually and according to species. For that one has all intelligible living things by comprising them within itself" (*Tim*. 30c2–5).

As for the figure of Protophanes, some thirty years ago I suggested that this name was in some way inspired by an Orphic theogony in which the deity Phanes (also known as Eros, Metis, and Erikepaios) was "first to appear" (πρῶτος γὰρ ἐφάνθη) from a primordial "Egg."[7] Although the

5. Unless otherwise noted, translations of Plato are mine and follow *Platonis opera*, 5 vols., ed. John Burnet, OCT (Oxford: Clarendon, 1900–1907).

6. Zost. 117.1–4: "It is there (i.e., in Kalyptos) that all the living things (ⲛⲓⲍⲱⲟⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ) are, individually yet joined together."

7. See Orph. Arg., l. 16: Φάνητα ... καλέουσι βροτοί· πρῶτος γὰρ ἐφάνθη; Phanes πρωτόγονος. For the critical text, see *Les Argonautiques d'Orphée*, ed. and trans. Georges Dottin (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930). See also Orph. Hymn. 52.5–6; *PGM* 4.943–944. For the critical text of Orphicorum Hymni, see *Orphei Hymni*, ed. Wilhelm Quandt (Berlin: Wiedmann, 1962). A recent study by Einar Thomassen appears to confirm even more forcefully the Orphic associations of the names of all three subaeons. See Thomassen, "Sethian Names in Magical Texts: Protophanes and Meirotheos," in *Gnosticism, Platonism, and the Late Ancient World: Essays in Honour of John D. Turner*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and Tuomas Rasimus, NHMS 82 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 63–71. Thomassen points out their occurrence in one or another form as appellations of the deity Eros in an erotic spell from the great Paris magical papyrus *PGM* 4, The "Sword of Dardanos" (*PGM* 4.1716–1870): πρωτοφανῆ at l. 1791, πρωτόγονε at l. 1755, and "(you) who conceal reasonable thoughts beneath a shroud [ὁ τοὺς σώφρονας λογισμοὺς ἐπικαλύπτων] at ll. 1757–1758, "who breathes life-giving reasoning [ζωογόνον ἐμπνέοντα λογισμόν] into every soul" at ll. 1752–1753; Protophanes or Phanes is the revealer of intelligible reality. Thomassen sees here evidence of a prior philosophical interpretation of an Orphic theogony that would have informed both this magical text and the Platonizing Sethians. Moreover at *PGM* 4.943–945, the sacred Egyptian scarab is praised as both first-appearing and self-generated: "Scarab, who drive the orb of fertile fire, O *self-engendered one*, because you are Two-syllabled, AE, and are the *first-appearing one*, nod me assent, I pray [κάνθαρε, κύκλον ἄγων σπορίμου πυρός, αὐτογένεθλε, ὅτι δισύλλαβος εἶ, ΑΗ, καὶ πρωτοφανὴς εἶ, νεῦσον ἐμοί]." Note the use of φαίνειν in the fol-

name *Protophanes* itself does not occur in the extant Orphic fragments, Phanes is also commonly given the epithet πρωτόγονος, "firstborn," (e.g., Athenagoras, *Leg.* 20.4.12; Nonnus, *Dion.* 9.141; 12.34; Proclus, *In Crat.* 71.106; Proclus, *In Tim.* 3.209.2; Damascius, *Dub. et sol.* 1.285.9), suggesting that Πρωτοφάνης could have derived from a contraction of πρωτόγονος and Φάνης.

In 2015, Zeke Mazur argued that the Sethian Kalyptos–Protophanes–Autogenes triad in fact derives from an Orphicizing interpretation of the demiurge's acts of planning the world on the basis of his contemplation of the Living-Thing-That-Is of Plato's *Tim.* 39e–40a, which was first clearly expressed by Plotinus's disciple Amelius Gentilianus.[8] According to Proclus's *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, Amelius identified the three intellects of *Tim.* 39e with the three kings posited by Plato (*Ep.* 2.312e), as well as with the Orphic triad of Phanes, Ouranos, and Kronos:

> Amelius makes the Demiurge triple and says that there are three Intellects and three Kings, one who is, one who has, one who sees.… He assumes, then, that these three Intellects and Demiurges are (to be iden-

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lowing gnostic testimonies: Simon Magus *apud* ps.-Hippolytus, *Haer.* 6.18.4–6: "For Thought [Ἐπίνοια] that subsists in unity processing forth became two, being rendered manifest to itself from itself [φανεῖς γὰρ αὐτῷ ἀπὸ ἑαυτοῦ], the Father passed into a state of duality." For the critical text see Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, ed. and trans. M. David Litwa, WGRW 40 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016, 386). Marcus *apud* ps.-Hippolytus, *Haer.*, 6.42.4: "The self-existent Father opened His mouth, and sent forth a Logos similar to himself and it stood by him and showed him who he was, that he himself had been manifested as a form of the Invisible One [ὃς παραστὰς ἐπέδειξεν αὐτῷ ὃ ἦν, αὐτὸς τοῦ ἀοράτου μορφὴ φανείς)]" (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 454). Cod. bruc. 36–37: "Moreover the power that was given to the forefather is called first-manifest [πρωτοφανής] because it is he who first appeared [ⲛⲧⲟϥ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ]. And he was called unbegotten [ἀγέννητος] because no one had created him. And he was (called) the ineffable and the nameless one. And he was also called self-begotten [αὐτογενής] and self-willed [αὐτοθελητός] because he appeared [ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ] by his own will." For the critical text, see *The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex*, trans. Violet MacDermot, ed. Carl Schmidt, NHS 13 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 252.24–253.3.

8. Zeke Mazur, "The Orphic Eros-Phanes, Platonizing Sethian Ascent Tractates, and the Mysterious Figure of Amelius Gentilianus" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, November 22, 2015). Some of this discussion can be found in his posthumously published work, Zeke Mazur, *Introduction and Commentary to Plotinus' Treatise 33 (II 9) Against the Gnostics and Related Studies*, ed. Francis Lacroix and Jean-Marc Narbonne, CZ (Paris: Vrin, 2019), 129–43.

> tified with) the three Kings in Plato [*Ep*. 2.312e1–4] and the three in Orpheus—Phanes, Ouranos, and Kronos—but the one for him who is the Demiurge in particular is Phanes. (Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.306.1–14)

Mazur suspected that Amelius was responding to and correcting a prior Platonizing Sethian schema, perhaps during the course of his lost forty-book refutation of Zostrianos (Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 16). Amelius therefore seems to have accepted the general conception of the dynamic threefold emergence of the Barbelo aeon but elevated Phanes from the second position, that of Protophanes-Nous, to the first position, which the Sethians had attributed to Kalyptos, probably because, in the Orphic rhapsodic tradition, Phanes was considered the first king of the universe (Proclus, *In Tim*. 3.168.17–20). This of course spoils what seems to have been the original Sethian intention of these names, perhaps itself inspired by Orphic theogonical speculation, that is, to signify an ontogenetic process in which the Barbelo aeon gradually unfolds from the Invisible Spirit: at first "hidden" (καλυπτός) or latent in the Spirit as its prefigurative intellect, then "first appearing" (πρωτοφανής) as the Spirit's separately existing thought or intellect, and finally "self-generated" (αὐτογενης) as a distinct demiurgical mind that operates on the physical world below in accordance with its vision of the archetypal ideas emerging in the divine intellect, Protophanes.

This motif of a sequence from initial hiddenness to emergent manifestation ending in final generation or instantiation is widespread, found not only in other Sethian treatises but also in the Valentinian Gospel of Truth and Tripartite Tractate, not to mention Plotinus, and of course Marius Victorinus.[9]

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9. In the Apocryphon of John (NHC II 1 and III 3), the Invisible—and thus "hidden"—Spirit emits an overflow of luminous water in which he sees a reflection of himself; this self-vision then "first manifests" itself as the second principle Barbelo, the divine First Thought. In turn, Barbelo contemplates the same luminous water from which she had originated in order to generate the third principle, the divine Autogenes as the "First Appearance" of the Invisible Spirit's first power. In the Trimorphic Protennoia (NHC XIII 1), Barbelo is the invisible "hidden one," (Three Forms 38.9–10; see also 36.6–9: "It is I who am hidden within [radiant] waters. I am the one who gradually put forth the All by my Thought"), the Intellect hidden in silence (46.11–23). In the Untitled Text of the Bruce Codex, where the term *hidden* occurs nearly forty times, the Monogenes is said to be "hidden" in the supreme Setheus (235.23), or in the "Triple-Powered One" (246.26). According to the Apocryphon of John (NHC II

1), not only Barbelo (Ap. John 4.27–30; 5.11) and her self-generated child Autogenes (Ap. John 6.20–21; see also the Gos. Eg. NHC IV 54.21–2; 55.25; Eugnostos [NHC III 74.14–15]), but even the divine Adamas (Ap. John 8.32) are said to be the "first to appear" (ⲡⲉⲧⲁϩⲱⲣⲡ ⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ~ πρωτοφανής). See Cod. bruc. 11: "The ninth father has a hidden (ⲕⲁⲗⲩⲡⲧⲟⲥ) aspect and a first-appearing (ⲡⲣⲱⲧⲟⲫⲁⲛⲏⲥ) aspect and a self-generated (ⲁⲩⲧⲟⲅⲉⲛⲏⲥ) aspect" (*Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text*, 234.12–13). In Cod. bruc. 15, Phosilampses says of the Monogenes: "For his sake are those things which truly and really exist (~ τὰ ὄντως ὄντα, archetypal forms) and those which do not truly exist (~ τὰ μὴ ὄντως ὄντα, animate beings). This is he for whose sake are those that truly exist which are hidden, and those that do not truly exist which are manifest" (*Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text*, 237.19–23).

Einar Thomassen has pointed out that the "Eastern" Valentinian protologies of the type found in the Gospel of Truth (esp. NHC I 27.26–33 and 28.4–10) and the Tripartite Tractate portray the generation of a multiplicity of aeons from the single monadic Father as a manifestation from an initial hiddenness latent in the Father's Thought: "The generative process of Tri. Trac. can be analyzed as involving three terms, namely the Father, the Son, and the 'Church' (Ekklesia) of aeons, whose mutual relationships pass through three successive stages: an initial existence as hiddenness and latency is followed by an exteriorizing manifestation and completed as individuated generation and independent instantiation. At a first stage the ineffable and unknowable Father (NHC I 51.8–54.35) is united with the Son in his own selfthinking activity (54.35–57.23), and contains within him the Church as the multiplicity of this Thought (57.23–59.38). At a second stage the Son 'spreads himself out and extends himself' (65.4–6); the Father is made potentially accessible, and the aeons are searching for him; here the three members all coexist in the modus of continuous exteriorization, represented by the selfextension of the Son (60.1–67.34). Finally, the third stage is characterized by the coming into being of the Pleroma of aeons as a multitude of individual, cognizant beings." See Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*: *The Church of the "Valentinians"* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 298–302.

The notion of a hidden intellect within the first principle, from which the manifest intellect emerges, does not generally occur in academic Neoplatonism prior to Proclus, although it is attested once in Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.8.5.33–35: "Actuality everywhere reveals completely hidden potency, in a way concealed and non-existent, because it does not yet truly exist" (translation slightly altered; εἴπερ πανταχοῦ ἡ ἐνέργεια τὴν δύναμιν ἔδειξε κρυφθεῖσαν ἂν ἀπάντη καὶ οἷον ἀφανισθεῖσαν καὶ οὐκ οὖσαν μηδέποτε ὄντως οὖσαν).

Thomassen also points out that Marius Victorinus (e.g., in *Ad Cand.* 14.11–12; also *Adv. Ar.* 4.15.23–25) employs a similar tripartite scheme using the terms *absconditum*/*occultum*, *manifestatio*/*apparentia*, *generatio*/*natalis* to defend "the homoousian doctrine by explaining the relationship of Father and Son in terms of a distinction between the hidden and the manifest: the Son is the manifest form of the hidden reality of the Father; in manifesting the Father, the Son, as Logos, and the Holy Spirit represent the Life and Thought of the Father; thus, the pure being of the Father manifests

2. The Ontogenetic Existence–Vitality–Mentality Triad in the Sethian Platonizing Treatises

On a still higher level, to account for the dynamic process by which the Barbelo aeon itself gradually unfolds from the supreme Invisible Spirit, the Platonizing Sethian treatises employed a completely different and distinctive terminology, namely, the noetic or "intelligible" triad of Being, Life, and Mind. Indeed, Plotinus too employed the terms of this noetic triad, mostly to describe the activity of his second hypostasis, intellect, in which Mind (νοῦς) denotes the thinking subject, Being (τὸ ὄν) denotes the object of its thinking, and Life (ζωή) denotes the thinking activity itself, sometimes grounding this triad in Plato's thought by citing the well-known passage from *Soph.* 248e–249b: "Are we really to be so easily persuaded that change, life, soul and intelligence have no place in that which wholly is real [παντελῶς ὄντι], that is neither lives [ζῆν] nor thinks [φρονεῖν], but stands motionlessly aloof devoid of intellect [σεμνὸν καὶ ἅγιον, νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, ἀκίνητον ἑστὸς εἶναι]?" This persuaded many scholars, beginning with Pierre Hadot, that the triad originated from speculation on that passage from the *Sophist* (e.g., *Enn*. 5.9.5.10; 5.4.2.12–19; 6.9.9.9; 6.6.8; 6.2.6; 5.3.5.31–35; 1.8.2, among others). However, this noetic triad occurs in nearly crystallized form in what is ostensibly Plotinus's very first treatise, a fact that led Pierre Hadot to suggest that the initial formulation of the triad itself had actually preceded Plotinus.[10] Interestingly, in certain of his trea-

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itself in an outward movement as Logos/Life and in a movement of return as Holy Spirit/Thought" (*Spiritual Seed*, 298). *Ad Cand.* 14.11–12 reads: "quod enim supra ὄν est, absconditum ὄν est. absconditi vero manifestatio generatio est" ("For that which is above the *on* [existent] is the hidden *on* [existent]. Indeed the manifestation of the hidden is begetting"). For the critical text, see Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), 31.

10. Pierre Hadot, "Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin," in *Les Sources de Plotin*, EnAC 5 (Vandoeuvres-Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1960), 119–23. See *Enn.* 1.6.7.10–12, describing the Good, "from which all depends and to which all look and are and live and think: for it is cause of life and mind and being" (ἀφ' οὗ πάντα ἐξήρτηται καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπει καὶ ἔστι καὶ ζῇ καὶ νοεῖ· ζωῆς γὰρ αἴτιος καὶ νοῦ καὶ τοῦ εἶναι). See Zeke Mazur, "The Platonizing Sethian Gnostic Interpretation of Plato's *Sophist*," in *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy, and Other Ancient Literature: Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson*, ed. April DeConick, Gregory Shaw, and John Turner, NHMS 85 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 469–93.

tises, Plotinus also cautiously invokes the median member of this triad to designate the phases by which Intellect emanates from the One as a trace of indeterminate Life emitted from the One.[11]

By contrast with Plotinus, the Platonizing Sethian treatises conceive the intelligible triad as an ontogenetic triad elevated beyond the intelligible realm, as the supreme Unknowable One's Triple Power. Here it is conceived as an inter-hypostatic triad of powers that functions as the means by which the supreme Invisible Spirit gives rise to the aeon of Barbelo.[12]

Among the Sethian treatises, there is a good deal of variation in the hypostatic status of the Triple-Powered One and its powers. It appears that

11. E.g., *Enn.* 6.7.21.4–6: "Life is the activity of the Good, or rather an activity from the Good, and Intellect is the activity already bounded and determined" (translation slightly altered); *Enn.* 6.7.17.13–26: "Life, not the life of the One, but a trace of it, looking toward the One was boundless, but once having looked was bounded (without bounding its source). Life looks toward the One and, determined by it, takes on boundary, limit, and form.… It must then have been determined as (the life of) a Unity including multiplicity. Each element of multiplicity is determined multiplicity because of Life, but is also a Unity because of limit … so Intellect is bounded Life" (my trans.). In *Enn.* 2.9.3.10–11, Plotinus's insistence that each successive ontological level from the One through Intellect and Soul on down to the sensible realm is necessarily vivified by its superiors, seems to be invoking the Platonizing Sethian treatises' own notion that the boundless vitality overflowing from the supreme principle results in the generation of the Barbelo Aeon as a divine intellect. As in Allogenes 48.29–49.1, Plotinus here refers to both a primary and secondary life or vitality as virtual synonyms for his well-known doctrine of two activities (*energeiai*), an "internal" primary activity by which an entity is what it is, and an incidental "external" or secondary activity that it emits as an image or trace of its primary internal activity (e.g., *Enn.* 4.8.6.1–2; 5.4.2.21–37; 5.1.6.28–53; 4.5.7.13–23; 2.9.8.11–19; 6.2.22.26–29; 5.3.7.13–3; as well as in 6.8.16; 5.9.8). Allogenes 48.29–49.1 reads: "Yet he is a provider of provisions and a divinity of divinity—but whenever they apprehend, they participate the First Vitality [Coptic ϯⲱⲟⲣⲡ ⲙ̅ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲱⲛⲉ < *πρώτη ζῳότης] and an undivided *energeia* and a hypostasis of the First One from the One who truly exists. And a second *energeia*.…"

12. While Zostrianos tends to portray this entity as the Invisible Spirit's inherent threefold power, Allogenes (and Marsanes) tends to hypostatize the Triple Power as a quasi-hypostatic "Triple-Powered One" or "Triple-Powered Invisible Spirit" interposed between the supreme Unknowable One and the Aeon of Barbelo by identifying it in terms of its median processional phase (e.g., Vitality, Life, Activity; NHC XI 66.30–38: "From the One who constantly stands, there appeared an eternal Life, the Invisible and Triple-Powered Spirit, the One that is in all existing things and surrounds them all while transcending them all"), although in its initial and final phases it actually *is* these two.

in the Three Steles of Seth (NHC VII 5), the three powers are only separate phases of the unfolding of the second principle, the Barbelo aeon (somewhat as in Plotinus and the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*). In Zostrianos, the three powers seem to be inherent in the supreme Invisible Spirit. In Allogenes, the Triple-Powered One seems to constitute a quasi-hypostasis mediating between the Invisible Spirit and the aeon of Barbelo, whose first and third powers, Existence and Mentality, seem to coincide with the Invisible Spirit/Unknowable One and the Barbelo aeon, respectively.[13] In Allogenes 54.8–11, its median power of Vitality is identified as an activity (ἐνέργεια) and is characterized as in motion (59.14–16; 60.19–28), but the term *Vitality* does not seem to demarcate an explicit phase in the emanation of the Barbelo aeon.[14]

Since the Invisible Spirit and its powers or acts are beyond the realm of determinate being, there is a tendency, especially noticeable and consis-

13. The Triple-Powered One is mentioned (1) sometimes separately from the Invisible Spirit (Zost. 15.18; 17.7; 24.9–10; 93.6–9; 124.3–4; Allogenes 45.13–30; 52.19; 52.30–33; 53.30; 61.1–22; Marsanes 4.13–19; 6.19; 8.11; 9.25; 14.22–23; 15.1–3); (2) sometimes as identical to or in close conjunction with the Invisible Spirit (Zost. 20.15–18; 24.12–13; 63.7–8; 74.3–16; 79.16–23; 80.11–20; 87.13–14; 97.2–3; 118.11–12; 123.19–20; 128.20–21; Allogenes 47.8–9, 51.8–9; 58.25; 66.33–34; Steles Seth 121.31–32; Marsanes 7.16–17 [the "activity" of the Invisible Spirit]; 7.27–29; 8.5–7), often called "the Triple-Powered Invisible Spirit" or "the invisible spiritual Triple-Powered One"; and (3) sometimes in conjunction with Barbelo (Steles Seth 120.21–22; 121.32–33; 123.18–30; Marsanes 8.19–20; 9.7–20; 10.8–11). As the activity of the Invisible Spirit, the Triple-Powered One is perhaps identical with all three in Marsanes 7.1–9.29. In Marsanes, where the Existence–Life–Intellect terminology seems to be lacking, the Triple-Powered One as an emanative vehicle seems to be identical with the active silence of the supreme unknown Silent One (who transcends even the Invisible Spirit): its initial phase seems to be the insubstantial Invisible Spirit; its median phase is the Triple-Powered One itself (as the Silence or ἐνέργεια of the Silent One); and its final phase is Barbelo herself. Ultimately, it does not matter whether Life or Vitality is placed entirely within the Invisible Spirit, as Zostrianos seems to do, or within Barbelo, which seems to be the preference of the Three Steles of Seth or as an interhypostatic entity as in Allogenes, for the mediating function of the Triple-Power always remains the same.

14. Except possibly in Allogenes 66.30–38: "From the One who constantly stands, there appeared an eternal Life, the Invisible and Triple-Powered Spirit, the One that is in all existing things and surrounds them all while transcending them all," where the Triple-Powered Invisible Spirit is itself considered an eternal Life that emanates from an even more transcendent entity, perhaps the Unknowable One, who "constantly stands."

tent in Allogenes, to represent this triad of powers not so much by nouns denoting determinate or substantive entities, but by abstract terms suggesting indeterminacy: Existence (ὕπαρξις) or "beingness" (ὀντότης) rather than Being (τὸ ὄν), Vitality or "livingness" (ζωότης) rather than Life (ἡ ζωή), and Mentality (νοότης) or "intellectuality" (or "Blessedness" in Zostrianos) rather than Intellect (ὁ νοῦς).[15] Each of its powers designates a distinct phase or activity in the emanation of the Barbelo aeon: (1) in its initial phase as a pure Existence, the Triple Power is latent within and perhaps identical with the supreme One; (2) in its emanative phase it is an indeterminate Vitality that proceeds forth from One; and (3) in its final phase it is a Mentality (or Blessedness) that contemplates its own prefiguration in the supreme One and, thereby delimited, takes on determinate being as the intellectual aeon of Barbelo.[16]

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15. In Allogenes, this consistent preference for designating powers or activities by abstract nouns no doubt owes to its adoption of the techniques of paronymy, relative predominance, and mutual implication by cyclic permutation (in each successively lower deployment of the triad, in which one term cyclically predominates and includes the other two, as in Allogenes 49.26–37 and Proclus, *Inst. theol.* 103, to arrive at an enneadic structure for the metaphysical ontology of Allogenes). See §2 above and notes 22 and 76 below. In Zostrianos and the Three Steles of Seth, there is less terminological consistency, but clearly an awareness of the ontogenetic hierarchy with Existence or sometimes "insubstantial Being" at the highest level, followed by either Vitality or Life as the median term, and Blessedness (but also Mentality and rarely Intellect) as the final term. See, e.g., Steles Seth 122.19–33–124.25–33; Zost. 15.4–17, 66.14–67.3, 75.6–19; and even Allogenes 49.26–37, exceptionally 67.30–38. In the Sethian corpus, the term "Blessedness" (μακαριότης)—here equivalent to Mentality (or "intellectuality," νοότης)—frequently denotes the act or result of self-contemplation as in Allogenes 59.9–13: "O Allogenes, behold your Blessedness, how silently it abides, by which you know your proper self." By a circuitous route, this notion may have derived from Aristotle's claim that both human and divine blessedness is the activity of contemplation (*Eth. Nic.* 1178b20–27).

16. E.g., Zost. 81.6–20: "She (Barbelo) [was] existing [individually] [as cause] of [the declination]. Lest she come forth anymore or get further away from perfection, she knew herself and him (the Invisible Spirit), and she stood at rest and spread forth on his [behalf] … to know herself and the one that pre-exists"; Allogenes 45.22–30: "For after it (the Triple-Powered One) [contracted, it expanded] and [spread out] and became complete, (and) it was empowered (with) all of them, by knowing itself and the perfect Invisible Spirit. And by knowing herself she (the Barbelo Aeon) knew that one"; Allogenes 48.15–17: "it is with [the] hiddenness of Existence that he provides Being, [providing] for [it in] every way, since it is this that [shall] come into being when he intelligizes himself." See also Ap. John 4.19–28: "For it is he (the Invisible

Various scholars, such as Michel Tardieu, Kevin Corrigan, Gerald Bechtle, and I myself have suggested a pre-Plotinian Middle Platonic provenance of this triad.[17] Recently, Tuomas Rasimus has made several plausible arguments that it was the Sethian gnostics themselves who

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Spirit) who looks at himself in his light which surrounds him, the Fount of living water … the Fount of pure luminous water surrounding him, and his thought became actual and she (Barbelo) appeared"; rather like Narcissus, the Invisible Spirit sees his reflected image and unites with it, but rather than ending in self-annihilation, the visionary act is here productive. The living waters of the baptismal rite have become a transcendent emanation of luminous, living, and self-reflective thinking.

17. Michel Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 7–114, esp. 110. See also Michel Tardieu, "Les Gnostiques dans la Vie de Plotin: Analyse du chapitre 16," in *Porphyre: La Vie de Plotin; Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française, commentaire, notes complémentaires, bibliographie*, ed. Luc Brisson et al., HDAC 16 (Paris: Vrin, 1992), 503–63. See Kevin Corrigan, "Platonism and Gnosticism: The Anonymous Commentary on the *Parmenides*: Middle or Neoplatonic?," in *Gnosticism and Later Platonism*: *Themes, Figures, and Texts*, ed. John D. Turner and Ruth Majercik, SymS 12 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 141–77, esp. 142–44, 160–61. Corrigan argues that all the apparent innovations in the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* are already to be found in Plotinus, and there is a remarkable affinity of thought between Plotinus, Amelius, and the anonymous commentator that stems from a still earlier tradition of commentary (in *Vit. Plot.* 20, Longinus *apud* Porphyry mentions Numenius, Cronius, Moderatus, and Thrasyllus) necessitated by the need for an intelligent reading of difficult passages in Plato's *Parmenides*. Moreover, Corrigan notes that the doctrine of participation apparently espoused by the anonymous commentator (Anon. in Parm. 12.16–22; 14.17–20, 33–35)—namely, that the Second One receives determinate being by substantivizing its own vision of the idea of being that it sees in the "First One"—is exactly the sort of participation that both Syrianus and Proclus specifically *deny* to Porphyry, but attribute to *earlier* Plotinian-circle thought that has its root in Middle Platonism and Neopythagoreanism (Numenius, Cronius, and Amelius; see Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 109.12–14; Proclus, *In Tim.* 3.33.31–34.3). See Bechtle, "Question of Being," 408–11, and Gerald Bechtle, *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, BRPS 22 (Bern: Haupt, 1999). I have suggested a pre-Plotinian Middle Platonic provenance of this triad in many publications, but most recently in John D. Turner, "The Gnostic Sethians and Middle Platonism: Interpretations of the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*," *VC* 60 (2006): 9–64; Turner, "Victorinus, *Parmenides* Commentaries and the Platonizing Sethian Treatises," in *Platonisms: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner, SPNPT 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 55–96; and Turner, "Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition," in *Gnose et Philosophie*: Études en hommage à Pierre Hadot, ed. Jean-Marc Narbonne and Paul-Hubert Poirier, CZ (Paris: Vrin, 2009), 147–221.

derived the triad from a combination of Stoic elements and speculation on the Johannine corpus.[18] Even more recently, Zeke Mazur argues that it was the author of Zostrianos whose own interpretation of Plato's dialogues was responsible for the very first formulation of an ontogenetic version of this noetic triad,[19] for whom the main Platonic subtext was not the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist* but instead the notorious passage from Plato's *Tim.* 39e3–40a2: "According, then, as Intellect [νοῦς] perceives [καθορᾷ] Forms [ἰδέας] existing in the Living-Thing-that-Is [ὃ ἔστι ζῷον], such and so many as exist therein he decided [διενοήθη] that this world also should possess." Mazur suspects that this author's quest after the origin of the Being–Life–Mind triad on the intelligible level caused his attention to focus on the multiplicity of *activities* implied by this very passage, specifically, the *living* and *being* of the Living-Thing-That-Is (ὃ ἔστι ζῷον) and the *intellection* of the observing Intellect.[20] The author accordingly posits that these three activities of living, being, and intellection must have preexisted as a distinct hypernoetic triad located at the hypertranscendent level of the first principle of Sethian-Barbeloite tradition, the Unknowable One or Invisible Spirit. Thus the Invisible Spirit was reconceptualized as the Triple-Powered Invisible Spirit, whose three powers were conceived as the prefigurations of being, life, and thought, whose activation resulted in the generation of the aeon of Barbelo. That is, the activities of being and living of the Living-Thing-That-Is (ὃ ἔστιν ζῷον) of *Tim.* 39e, now identified as Kalyptos, and the intellection of the observing Intellect, now identified as Protophanes-Nous, must have preexisted on an even higher, hypernoetic level in the form of a distinct triad of activities ascribed to the hypertranscendent first principle of Sethian theology, the Invisible Spirit or Unknowable One.

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18. Tuomas Rasimus, "Johannine Background of the Being–Life–Mind Triad," in Corrigan and Rasimus, *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World*, 369–409.

19. Mazur, "Intimations of the Pre-Plotinian Gnostic Use"; Mazur, *Introduction and Commentary to Plotinus' Treatise 33*, 24–44.

20. Thus not, as Pierre Hadot and subsequent scholars have supposed, primarily from the celebrated passage of Plato's *Soph.* 248e–249b (cited above, §2). That the term *life* can be represented by the "Living Being" of the Timaeus is confirmed by Plotinus himself at 6.7.36.10–12, where he alludes to the three terms of the triad as "(1) substance and (2) intellect and (3) all-perfect living being" (οὐσία καὶ νοῦς καὶ ζῷον παντελὲς), to which one must assimilate oneself, precisely as in Allogenes, at the penultimate phase of the contemplative ascent to the Good.

While these notions are more or less common to Zostrianos and Marsanes and are perhaps reflected also in the Three Steles of Seth, Allogenes takes an additional and innovative step by arranging the Triple-Powered One's three powers into an enneadic structure, a hierarchy of three horizontal triads where, at each successively lower deployment of the triad, (1) each term cyclically predominates and includes the other two,[21] and (2) a theory of paronymic hierarchy, according which actions (ἐνέργεια, *actus*, *actio*) always precede their resultant states of being such as essentiality, vitality, and mentality (ὀντότης or *essentitas*, ζωότης or *vitalitas*, and νοότης). In turn these states of being precede their substantive instantiations, such as the fully determinate and substantial being, life, and intelligence (τὸ ὄν or *essentia*, ἡ ζωή or *vita*, and ὁ νοῦς or *intelligentia*) that characterize the second One.[22]

21. Allogenes 49.26–37: "He (the Triple-Powered One) is Vitality and Mentality and Essentiality. So then, Essentiality constantly includes its Vitality and Mentality, and Vitality includes Substantiality and Mentality; Mentality includes Life and Essentiality. And the three are one, although individually they are three." See also Allogenes 61.32–39: "Now he (the Unknowable One) is an entity insofar as he exists, in that he either exists and will become, or lives or knows, although he {lives}<acts> without Mind or Life or Existence or Nonexistence, incomprehensibly." The same notion is found in Marius Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 1B.54.9–10; *Adv. Ar.* 2.3.39–44; *Adv. Ar.* 3.4.6–46; *Adv. Ar.* 4.5.36–45; *Adv. Ar.* 4.21.26–22.6; Proclus, *Inst. theol.* 103, cited below, note 76. The notion of mutual inclusion is only hinted at in Zost. 66.14–21: "For they are [triple] powers of his [unity: complete] Existence, Life and Blessedness. In Existence he exists [as] a simple unity, his own [rational expression] and idea." See also *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.10: "Since he is one in his simplicity, containing three powers: all Existence, all Life, and Blessedness" (my trans.). A closer but very fragmentary parallel occurs later, in Zost. 75.7–11: "In Existence [is] Being; in [Vitality] <is> Life; and in perfection and [Mentality] is Blessedness."

22. See Proclus's theory of paronyms, in which infinitives, participles, and *nomina actionis* ontologically precede abstract denominatives in -της, which in turn ontologically precede their respective substantives, by which one may illustrate that acts precede their substantive results (*In Parm.* 1106.1–1108.19). An example would be this series of terms from most abstract to most substantial: νόημα, νοοῦν, νοότης, νοῦς (as though all derived from the causitive νοόω). See *Adv. Ar.* 4.6.5–7 (translation altered): "from the agent is born the act, from the 'to be' comes the essence or quality of what an essence is, from the living is born vitality or life, from understanding is born *nootēs* [mentality], the universal understanding of universal ideas" ("ab agente actus, ab eo quod est esse, essentitas vel essentia, a vivente vitalitas vel vita, ab intelligente νοότης, intelligentiarum universalium universalis intelligentia nasceretur" [*Opera pars prior*, 232]).

Thus (1) at the level of the Invisible Spirit and/or Unknowable One, the Being–Life–Mind triad is present as pure infinitival activity (Existing, Living, Thinking, though dominantly Existing); (2) on the level of the Triple-Powered One, it is present as a triad of abstract qualities (Essentiality, Vitality, Mentality/Blessedness, though dominantly Vitality); and (3) on the level of the Barbelo aeon, it is present as an implicit triad of substantial realities (Being, Life, and Mind, though dominantly Mind).[23] This triadic system is presented schematically in the table below (underlining indicates the predominance of a member of a triad).

Triads in the Sethian Platonizing Treatises

Invisible Spirit/Unknowable One	<u>Exists</u>	Lives	Knows
The Triple-Powered One/Eternal Life	Essentiality	<u>Vitality</u>	Mentality
The aeon of Barbelo/First Thought (Intellect)	Being	Life	<u>Mind</u>
Kalyptos: <u>contemplated intellect</u> (the hidden Living Being, *Tim*. 39e)			
Protophanes-Nous: <u>contemplating intellect</u> (initial self-manifestation)			
Autogenes: <u>discursive intellect</u> (self-generated demiurge/cosmic soul)			
Nature (sensible cosmos)			

If one accepts that the extant Platonizing Sethian treatises Allogenes and Zostrianos are more or less accurate reflections of the homonymous Greek treatises that were read and critiqued in Plotinus's Roman circle in the years 265–268 CE,[24] then the Platonizing Sethians instantly become

23. Allogenes 61.32–39 (exists, lives, knows); 49.26–37 (substantiality, vitality, mentality); 49.14–19 + 46.32–36 + 51.8–21 (being, life, intellect; see Steles Seth 123.8–26: "Because of you [Barbelo] is Life: from you comes Life. Because of you is Intellect: from you comes Intellect. You are Intellect: you are a universe of truth. You are a triple power: you are a threefold; truly, you are thrice replicated, O aeon of aeons!").

24. That chapter 10 of Plotinus's refutation "Against the Gnostics" (*Enn.* 2.9.10.19–33) appears to be an actual citation of material contained in the Coptic ver-

the earliest attested source, and possibly the ultimate provenance, for an *ontogenetic* implementation of the Being–Life–Mind triad, a conception that was of tacit importance to Plotinus but became fundamental in later Neoplatonism. As we will see, similar notions were taken up in the fourth-century Trinitarian metaphysics of Marius Victorinus.

3. The Anonymous *Parmenides* Commentary and the Platonizing Sethian Treatises

The closest contemporarily attested non-Sethian parallel to this triad of activities, Existence, Life, and Intellect, is apparently to be found in the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*, found in 1873 by Bruno Peyron in a palimpsest in the National University Library at Turin.[25] At

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sion of Zostrianos (NHC VIII 9.17–10.20), as shown by Michel Tardieu, suggests that its Coptic translation is not so different from its Greek original known to Plotinus. See Tardieu, "Plotin citateur du Zostrien," in *Plotin et les Gnostiques*, ed. Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete and Anna van den Kerchove (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming). There are also extremely close parallels that here have been noted between Allogenes 60.13–61.22 and Plotinus, *Enn.* 3.8.9.18–40 on the contemplative technique of introversive withdrawal and self-retraction, as well as the common use of concepts such as "previtality" in Allogenes 60.13–61.22 and "first life" in *Enn.* 3.8.9.18–40 and of contemplation through the practice of unknowing in Allogenes 60.13–61.22 and *Enn.* 6.9.7.17–2. Similar common usages also occur between Allogenes and the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, especially the concept of "preconception" and "learned ignorance" in Allogenes 48.8–35 and Anon. in Parm. 2.12–27.

25. First published by Wilhelm Kroll in 1892, this commentary has attracted much attention in recent decades, having been subsequently reedited by Pierre Hadot in 1968—who also named Plotinus's disciple Porphyry as its author—and more recently by Alessandro Linguiti in 1995 and by Gerald Bechtle in 1999, who located it in a pre-Plotinian Middle Platonic milieu. See Wilhelm Kroll, "Ein neuplatonischer Parmenides-kommentar in einem Turiner Palimpsest," *RhM* 47 (1892): 599–627; Pierre Hadot, "Fragments d'un commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide," *REG* 74 (1961): 410–38; Hadot, "Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin"; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, CEAug 33 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968), 2:64–113; "Commentarium in Platonis Parmenidem," in *Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini*, *Parte III: Commentari*, ed. Alessandro Linguiti, STCPF (Florence: Olschki, 1995), 63–202 (text, translation, commentary), 601–12 and 649 (indices); Bechtle, *Anonymous Commentary*; Václav Němec, "Die Theorie des göttlichen Selbstbewusstseins im anonymen Parmenideskommentar," *RhM* 154 (2011): 185–205; and most recently Michael Chase, "Porphyre de Tyr: Commentaires à Platon et à Aristote," in *De Plotin à Rutilius Rufus*, vol. 5.2 of *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, ed. Richard Goulet (Paris: CNRS, 2012), 1349–

least some of the ambiguities surrounding the Sethian doctrine of the Triple-Powered One may therefore be partially explained by examining this commentary's interpretation of the two Ones of the first and second hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides* and its subtle distinctions between the First One, the indeterminate prefiguration of the Second One in the infinitival being of the First One, and the resultant determinate being of the emergent Second One as "another One" (ἄλλο τι ἓν).[26] Although the First One is altogether beyond determinate being, it nevertheless somehow gives rise to the Second One as "another One" (ἄλλο τι ἓν γέγονεν) that possesses another being declined from the First (τὸ <ἓ>ν ἄλλο ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔχει ἐκκλινόμενον τὸ εἶναι) that becomes defined as fully determinate Being (τὸ ὄν) and Intellect.

According to the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, there are two Ones: a first One whom the *Parmenides*'s first hypothesis (*Parm.* 137c–142a) describes as altogether beyond the realm of determinate being, and a second One, the prototype of all true, determinate being, to be identified with the "One-Being" of the second hypothesis (*Parm.* 142b–155e). The commentary distinguishes between the absolute being—τὸ εἶναι τὸ ἀπόλυτον—of the first One and the derivative being of the second One, designated variously as τὸ ὄν or as a second τὸ εἶναι declined from the First. What makes the first Being absolute is that it is prior to the limitation imposed by form: "it has neither form, nor name, nor substance, for it is dominated by nothing and given shape by nothing" (Anon. in Parm. 13.17–19),[27] while the second, derivative being, is generated from the absolute being of the first, somewhat as in Plotinus's doctrine of the generation of Intellect from the One. Like Plotinus, the commentator assumes that the One of the first hypothesis is an absolutely simple One and the

76, esp. 1358–71, and John D. Turner, "The Anonymous Parmenides Commentary, Marius Victorinus, and the Sethian Platonizing Apocalypses: State of the Question," in *Gnose et Manichéisme: Entre des oasis d'Égypte à la Route de la Soie; Hommage à Jean-Daniel Dubois*, ed. Anna van den Kerchove and Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete, BEHER 176 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 93–126.

26. Clearly the commentator presupposes that certain unspecified entities are somehow prefigured or potentially exist within the First One when he claims that the One is commensurable with "neither the things begotten after him nor the things that coexist in him" (οὐδὲ τὰ <μετ'> αὐτὸν γεγονότα. οὐδὲ ἐν αὐτῷ ὄντα ἐν <τ>αὐτῷ ἐστιν; Anon. in Parm. 6.21–22).

27. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:106–8.

One of the second hypothesis is the divine Intellect or "One who is" (see Plotinus, *Enn.* 5.1.8).

In the fifth fragment, the commentator lays out a rather un-Plotinian ontology that claims that the second One participates in the first One conceived as something like the Idea of being, evidently addressing a question raised at the beginning of the second hypothesis of the Plato's *Parmenides* (*Parm.* 142b), "If the One exists, can it exist without participating in being [οὐσία]?" as follows:

> It has not been said that (Being) participates in the One, but that the One participates in Being [ἓν μετασχὸν τοῦ ὄντος], not because the first was Being [τὸ ὄν], but because an otherness [ἑτερότης] from the One has turned it (the One) towards this whole One-Being [περιήγαγεν αὐτὸ εἰς τὸ ἓν εἶναι τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο]. For from the fact of being engendered somehow at the second level, being-one [τὸ εἶναι ἕν] is added. See then if Plato is like one who hints at a hidden doctrine: for the One, which is beyond substance and being [οὐσίας καὶ ὄντος, cf. Plato, *Resp.* 509b8], is neither being nor substance nor act [ὂν μὲν οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲ οὐσία οὐδὲ ἐνέργεια], but rather acts and is itself pure infinitival acting [ἐνεργεῖ δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν καθαρόν], such that it is itself (infinitival) being before (determinate) being [τὸ εἶναι τὸ πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος]. By participating this [act of] being (the εἶναι from the first One), the One (second One) possesses another being declined from it [τὸ <ἓ>ν ἄλλο ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔχει ἐκκλινόμενον τὸ εἶναι, i.e., the εἶναι of the Supreme One], which is what is meant by participating in determinate being [μετέχειν ὄντος, i.e., the οὐσίας of *Parm.* 142b6]. Thus, being [εἶναι] is double: the one preexists determinate being [προϋπάρχει τοῦ ὄντος], while the other is derived from the being of the transcendent One [ὃ ἐπάγεται ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος (*sic*) τοῦ ἐπέκεινα], who is absolute being [τοῦ εἶναι ὄντος τὸ ἀπόλυτον] and as it were the idea of determinate being [ἰδέα τοῦ ὄντος] by participation in which (i.e., in absolute being) some other One has come to be [οὗ μετασχὸν ἄλλο τι ἓν γέγονεν], to which is linked the (derived) being carried over from it (i.e., the first One's act of being) [ᾧ σύζυγον τὸ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιφερόμενον εἶναι]. (Anon. in Parm. 12.16–35)[28]

The fact that the first One is absolute being prior to determinate being (τὸ εἶναι τὸ πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος) is said to follow from the fact that it "acts [ἐνεργεῖ] and is itself pure infinitival acting" (ἐνεργεῖ δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν καθαρόν), where the use of the infinitives τὸ εἶναι and τὸ ἐνεργεῖν rather

28. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:104–6.

than inflected verb signifies that there is no particular subject performing an activity unconstrained by any categories of subject and attribute.[29] In this sense, εἶναι and ἐνεργεῖν are not entities but processes. The infinitive phrase "pure acting taken in itself" (αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν καθαρόν) also conveys the concept of full actuality without any passivity or unrealized potentiality, thus making a direct connection between acting, actuality, and absolute existence.

The second One—conceived as a divine Intellect—is said to originate as "some other One" (ἄλλο τι ἓν) by unfolding as an "otherness" (ἑτερότης) from the pure activity (ἐνεργεῖν καθαρόν) of the absolute infinitival being (τὸ εἶναι) of the supreme One, which is also said to be the idea of the determinate being (ἰδέα τοῦ ὄντος) of the second One. This otherness—in the sense of an incomplete activity moving away from its source—seems to be a derivative infinitival being carried over (τὸ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιφερόμενον εἶναι) from the absolute infinitival being of the first One.[30] Its linking or yoking together (σύζυγον τὸ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιφερόμενον εἶναι) with the derived infinitival being of "some other one" that has "come to be" (ἄλλο τι ἓν γέγονεν) is conceived as the way in which determinate being participates in the absolute infinitival being of the First One as its idea. Here participation of an inferior in a superior means that the inferior completes itself by receiving something—in this case infinitival being—from the superior, and in this way "substantifies" itself (12.9–10: οὐσιωμένον δὲ ἕν, μετέχειν οὐσίας ἔφη [i.e., Plato]) as a One-Being (τὸ ἓν εἶναι, 12.18–20).

The commentary's sixth fragment goes on to develop this ontogenetic ontology in a more epistemological direction:

> The power [δύναμις], according to which the intellect that cannot enter itself (i.e., the initial, indeterminate state of the second One as yet unac-

29. This is what Pierre Hadot has called "l'idée verbale nue." See Hadot, "Dieu comme acte d'être dans le néoplatonisme: A propos des théories d'É. Gilson sur la métaphysique de l'Exode," in *Dieu et l'être: Exégèses d'Exode 3,14 et de Coran 20,11–14*, CEAug 78 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978), 61. As Hadot observes, the Greek term for the infinitive is ἡ ἀ-παρέμφατος, an alpha-privative meaning "not determinative or indicative."

30. See *Enn.* 5.2.1.8–11: "This, we may say, is the first act of generation: the One, perfect because it seeks nothing, has nothing, and needs nothing, overflows, as it were, and its superabundance makes something other than itself" (τὸ ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο).

tualized by its power of sight)[31] sees, is different, superior to intellection and to the conception [νοήσεως καὶ τοῦ νοουμένου ἐπινοία<ς>] of what is intelligized, and is beyond these two by its majesty and power [see *Resp*. 509b]. And thus, being one and simple [ἓν ὂν καὶ ἁπλοῦν], this "itself" ["τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο" i.e., the εἶναι declined from the One] nevertheless differs from itself in (the distinction between) activity and existence [ἐνεργείᾳ ἑαυτοῦ διαφέρει καὶ ὑπάρξει]. From one point of view, it is thus one and simple [ἕν ἐστιν ἁπλοῦ]; from another, it differs from itself. For that which differs from the One is no longer one, and what is other than simple is no longer simple. It is thus one and simple according to the first notion of "itself" taken in itself [ἓν … καὶ ἁπλοῦν κατὰ τὴν πρώτην καὶ 'αὐτὸ τοῦτο' αὐτοῦ το <α>ύτου ἰδέαν]. But this power [δύναμις]—or whatever term one might use to indicate its ineffability and inconceivability—is neither one nor simple with respect to existence, life and intellection [οὐχ ἓν δὲ οὐδὲ ἁπλοῦν κατὰ τὴν ὕπαρξιν καὶ ζωὴν <καὶ> τὴν νόησιν]. In existence [ὑπάρξει], thinking is also being thought (i.e., subject identical with object). But when Intellect transfers [<μετε>ξ<έλθῃ>] from existence to thinking [νοοῦν] so as to return to the rank of an intelligible in order to see itself [ἵνα ἐπανέλθῃ εἰς τὸ νοητὸν καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἴδῃ, i.e., as an intelligible],[32] thinking is in life [reading ζωῇ for ζωὴ]. Therefore

31. Hadot identifies "the intellect that cannot enter itself" as the transcendent moment of the intellect that proceeds from reflexive knowledge and coincides with the first One itself, while Bechtle identifies it as the reflexive Intellect or Second One, and Němec as the Second One's indeterminate activity of Life that has come forth from its static activity of Existence prior to its reversion on itself (Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:133–38; 2:107–13; Bechtle, *Anonymous Commentary*, 185–86; 191–96; Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen Selbstbewusstseins," 194). However, all of these identifications presuppose that these distinct ἐνεργείαι are the actualizations of all that is potentially prefigured in the highest principle's hypernoetic power (δύναμις) of sight; see note 35 below.

32. In Allogenes 49.5–26, the Invisible Spirit's indeterminate boundlessness, traversed or delimited by its Triple Power, causes the rise of determinate being through the Triple Power's reversion on itself through an act of knowledge: "He is endowed with [Blessedness] and Goodness, because when he is intelligized as the Delimiter (D: ⲣⲉⲫⲭⲓⲟⲟⲣ < διαπεραίνω or perhaps < διαπεράω "Traverser") of the Boundlessness (B) of the Invisible Spirit (IS) [that subsists] in him (D), it (B) causes [him (D)] to revert to [it (IS)] in order that it (B) might know what it is that is within it (IS) and how it (IS) exists, and that he (D) might guarantee the endurance of everything by being a (determining) cause for those that truly exist. For through him (D) knowledge of it (IS) became available, since he (D) is the one who knows what it (IS; or he, D?) is. But they brought forth nothing [beyond] themselves, neither power nor rank nor glory nor aeon, for they are all eternal." In the immediately following passage (49.27–37),

> thinking is indeterminate with respect to life [ἀόριστος κατὰ τὴν ζωήν]. And all are activities [ἐνεργείαι], such that with respect to existence, activity would be static [ἑστῶσα ἂν εἴη ἡ ἐνέργεια]; with respect to intellection, activity would be turned to itself [εἰς αὐτὴν στραφεῖσα ἐνέργεια]; and with respect to life, activity would be inclining away from existence [ἐκ τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἐκνεύσασα ἐνέργεια]. (Anon. in Parm. 13.35–14.26)[33]

This passage seems to argue that the First One, whose absolute infinitival being is a pure indeterminate activity that transcends any determinate distinction between subject and object, possesses a certain transcendent power (δύναμις) of objectless sight. It is this power by which it is able to differ from itself—not as thinking subject as opposed to its object of thought—but as an otherness in the form of an indeterminate activity or power (δύναμις) of hypernoetic sight[34] that confers on the second One the distinct activities of existing, thinking, and living. These defined activities (ἐνέργειαι) must be somehow prefigured or potentially contained within the indeterminate pure acting (τὸ ἐνεργεῖν καθαρόν) or infinitival being declined from or carried forth as an otherness from the First and, once (somehow) actualized by its hypernoetic power (δύναμις ἐπαναβεβηκυῖα

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the Spirit's indeterminateness is understood as the Triple Power's power of Vitality, which is later on (60.25–28) defined as "an eternal, intellectual, undivided motion, peculiar to all formless powers, not determined by any determination." See Zost. 16.3–15: "Not only [did they dwell] in thought, but he (the Triple Power) [made room for] them, since he is [Being (ⲡⲱ[ⲱ]ⲛⲉ = τὸ εἶναι)] in the following way: he imposed a [limit] upon Being (i.e., τὸ ὄν), lest it become endless and formless; instead, it was truly delimited while it was a new entity in order that [it] might become something having its own [dwelling], Existence together with [Being (ⲡⲱ[ⲱⲡ]ⲉ)], standing with it, existing with it, surrounding it, [and being like it] on every side."

33. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:108–12.

34. Although the anonymous commentary does not explicitly identify this power of sight, I take it to be the image or reflection of the First One's hypernoetic power of sight, earlier identified as "another knowledge, an absolute one which is neither knowledge proper to a knower nor knowledge of a known, but a knowledge which is this One before every known or unknown and every subject coming to knowledge" (Anon. in Parm. 6.8–12: ἄλλη γνῶσις ἀπόλυτος οὐ [γιγν]ώ[σκοντ]ος οὖσα καὶ γιγνωσκομένου, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἓν τοῦτο γνῶσις οὖσα πρὸ παντὸς γιγ<ν>ωσκομένου καὶ ἀγνοουμένου <καὶ> εἰς γνῶσιν ἐρχομένου [Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:82]). Conceived as a hyperintelligence, the First One does not think but has a kind of superior awareness of its lower level doing so. See Plotinus, *Enn.* 5.5.7.9–10: "but when there is nothing there but the medium, the eye sees it by an instantaneous immediate perception [ἀθρόᾳ εἶδε προσβολῇ]."

τούτων, 13.28–29) of sight (ἡ δύναμις καθ' ἣν ὁρᾷ),[35] serve as its distinct "instruments" (ὄργανα, 13.32–33).

Initially unable to "enter itself," the Second One thereby enters into existence (ὑπάρξει) as a stable entity distinct from the First One. The self-constitution of the Second One as Intellect is initiated as its act of living causes its initial indeterminateness to undergo determination as a thinking subject (τὸ νοοῦν) able to think itself as a determinate object of thought (τὸ νοητόν). In terms of the three activities of existence, life, and thought, existence represents the initial state of the intellect as activity remaining at rest, in which thinking coincides with the thought. Intellect can then differentiate itself by the movement of Life as indeterminate thinking away from Existence followed by a self-reflexive backward movement of determinate Intellection in which thinking returns to the object of thought. It is only in this final phase of self-reflexive movement that there arises the state in which the thinker reunites with the thought, that is, the intellect enters into itself as its object of thought.

Essentially, the Sethian Triple Power seems to be a close equivalent of the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary's notion of the otherness declined from the First One: a pure activity or derivative infinitival being, which from one point of view—that is, pure existence—is one and simple; and from another point of view—as actualized by the First One's hypernoetic power of sight—is neither one nor simple with respect to existence, life, and intellection.[36] In its desire to see itself, it becomes the second One, the divine Intellect, or in Sethian terminology, the Barbelo aeon.

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35. Anon. in Parm. 13.34–14.4: "the power according to which the intellect that cannot enter itself sees is different, superior to intellection and the (common) notion of what is intelligized and beyond these two by its majesty and power" (ἡ δύναμις καθ' ἣν ὁρᾷ ὁ νοῦς μὴ δυνάμενος εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἑτέρα ἂν εἴη, τῆς <τῆς> νοήσεως καὶ τοῦ νοουμένου ἐπινοία<ς> διαφέρουσα καὶ ἐπέκεινα τούτων οὖσα πρεσβείᾳ καὶ δυνάμει [Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* 2:108]).

36. It is significant that the metaphysical *aporia* pondered by the commentator—"And thus, being one and simple, this 'itself' (the *einai* declined from the One) nevertheless differs from itself in act and existence; from one point of view (i.e., existence), it is thus one and simple, from another (i.e., activity), it differs from itself.… But with respect to (the activities of) existence, life, and thought, it is neither one nor simple" (Anon. in Parm. 14.4–8, 15–16)—is virtually the same as pondered by the eponymous visionary of Zost. 2.25–3.13: "Now as for Existence: How can beings—since they are from the aeon of those who derive from an invisible and undivided self-generated Spirit as triform unengendered images—both have an origin superior to Existence

While the anonymous commentary characterizes the pure existence of the First One—as opposed to the determinate being of the Second One—by attributing to it an absolute infinitival activity, τὸ εἶναι, Allogenes distinguishes the pure activity of the First One from the determinate nature of the lower intelligible realm by employing not infinitives but active verb forms as follows: "Now he (the Unknowable One) is an entity insofar as he exists, in that he either exists and will become, or lives or knows, although he {lives}<acts> without Mind or Life or Existence or Nonexistence, incomprehensibly" (Allogenes 61.32–39). On the other hand, Allogenes denotes each power of the supreme One's Triple Power by abstract nouns indicating a state of being rather than the determinate being implied by substantive nouns, as follows:[37]

> He (the Triple-Powered One) is Vitality and Mentality and Essentiality [ⲧⲙⲛⲧ̀ⲱⲛϩ ⲙⲛ ⲧⲙⲛⲧ̀ⲉⲓⲙⲉ· ⲙⲛ ⲡⲉⲧ̀ⲟⲩⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̀ⲧⲟϥ ⲡⲉ = ζωότης, νοότης, ὄντότης]. So then, Essentiality constantly includes its Vitality and Mentality [νοήτης for νοότης], and Vitality includes Substantiality [οὐσιότης] and Mentality; Mentality includes Life [ζωή] and Essentiality. And the three are one, although individually they are three. (Allogenes 49.26–37)

In the Platonizing Sethian treatises, the overflow of the Triple Power's indeterminate power of Vitality results in the generation of the Barbelo aeon as a divine intellect by the self-determining reversion of its power of Mentality on its prefiguration in its own power of Existence. Plotinus too outlines a similar process in *Enn.* 6.7:[38]

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and pre-exist all [these] and yet have come to be in the [world]? How do those in its presence with all these [originate from the] Good [that is above]? Of what sort [is its power] and [cause, and] what is [the] place of that [one]? What is its principle? How does its product belong both to it and all these? How, [being a] simple [unity], does it differ [from] itself, given that it exists as Existence, Form, and Blessedness, and, being alive with Life, grants power? How has Existence which has no being appeared in a power that has being?" The answer follows in Zost. 66.14–67.3: "For they are (triple) powers of his [unity (ἕννας), complete] Existence, Life and Blessedness. In Existence he exists (as) a simple unity, his own (rational expression) and idea. Whatever happens he brings into being. (And in) Vitality, he is alive (and becomes); in (Blessedness) he comes (to have) Mentality."

37. See Proclus, *Inst. theol.* 103, cited below, n. 76.

38. See also *Enn*. 6.7.21.4–6 (translation slightly altered): "The life (of Intellect) is the activity of the Good, or rather an activity from the Good, and Intellect is the activity already bounded and determined" (τὸν δὲ ἤδη ὁρισθεῖσαν ἐνέργειαν).

> Life, not the life of the One, but a trace of it, looking toward the One was boundless, but once having looked was bounded (without bounding its source). *Life* looks toward the One and, determined by it, takes on boundary, limit and form.… It must then have been determined as (the life of) a Unity including multiplicity. Each element of multiplicity is determined multiplicity because of Life, but is also a Unity because of limit… So Intellect is *bounded Life*. (*Enn.* 6.7.17.13–26; my trans.)

Interestingly, Plotinus characterizes the human aspirant's quest to contemplate the One in much the same way:[39]

> What is it, then, which we shall receive when we set our intellect to it (the One)? Rather, the intellect must withdraw [ἀναχωρεῖν], so to speak, backwards, and give itself up, in a way, to what lies behind it (for it faces in both directions); and there, if it wishes to see that First Principle, it must not be altogether intellect. For it is the first life, since it is an activity manifest in the way of outgoing [ἐν διεξόδῳ] of all things; outgoing not in the sense that it is now in process of going out but that it has gone out [διεξόδῳ δὲ οὐ τῇ διεξιούσῃ, ἀλλὰ τῇ διεξελθούσῃ]. If, then, it is life and outgoing (διέξοδός ἐστι) and holds all things distinctly and not in a vague general way—for (in the latter case) it would hold them imperfectly and

39. See also *Enn.* 6.9.11.1–26, esp. 16–22, and 5.8.11.1–13, esp. 10–12. Precisely the same technique of contemplative withdrawal is described in Allogenes, where Allogenes ascends from the Barbelo Aeon to the Unknowable One through the three powers of the Triple-Powered One in a series of self-withdrawals whose sequence is the exact reverse of the descending ontogenetic phases by which the Triple-Powered One unfolds into the Aeon of Barbelo. The ascent is described as a centripetal sequence of self-withdrawals from the determinate self-knowledge of Mentality, through a complete loss of determinate awareness in Vitality, ending at the level of Existence, where Allogenes unites with the preexistent prefiguration of his own self still latent in the supreme One from which it originated (NHC XI 60.1–61.8): "There was within me a stillness of silence, and I heard the Blessedness whereby I knew <my> proper self. And I withdrew to the Vitality as I sought <myself> (ⲛ̄ⲥⲱ<ⲓ>; cod. ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲥ; see 59.14 "seeking yourself"). And I joined it and stood, not firmly but quietly. And I saw an eternal, intellectual, undivided motion, all-powerful, formless, undetermined by determination. And when I wanted to stand firmly, I withdrew to the Existence, which I found standing and at rest. Like an image and likeness of what had come upon me, by means of a manifestation of the Indivisible and the Stable I was filled with revelation; by means of an originary manifestation of the Unknowable One, [as though] incognizant of him, I [knew] him and was empowered by him. Having been permanently strengthened, I knew that [which] exists in me, even the Triple-Powered One and the manifestation of his uncontainableness."

> inarticulately—it must itself derive from something else [ἔκ τινος ἄλλου; see Anon. in Parm. 12.33: ἄλλο τι ἕν], which is no more in the way of outgoing, but is the origin [ἀρχή] of outgoing, and the origin of life and the origin of intellect and all things. (*Enn*. 3.8.9.29–39)

The distinction between primary life as both in the process of going out and as an ἀρχή no longer going out is virtually synonymous with Plotinus's doctrine of double activities (ἐνέργειαι): (1) an internal primary activity by which an entity is what it is, and (2) an external or secondary activity that it emits as an image or trace of its primary internal activity.[40]

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40. For Plotinus, everything has both an internal (intrinsic or primary) and an external (extrinsic or secondary) activity, a first, "internal" activity constituting a thing's own substance or essence (οὐσία), and a second, "external" activity that departs from its substance and appears as an "image" (εἰκών) or "trace" (ἴχνος) of the prior internal activity. Even if the One is strictly speaking not a thing or a substance, it is plausible that the structure of primary and secondary activities found in lower things applies also in its case and that the absolutely simple activity that it is gives rise to a secondary activity that is somehow different from it. As Plotinus puts it: "When, therefore, the Intelligible (νοητόν) abides 'in its own proper way of life' (i.e., the demiurge's retirement in *Tim.* 42e5–6), that which comes into being does come into being from it, but from it as it abides unchanged. Since therefore it abides as Intelligible, what comes into being does so as thinking (νόησις), and since it is thinking and thinks that from which it came—for it has nothing else—it becomes Intellect, like another Intelligible and as it were that principle, a representation and image [μίμημα καὶ εἴδωλον] of it. But how, when that abides unchanged, does Intellect come into being? In each and every thing there is an activity which belongs to the Being [οὐσία] and one which goes out from the Being; and that which belongs to Being is the activity which is each particular thing, and the other activity derives from that first one, and necessarily follows it in every respect, being different from the thing itself: as in fire there is a heat which constitutes its Being, and another which comes into being from that primary heat when fire exercises the activity which is native to its Being in abiding unchanged as fire. So it is also in the intelligible; and much more so, since while it [the first principle] abides 'in its proper way of life,' the (external, other-directed) activity generated from its perfection and its coexistent activity (συνούσης ἐνεργείας, i.e., its internal, inner-directed activity by which it is what it is) acquires substantial existence (ὑπόστασιν), since it comes from a great power, the greatest of all, and arrives at being and Being [εἰς τὸ εἶναι καὶ οὐσίαν]: for that other is beyond Being [ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας, cf. Plato, *Resp.* 509b]" (*Enn*. 5.4.2.21–37, translation modified). The internal activity is thus pure "active" power (δύναμις) that remains unchanged, rather than mere passive possibility or potential (ἐν δυνάμει). As suggested by the priority of τὸ εἶναι ("to be") over οὐσία ("being") in Plotinus's phrase εἰς τὸ εἶναι καὶ οὐσίαν, the internal activity is indeterminate or better, infinitival, while the external activity is its direct and neces-

In his hierarchy of hypostases, the One has a totally self-contained internal activity, while its external activity is the One's own image, manifesting itself as a potential Intellect or even pre-Intellect.[41] Reverting to its source, this inchoate Intellect becomes fully determined Intellect whose internal activity is identical with its own substance and whose external activity is Soul. While the inner activity is the real thing itself, its outer act is its image or representation. All this suggests that the inchoate or prefigurative Intellect's awareness or consciousness of the possibility contained

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sary consequence—for Plotinus its "image" (εἰκών) or "trace" (ἴχνος)—and represents an outer-directed movement, even though it is the same agent that is acting in both activities. On the internal and external activity of the One, see also *Enn.* 5.9.8.1–22; 4.8.6.1–2; 5.4.2.21–37; 5.1.6.28–53; 4.5.7.13–23; 2.9.8.11–19; 6.2.22.26–29.

41. In the early *Enn.* 5.4, Plotinus does credit the One with a kind of thinking beyond that of Intellect, namely, the as-yet indeterminate prefiguration of Intellect internal to, but not identical with, as an internal activity of the One he calls the Intelligible: "The intelligible [νοητόν] … is not like something senseless; all things belong to it and are in it and with it, it being completely able to discern itself. It contains life in itself and all things in itself, and its comprehension [κατανοήσις] of itself is itself in a kind of self-consciousness [συναίσθησις] in everlasting rest and in a manner of thinking [νόησις] different from the thinking [νόησις] of Intellect" (*Enn.* 5.4.2.15–19, translation modified). In *Enn.* 6.8.16.17–39, Plotinus attributes to the One a kind of "thought transcending thought" (ὑπερνόησις), as well as self-directed activity (ἐνέργεια) that constitutes his being (εἶναι): "Therefore he (the One) is not as he happens to be, but as he acts. Moreover, then, if he exists principally because he is so to speak fixed upon himself and looks toward himself and his sort of existence consists in looking toward himself, he would so to speak make himself, not as he chanced to be but as he wills; and his will is neither random nor has it happened to be, for being the will of the best, it is not random. But that such an inclination toward himself—being as it were his activity and his remaining in himself—makes him to be what he is [νεῦσις αὐτοῦ πρὸς αὐτὸν οἷον ἐνέργεια οὖσα αὐτοῦ καὶ μονὴ ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ εἶναι ὅ ἐστι ποιεῖ], is confirmed by positing the opposite, since, if he were inclined to his exterior, he would annihilate his being what he is; so his being what he is is his self-directed activity, but this is identical with himself. Therefore he brought himself into existence, while his activity was brought along with himself [αὐτὸς ἄρα ὑπέστησεν αὐτὸν συνεξενεχθείσης τῆς ἐνεργείας μετ' αὐτο]. So if he didn't come into being, but his activity always was and was as it were an awakening when the awakener was not something else—an eternal awakening and an intelligizing transcending thought [ὑπερνόησις]—then he is as he awakened himself to be. But his wakening is beyond Being and Intellect and intelligent Life, yet these things are he himself. He is thus activity beyond intellect and thought and life, but these are from him and not from another. His existence then comes by and from himself. Thus, he is not as he happened to be, but as he willed himself to be" (translation modified).

in the One's power enables its self-constitution or self-determination as Intellect proper.

In fact, Allogenes is also aware of a similar notion of dual activities, where it characterizes the "primary Vitality" of the Triple-Powered One as "the indivisible activity" of the supreme One, which is said to be "an hypostasis of the primary (activity) of the One that truly exists." This primary activity—presumably the Triple Power's phase of Existence—apparently gives rise to a secondary activity as its consequence or efflux, which must be its power of "Vitality."[42] By contemplative reversion on its power of Existence, the activity of Vitality appears as the power of Mentality coincident with the determinate being of the Barbelo aeon:

> Since it is impossible that the Individuals (in Autogenes) comprehend the totality [situated in the] realm that is higher than perfect, they at least share (in it) through a preconception, not as Being per se; [on the contrary] it is with [the] hiddenness (see Kalyptos) of Existence that he provides Being, [providing] for [it in] every way, since it is this itself that [shall] come into being when he intelligizes himself. For he is a [Unity], subsisting as a [true cause] and source of [Being]. But if they receive (this preconception), they share in the primary Vitality, even an indivisible activity, an hypostasis of the primary (activity) of the one that truly exists. Now a secondary activity (ἐνέργεια) […]. (Allogenes 48.29–49.1)

The similarity in the distinction between activity and substance and between indetermination and determination, as well as in the terminology of existence, life, and intellection in all of these ontogenetic schemes, suggests an intertextual exchange between Plotinus, these Sethian texts, and the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* in the early third century.

This brings us to the figure of Marius Victorinus, a fourth-century Christian Neoplatonist who attempted to adapt these ontogenetic schemes and their theories about various modes of being, especially the idea that existence is a kind of activity, to the doctrine of the Christian Trinity, particularly two of his works against the anti-Nicene theologians, *Ad Candidum* (359 CE) and *Adversus Arium* (359–362 CE).

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42. See Zost. 68.4–6: "And the Life is [an] activity of the insubstantial [Existence]."

4. Marius Victorinus

Already in 1983, Luise Abramowski called attention to clear parallels between the Sethian Platonizing treatises Zostrianos and Allogenes and select passages from Marius Victorinus's Trinitarian treatises whose metaphysics Pierre Hadot had argued were originally derived from the works of Porphyry, whom he also held to be the author of the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*.[43] She concluded that, like Victorinus, the authors of these two treatises were dependent on Porphyry for much of their philosophical conceptuality (especially the term τριδύναμος, "Triple-Powered"), while allowing that Porphyry may have in turn borrowed selectively from the gnostics themselves. Continuing this line of inquiry in 2007, Abramowski argued that the common source underlying Zostrianos derives not from a Platonist philosopher but from a (Barbelo-) gnostic source that predates and was later incorporated into the Nag Hammadi treatise Zostrianos, whose composition she dates in the mid-fourth century.[44] That is, the Greek version of Zostrianos named in Porphyry's *Vit. Plot.* 16 cannot have been the same treatise by that name in the Nag Hammadi Library.

However, in 1996 Michel Tardieu and Pierre Hadot uncovered a theological source shared virtually word-for-word between Zostrianos and Marius Victorinus's treatise *Adv. Ar.* 1B.[45] Here, Tardieu and Hadot refer

43. Luise Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius und die römischen Gnostiker," *ZNW* 74 (1983): 108–28. See Hadot's arguments for Porphyrian authorship of the anonymous commentary anticipated in "Être, Vie, Pensée," and articulated fully in Hadot, "Fragments d'un commentaire"; Pierre Hadot, "La métaphysique de Porphyre," in *Porphyre*, EnAC 12 (Vandoeuvres-Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1966), 127–57; and Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:461–77. In the latter he argues that the principal Porphyrian source behind the non-Christian aspects of Victorinus's Trinitarian theology was a theogonic work (or works) in which Porphyry commented on the Chaldean Oracles. These arguments are accepted by Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius"; Ruth Majercik, "The Existence–Life–Intellect Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism," *ClQ* 42 (1992): 475–88; Majercik, "Chaldaean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis: Some Reconsiderations," *ClQ* 51 (2001): 265–96. See also Mark J. Edwards, "Porphyry and the Intelligible Triad," *JHS* 110 (1990): 14–25; Edwards, "Being, Life and Mind: A Brief Inquiry," *SyllCl* 8 (1997): 191–205.

44. Luise Abramowski, "'Audi, ut dico': Literarische Beobachtungen und chronologischen Erwägungen zu Marius Victorinus und den 'platonisierenden' Nag Hammadi-Traktaten," *ZKG* 117 (2006): 145–68.

45. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation"; Pierre Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus, Questions et hypothèses," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 115–25. See also my introduction and

to the culminating revelation of the Luminaries of the aeon of Barbelo to Zostrianos at the apex of his visionary ascent into the Barbelo aeon.[46] In its initial portion, both Zostrianos (NHC VIII 64.13–66.12) and Victorinus (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.9–40) characterize the supreme deity by means of a negative and a superlative theology familiar from the classical ways of knowing God outlined in Alcinous's *Didaskalikos*.[47] The second portion of this theological source (Zost. 66.14–68.13; 74.17–75.21 and Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.1–21, also cited at the beginning of Abramowski's article) goes on to present a largely affirmative theology of the supreme principle, conceptualized as a single perfect Spirit that nevertheless is a unity of three powers, Existence, Life (or Vitality), and Blessedness (or Mentality). By these powers, it generates all subsequent reality in the three phases: an

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commentary to Zostrianos in *Zostrien (NH VIII, 1)*, ed. Catherine Barry et al., BCNH, Textes 24 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), esp. 77, 150, 579–608. On Victorinus's thought, see Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques sur la trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, 2 vols., SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960); Matthias Baltes, *Marius Victorinus*: *Zur Philosophie in seinen theologischen Schriften*, BzAK 174 (Munich: Saur, 2002).

46. See the complete parallel texts most conveniently in John D. Turner, "The Platonizing Sethian Treatises, Marius Victorinus's Philosophical Sources, and Pre-Plotinian Parmenides Commentaries," in *History and Interpretation from the Old Academy to Later Platonism and Gnosticism*, vol. 1 of *Plato's Parmenides and Its Heritage*, ed. John D. Turner and Kevin Corrigan, WGRWSup 2 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 166–69.

47. The *via negativa*, or way by subtraction (ἀφαίρεσις) or negation (ἀπόφασις) of all positive predicates, is complemented by the *via eminentiae* or way of transcendence (ὑπεροχή or ἐπαγωγή) of all possible predicates, both positive and negative, including pairs of contraries, i.e., the *via oppositionis* (Alcinous, *Epit.* 10.3–4; 28.1–3). In the negative theology common to Zostrianos and Victorinus, the negative attributes of the Spirit—such as immeasurable, invisible, indiscernible, and partless—mostly derive from the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* (137c–142a), while others are transferred from the *Phaedrus* or derive from the description of matter in the *Timaeus*: *Parm.* 140c3, 140d4 (immeasurable), 136d7–138a1 (invisible), 139b–e (indiscernible), 137c4–d3 (partless; see *Soph.* 245a), 137d9 (shapeless); *Phaedr.* 247c6–7 (colorless and shapeless); *Tim.* 50d7, 51a8 (formless), 50e4 (specieless); Alcinous, *Epit.* 10 (qualityless), and *Epit.* 8 (shapeless, specieless). According Luc Brisson, such attributes are not typical Neoplatonic designations of the One, but more like the sort of scholastic formulations to be found in the Middle Platonic commentaries and treatises by Severus, Cronius, Numenius, Gaius, Atticus, and Alexander read in the meetings of Plotinus's circle. See Brisson, "The Platonic Background in the *Apocalypse of Zostrianos*: Numenius and *Letter II* attributed to Plato," in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. John J. Cleary (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 173–88.

initial static existence followed by a spontaneous vital overflowing, and ending in the self-determination of that overflow as an independent reality by a cognitive apprehension of both itself and its prefiguration still resident in its source.

Tardieu postulates that both Victorinus and Zostrianos drew in common on a Greek text of Middle Platonic provenance, a Neoplatonic source being excluded because the author calls the One a Spirit (*pneuma*), a Stoic identification whose implicit materialism would be unsuitable to Neoplatonic thought. Moreover, the affirmative theology describes the Father's power of being as an "idea and *logos* of itself" (Zost. 8.66.18–21), a formula that Plotinus would surely have rejected. This source, whose author Tardieu suspected to be Numenius, was already written in 263 and embedded in the Greek version of Zostrianos known to Plotinus and his followers. Moreover, contra Abramowski, this text was identical to the Coptic version in the Nag Hammadi treatises. In his accompanying reply to Tardieu, Hadot himself admits that this common source indeed cannot have stemmed from Porphyry and may well in fact derive from a pre-Plotinian gnosticized (originally perhaps Numenian) text known to both Victorinus and the author of Zostrianos.[48] Tardieu furthermore noted that fragment 4 of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, which Hadot had attributed to Porphyry, contains a statement that depends on *both* the Chaldaean Oracles (3 and 4) *and* the theological source common to Victorinus and Zostrianos,[49] to the effect that the

48. Hadot, "Questions et hypothèses."

49. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 100–101. Anon. in Parm. 9.1–4: "Others, although they affirm that He has snatched himself away from all that which is his, nevertheless concede that his power and intellect are co-unified in his simplicity." The commentator alludes to certain thinkers who apparently thought that the *Oracles* had located a Father–Power–Intellect triad within a supreme Father conceived as a monadic intellect who presides over "still another" subjacent triadic intellect. It appears that not only Zostrianos and Allogenes, but also these thinkers and the anonymous commentary itself, entertain a triadic doctrine related to that of the Chaldaean Oracles, although they take a critical stance toward it. Orac. Chald., frag. 3: "the Father snatched himself away and did not enclose his own fire in his intellectual Power"; and frag. 4: "For Power is with him (for the commentator, the Father), but Intellect is from him." Translations follow *Oracula Chaldaica*, ed. and trans. Ruth Majercik, SGRR 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1989). According to the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* (cited above), since the Father snatched himself away, he cannot be called a solitary "One"; as the first member of a triad, he is instead "co-unified" with the entire triad as a three-in-

supreme One's power and intellect are co-unified in his simplicity. This suggests that the common source is contemporary with or even predates the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary, and that the anonymous commentary is not by Porphyry but, like the common source, is a product of earlier pre-Plotinian *Parmenides* interpretation on the part of Middle Platonists or even Sethian thinkers.

4.1. The Relation between the One and the Spirit in Zostrianos and Victorinus

There is, however, another problem: Victorinus supplements his negative and superlative theology in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.9–40—which does *not* identify the One with the Spirit—with an affirmative theology of the threefold character of the One in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.1–21, which quite freely designates the One as the Spirit (50.4–8; 50.18). Likewise, the initial negative and superlative theology of Zostrianos—which *does* identify the One as an "immeasurable Spirit" (Zost. 64.17)—is also supplemented by an affirmative theology of the threefold character of the One as a unitary Spirit (Zost. 67.11, 16, 20; 75.14). That is, both authors witness the presence of the problematic term *spirit* in the *second* affirmative section of the common source, but only Zostrianos witnesses it in the *first*, negative theological section. Now, the problem is that—as both Hadot and Tardieu point out—since the term *spirit* was a standard designation for the Stoic universal Logos immanent in the physical cosmos, it would be highly unlikely for Platonists to apply such a materialistic term to the supreme One beyond being.[50]

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one unity. A similar notion of self-rapture, which seems to be implied in Moderatus, may possibly be reflected also in the Sethian Platonizing treatise Marsanes (NHC X 9.29–10.4) when it says that the Invisible Spirit "ran up to his place," apparently causing the entire divine world to unfold and be revealed "until he reached the upper region." Esp. *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.10: "Since he is one in his simplicity, containing three powers: all Existence, all Life, and Blessedness." Esp. Zost. 66.14–20: "For they are [triple] powers of his [unity: complete] Existence, Life, and Blessedness. In Existence he exists [as] a simple unity."

50. So Hadot, "Questions et Hypothèses," 124–25; see also Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 114. Interestingly, the Platonizing Sethian treatises' use of the term *Spirit*—in spite of its materialistic connotation in Stoic philosophy—to denote their supreme principle never falls under Plotinus's direct criticism, however much it might have been one of the original provocations for his antignostic critique in the *Großschrift*. Majercik points out that Hadot notes that in the later Neoplatonists one

As noted, Zostrianos's version (Zost. 64.17) of the initial section of the common source contains the term *spirit*, but Victorinus's version does not (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.9–40), which raises the question: Does the identification of the One with Spirit stem from the source common to Zostrianos and Victorinus, or has it been added by the author of Zostrianos, as Tardieu thinks, or was it previously added to a Christian or gnostic revision of the common source that was used by both, as Hadot thinks? Again, since both authors apparently reflect its presence in the second, affirmative section of the source, what accounts for its absence from Victorinus's version—that of a Christian theologian—of its initial negative section?[51]

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never finds the name πνεῦμα in place of the Chaldean πατήρ, and suggests that Victorinus's employment of *Spirit* here may not involve borrowing from a Neoplatonic source (Majercik, "Existence–Life–Intellect Triad," 487; see Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:297). Abramowski suggests that Porphyry has borrowed the term *Spirit* from the gnostics, noting in particular the expression *tripotens in unalitate spiritus* in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.4–5 (i.e., "triple powerful Invisible Spirit" in Zost. 87.13–14, etc.), but since Porphyry (e.g., *Sent.* 29) uses the term πνεῦμα principally in connection with the Chaldaean Oracles' doctrine of the soul's "breath" or "vehicle" (ὄχημα-πνεῦμα; Orac. chald. frags. 61, 104, 120, 129, 158, 201), the "spiritual envelope" or "astral body" acquired by the soul in its earthly descent, Porphyry would hardly have used this term to describe the First Principle, whether as a Stoicizing of Chaldean terminology (Hadot) or as a gnostic adaptation (Abramowski; see "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius"). Even so, if Victorinus found the term πνεῦμα as an equivalent for πατήρ in Porphyry's exegesis of the Oracles, why no trace of this use among subsequent Neoplatonists? Majercik argues that "unless Victorinus found this terminology in a source independent of Porphyry, the best explanation is that he has equated *pneuma* and *pater* in *Adv. Ar.* 1.50 in order to reconcile Chaldean and Christian concepts" (as in *Ad Cand.* 1.6–8, where he equates the Chaldean "Paternal Intellect" with the "Spirit" who has "sent forth symbols from all eternity which are engraved in the soul" (*animae nostrae* νοῦς πατρικός *et spiritus de super missus figurationes intellegentiarum inscriptas* [*Opera pars prior*, 15]), a paraphrase of Orac. Chald., frag. 108 (σύμβολα γὰρ πατρικὸς νόος ἔσπειρεν κατὰ κόσμον), where the Paternal Intellect is said to have "sown symbols through the cosmos." Thus the "Spirit triple powered in its unity" of *Adv. Ar.* 1B 50.4–5 is equivalent to the Oracle's Paternal Intellect, or better, the prefiguration of the second Intellect from whom the Father "snatched himself away" (frag. 3) to give rise to the second Intellect. It seems now that Majercik's alternative, namely, that Victorinus "found this terminology in a source independent of Porphyry" is the correct solution: the source was not Porphyry, but a non-Christian, Middle Platonic source common to Zostrianos and Victorinus uncovered by Hadot and Tardieu.

51. A similar issue also arises in the case of Apocryphon of John, whose negative (and positive) theology identifies the supreme Monad as the Invisible Spirit: "The Monad [is a monarchy] over which there is [nothing. It is he who exists as God] and

Given that the versions of the common source represented by Zostrianos and Victorinus each introduce the term *spirit* at different locations in the text, it may be that the term either was not present anywhere in the original source or was indeed present in the initial negative and superlative theology (Zost. 64.13–66.14 = *Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.9–40), where it was included in Zostrianos 67.18–20— "He is not about to come forth to any place, because he (is) a single perfect, simple Spirit"—but omitted by Victorinus. Yet it is also possible that the term *spirit* was originally present only in the *second*, affirmative theological section of the source (Zost. 66.14–68.13; 74.17–75.21 = *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.1–21), where *spirit* would have designated not the One per se but a *mode* in which the One exists. Here Zostrianos's version identifies *spirit* as the supra-eidetic ("idea of an idea") unity (literally "Henad") "*within*" which the One exists:

> And he [exists alone] in himself (with himself), the single, (perfect, spiritual) Unity [ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲛ̀[ⲧⲉⲗⲓⲟⲥ ⲙ̅ⲡ̅ⲛ̅]ⲁ]. For he dwells (within) that which is his, which (exists as) an *idea of an idea*, (a) *unity of the* [*Henad*]. He exists *as* (the Spirit), [ⲉⲫⲱⲟⲡ ⲙ̀ⲡ[ⲓⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲁ, *not*: *ⲡⲓⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲁ ⲡⲉ = "he *is* the Spirit"!] inhabiting it by intellect and it inhabits him. (Zost. 67.8–18)

In Victorinus's version, God is characterized as follows:

> Perfect beyond perfect, triple-powered in accord with the unicity of the Spirit [*tripotens in unalitate spiritus*], perfect and beyond spirit [*perfectus et supra spiritum*], for he does not breathe; rather the Spirit is only in that which is his being, Spirit breathing into itself that it may be Spirit, since the Spirit is not separate from itself. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50, translation altered)[52]

Here *spiritus* in the phrase "tripotens in unalitate spiritus" is probably not nominative case—as it occurs elsewhere in this passage as an equivalent

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Father of [the All, the Invisible One] who is over [the All, who exists in] the Incorruptibility that is [in the Pure Light], into which no [eye can] gaze. [He is] the Invisible [Spirit]" (NHC II 2.26–33). While this identification is not explicit in the portion of this negative theology that the Apocryphon shares word-for-word with Allogenes (NHC XI 62.28–63.25), one may wonder whether it stood in the portion of this source used by the Apocryphon of John but omitted from Allogenes.

52. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 145.4–8: "Perfectus super perfectos, tripotens in unalitate spiritus, perfectus et supra spiritum: non enim spirat, sed tantum spiritus est in eo quod est ei esse, spiritus spirans in semet ipsum ut sit spiritus, quoniam est spiritus inseparabilis a semet ipso."

name for the supreme deity who clearly transcends spirit ("perfectus et supra spiritum")—but genitive, referring to the unifying *function* possessed by the Spirit conceived as an entity subordinate to the triple-powered deity. Here Victorinus's version glosses the term *spirit* as designating the inward breathing (a "motionless motion") of the supreme One's *being* ("in eo quod est ei esse"), which is "inseparable" from the One.[53] Indeed later on, in *Adv. Ar.* 4.4, Victorinus identifies the Spirit as the "to be" and the "substance" of God, which is living (*vivens*).[54] In *Adv. Ar.* 4.10, this tonic motion or inward breathing designates the infinitival living and the inseparable simplicity of God's self-existence.[55] In *Adv. Ar.* 4.6, "to breathe" means "to live," which is the interior "movement in rest" or "pure act" that gives rise to exteriorized *vitalitas* (life-in-determination) and ultimately to substantive life.[56]

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53. See Luise Abramowski's review of Tardieu and Hadot's articles in *ResOr* 9 (cited in n. 45), "Nicänismus und Gnosis im Rom des Bischofs Liberius: Der Fall des Marius Victorinus," *ZAC* 8 (2005): 513–66, esp. 536–43. In *Adv. Ar.* 1B.51.27–28, "spirit" designates the power of Life in both its procession from and its return to the Father's power. I suspect that this passage may be based on a further, *third* section of the common source; see §4.2 above and the parallel texts in my "Platonizing Sethian Treatises."

54. In *Adv. Ar*. 4.4.19–23, Victorinus argues, granted that God is, what do we think he is? "'God,' he says, 'is Spirit' (John 4:24), that is the 'to be' of God. Therefore the Spirit is the substance of God. This same substance (*substantia*) is that which is living, not so that it is one thing to be substance, another to be living, but so that the living itself is the substance itself" ("*Deus,* inquit, *spiritus est,* hoc est Dei, quod est esse: ergo substantia Dei spiritus est. Eadem substantia hoc est quod vivens, non ut aliud sit substantia, aliud vivens, sed ipsum vivens ut sit ipsa substantia" [*Opera pars prior*, 229]). See John 6:63.

55. *Adv. Ar.* 4.10.1–15: "But the Spirit breathes and breathes from himself, and God is Spirit; indeed 'he breathes' is 'he lives.' Therefore he lives from himself … thus the Spirit is 'to live' and life is Spirit. They are mutually implied, in each one is also the other, not as a duplication or addition but by the simplicity of existing from itself and in itself, as though each were the duplicate of the other yet never other than itself. Indeed, 'to live' is found with life, and life is again found in that which is 'to live'" ("Spirat autem spiritus, et a se spirat, et Deus spiritus est: spirat vero, hoc est, quod vivit: vivit ergo a se … Spiritus ergo est vivere, et vita spiritus est: complectitur se utrumque, et in utrumque est, et alterum non ut geminum et adjectum, sed simplicitate ex se atque in se existentis, quasi alterius substantiae duplicatum, nunquam a se discretum, quia in singulis geminum. Etenim vivere cum vita est, et vita rursus cum eo est quod est vivere" [*Opera pars prior*, 238–39]).

56. *Adv. Ar.* 4.6.34–37: "'But the Spirit breathes' (John 3:8), and from himself he breathes. But to breathe is to live. But that which breathes from itself lives from itself"

Clearly Victorinus has in mind something like the Stoic theory of tonic or tensile motion, the bidirectional expansion and contraction of *pneuma* by which physical objects and living organisms constitute themselves.[57] Although Zostrianos does not explicitly invoke this notion, Allogenes specifically applies it to the Triple Power of the Invisible Spirit or Unknowable One:

> For after it (the Triple-Powered One) [contracted, it expanded] and [spread out] ([ⲉⲧⲁⲩⲍⲟⲧⲡ̅ⲏ̅ ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲱ]ⲱ̅ⲥ̅ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲩⲱ [ⲉⲁⲩⲩⲡⲟⲣ]ⲱ̅ⲩ̅ⲏ̅]) and became complete, (and) it was empowered (with) all of them, by know-

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("Spiritus vero spirat, et a se spirat: spirare autem vivere est. Porro quod a se spirat, a se vivit" [*Opera pars prior*, 233]). See also *Adv. Ar.* 4.10.1–3 (cited in the preceding note) and *Adv. Ar.* 4.24.22: "spiritus vel spirans." Compare Anon. in Parm. 12.23–27: "the One beyond substance and being is neither being nor substance nor act, but rather acts and is itself pure acting, such that it is itself being before being" (τὸ εἶναι τὸ πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος [Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:104]).

57. Pierre Hadot (*Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:68–77) suggests that such a process of self-reflexive ontogenesis underlying Neoplatonic doctrines of procession and reversion was ultimately derived from a transposition to the metaphysical plane of what was originally a physical or even biological model, specifically, the Stoic notion of tonic motion (τονικὴ κίνησις), the simultaneous bidirectional expansion and contraction of *pneuma* (ἡ τοῦ πνεύματος φύσις καὶ ἡ τονικὴ κίνησις [Proclus, *Theol. Plat*. 4.5.7–8]) by which physical objects and living organisms constitute themselves. For the critical text of Proclus see *Théologie platonicienne*, 6 vols., ed. and trans. Henri-Dominique Saffrey and Leendert Gerrit Westerink, Budé 188, 230, 264, 282, 311, 379 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968–1997). Thus outward motion produces multiple magnitudes and qualities, and inward motion produces unity and cohesive substance, a precursor to the Neoplatonic doctrines of procession and reversion. See Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 2.70–71 = Numenius, frag. 4b: "If we say, with the Stoics, that there is a 'tensile motion' (τονικήν τινα εἶναι κίνησιν) involved with bodies which simultaneously moves inwards and outwards (εἰς τὸ εἴσω ἅμα καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔξω κινουμένην), where the outward movement effects size and quality (τὴν μὲν εἰς τὸ ἔξω μεγεθῶν καὶ ποιοτήτων ἀποτελεστικὴν εἶναι, τὴν δὲ εἰς τὸ εἴσω ἑνώσεως καὶ οὐσίας), the inward one unity and substantiality. But since every movement comes from some power, we should ask them what the power is here, and what it is instantiated in" (εἰ δὲ λέγοιεν καθάπερ οἱ Στωϊκοὶ τονικήν τινα εἶναι κίνησιν περὶ τὰ σώματα εἰς τὸ εἴσω ἅμα καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔξω κινουμένην, καὶ τὴν μὲν εἰς τὸ ἔξω μεγεθῶν καὶ ποιοτήτων ἀποτελεστικὴν εἶναι, τὴν δὲ εἰς τὸ εἴσω ἑνώσεως καὶ οὐσίας, ἐρωτητέον αὐτοὺς ἐπειδὴ πᾶσα κίνησις ἀπό τινός ἐστι δυνάμεως τίς ἡ δύναμις αὕτη καὶ ἐν τίνι οὐσίωται). For the critical texts, see Nemesius, *De natura hominis*, ed. Moreno Morani, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1987); Numenius, *Fragments*. This may be a distant echo of Empedocles's cosmic phases governed by Love (Philia) and Strife (Neikos).

> ing itself and the perfect Invisible Spirit. And by knowing herself she knew that one. (Allogenes 45.22–30)

In any case, the inappropriateness of the term *spirit* in the original source as an overly materialistic Stoicizing designation for the supreme principle loses its force if one takes the term as Victorinus does, that is, as equivalent to the infinitival living (*vivere*) of the supreme deity rather than to its actual identity. Given its merely attributive presence in the second part of the source, it would have been quite natural for the author of Zostrianos to add the term *spirit* to the first part, given the traditional Sethian designation of the supreme deity as the Invisible Spirit. If the term *spirit* stood in the source's positive theology, it would seem to have served as a rough equivalent of the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary's pure infinitival being (εἶναι) or pure activity (ἐνέργεια) declined from the supreme One,[58] which the author of Zostrianos may have intended to designate a faculty or power of the supreme deity rather than its identity.

4.2. The Generation of a Second One: A Third Part of the Common Source?

Apparently Victorinus's and Zostrianos's word-for-word citation of the common source breaks off with the phrase "being absolutely all things in a universal mode, purely unengendered, preexisting, a unity of union which is not itself union" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.21–22),[59] after which Zostrianos contains no more exact word-for-word parallels with the extant writings of Victorinus. But if the common source was intended as a theological interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides*, as it so far seems to be, might not one expect its exposition of the first One and its powers to be followed by an exposition of the generation and nature of the second One?

Indeed, it turns out that both Victorinus and Zostrianos immediately move beyond their expositions of the supreme One to expound the process by which the indeterminate preexistence within the One-Spirit

58. Anon. in *Parm*. 12.31–35, cited in §3 above. Perhaps the Spirit is somewhat equivalent to the primary internal activity Plotinus locates in the One whose internal completeness *necessarily* gives rise to a secondary activity different *from* and external to itself.

59. Rendered by Zostrianos as "And (he is) a Henad with Unity, and absolutely all things, the unengendered purity, thanks to whom they preexist, all of them together with …" (Zost. 75.20–25).

gives rise to a subsequent hypostasis: for Victorinus the Son of God (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.22–51.43), and for Zostrianos the aeon of Barbelo (NHC VIII 76.top–84.21).[60] Interestingly, Zostrianos's version (NHC VIII 77.20–23) of this exposition applies the Invisible Spirit's attribute of "unengendered purity" from the apparent conclusion of the common source's positive theology to the aeon of Barbelo as the externalized "pre-potency and primal unengenderedness" of the supreme One. Moreover, the concluding lines of Zostrianos's exposition of the emergence of the Barbelo aeon also return to the terminology of the Invisible Spirit's simplicity and unity (ἁπλότης, ἕν[ν]ας, ἑνότης; see *unalitas counitionis* in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.21) of the concluding lines[61] of the common source. So also, like Zostrianos's version of the initial negative and positive theology presented by both Victorinus and Zostrianos, this section also continues to employ the term *spirit* in what seems to constitute a continuation of the common source that goes on to speak of the generation of "all things" that preexist in the One. Moreover, a noticeable continuity of vocabulary this section shares with the first two sections of the common source suggests that it may constitute what may be a *third* section of the common source, but whose content Victorinus has creatively adapted to his own Christology.[62]

Victorinus's version of this putative third section of the common source (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.22–51.43) goes on to treat the emergence of the Son as the "second One," which he characterizes as Life, indeed a "One One" (*unum unum*), conceived as an indefinite dyad of substance and motion (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.22–24).[63] In Neopythagorean fashion, such an indefinite

60. For a comparative table of these texts, including one from Marsanes, see the parallel texts in my "Platonizing Sethian Treatises," 169–71.

61. NHC VIII 84.16–20: "the simplicity [ϯⲙ̄ⲛⲧⲣⲁⲡⲗⲟⲩⲥ] of the Invisible Spirit—'within the Henad' resembles 'within the Unity'" (ⲛ̄ⲣⲣⲁⲓ ⲉ̄ⲛ ϯⲣⲉⲛⲛⲁⲥ ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲣⲣⲁⲓ ⲉ̄ⲛ ϯⲙ̄ⲛⲧ̀ⲟⲩⲱⲧ). NHC VIII 75.20–22: "and Henad and Unity and all these absolutely (preexist)" (ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲛⲛⲁⲥ ⲙ̄[ⲙ̄] ⲟⲩⲙ̄ⲛⲧ̀ⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲣ[ⲁ]ⲡⲗⲱⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ).

62. Beyond their strikingly obvious common theme of the generation of a second hypostasis through the masculinization of an indeterminate feminine power, both authors share a significant amount of common concepts and vocabulary: spirit, existence, life, motion, power, potency, virginal potential, eternal movement and appearance, desire, striving, thinking, declination, downward tendency, and perfection by contemplative reversion.

63. *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.22–32: "Therefore with this One existing, the One leapt forth, the One who is One [*unum unum*], one in substance, one in movement, for movement is also existence [*existentia*], since existence is also movement. This one is therefore

dyad would be considered as an initial feminine—and thus indeterminate—phase of the Son's emanation, which then achieves a masculine determinateness by its reversion on its source. But even the use of this concept of female-to-male transition is clearly infiltrated by Victorinus's own terminology and Christology.[64]

This hypothetical third section of the source expounds the emergence of a second hypostasis through a gender transformation from female to male.[65] For Zostrianos the feminine, maternal figure of Barbelo, first thought of the Invisible Spirit, becomes the masculine aeon of Barbelo (Zost. 76.20–84.3) by the act of knowing both herself and her source. For Victorinus, the indeterminate feminine power of Life emerging from the Father is instantiated as the masculine Son of God by reversion on its potential prefigurative existence in the Father. Here the term *spirit* seems to designate both "Life in procession from" and "Wisdom in reversion to" the Father's vivifying power in what may be

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essentially One [*exsistentialiter unum*] but not as the Father is essentially in himself One, but as he who is essentially One according to power [*secundum potentiam*]. For power already has, and to the highest degree, the 'to be' [*esse*] that it will have when it will be in act [*secundum operationem*], and, in truth, it does not have it, it *is* it; for power, through which act is actuated [*qua actio actuosa fit*], is all things impassibly and truly under all modes, having itself no need of 'to be' in order that it may be all things: indeed the power, through which the act that is born of it acts, is itself in act [*qua potens nata actio agit, agens ipsa*]. This power is therefore unity [*unalitas*]."

64. Key vocabulary shared by Victorinus's citation of the common source (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.9–50.21) and his exposition on the generation of the second One (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.22–51.43) include *existentia*, *immobilis*, *intelligentia*, *motio*, *motus*, *pater*, *perfectus*, *potentia*, *praeexistentia*, *praeintelligentia*, and *spiritus*.

65. The concept of gender transformation is frequent in gnostic thought. Thus, in Sethian thought, see Marsanes 9.1–3 concerning the generation Barbelo Aeon: "For this reason the Virgin became male, because she had been divided from the male." Likewise in Valentinian thought, see Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 21.3: "Therefore the males are drawn together with the Logos, but the females, becoming men, are united to the angels and pass into the Pleroma. Therefore the woman is said to be changed into a man, and the church here on earth into angels"; also *Exc.* 79: "So long, then, they say, as the seed is yet unformed, it is the offspring of the female, but when it was formed, it was changed to a man and becomes a son of the bridegroom. It is no longer weak and subject to the cosmic forces, both visible and invisible, but having been made masculine, it becomes a male fruit." Translations follow Clement of Alexandria, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, ed. and trans. Robert Pierce Casey, SD 1 (London: Christophers, 1934.) See also Gos. Thom. 117c: "For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven."

Victorinus's Christian adaptation of material he may be sharing with Zostrianos:

> For proceeding as a potency out of a state of immobile preexistence—unmoved so long as it was in potency—this never-resting motion arising out of itself and hastening to engender all sorts of movement since it was infinite life—this motion as it were appeared outside in vivifying activity. It necessarily follows that life has sprung forth [*nata est*].… Life is thus this Existence of all existents [*exsistentia est totius exsistentiae est vita*], and insofar as life is movement, it has received a sort of feminine power, since it desired to vivify [*vita motus, quasi femineam sortita est potentiam, hoc quod concupivit vivificare*]. But since, as was to be shown, this movement, being one, is both Life and Wisdom, Life is converted to Wisdom, or rather to the paternal existence, or better yet, by a retrograde movement to the paternal power. Thus fortified, Life, hastening back to the Father, has been made male, for Life is descent and Wisdom is ascent [*vita recurrens in patrem vir effecta est. Descensio enim vita, ascensio sapientia*]. It is also Spirit; the two are thus Spirit, two in one [*Spiritus autem et ista. Spiritus igitur utraque: in uno duo*]. And likewise Life: at first nothing other than primal Existence, it was necessarily first invested with a virginal potential to be subsequently engendered [*generari*] as the male Son of God by masculine birth from the Virgin—since in the first motion, when it first appears, Life—as if it defected from the Father's power and by its innate desire to vivify while it was still interior—was initially externalized by its own movement. When it again reverted upon itself, it returned to its paternal existence and became male [*rursus in semet ipsam conversa, venit in suam patricam exsistentiam, vir effecta*]. Completed by its all-powerful vigor, life has become perfect Spirit by reversion toward the higher, i.e., toward the interior away from its downward tendency. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.51.11–38; my trans.)[66]

For Zostrianos, the indeterminate feminine power of life emerging from the Invisible Spirit is rendered as the masculine intellect, the aeon of Barbelo, by its contemplative reversion on its prefigurative existence in the Invisible Spirit. While Victorinus conceives this indeterminate proceeding power primarily in terms of life, vivification, and wisdom, Zostrianos conceives it primarily in terms of an act of knowledge and intellectual life or blessedness (i.e., Mentality).[67]

66. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 146–47.

67. See the table of parallels in my "Platonizing Sethian Treatises," 169–71.

These commonalities strongly suggest—although by no means prove—that the source common to Victorinus and Zostrianos not only may have included a negative and positive theology of the supreme First One, but may also have contained a third part that expounded the emergence of the Second One from the First. If so, the common source may have been a *Parmenides* commentary that—like the anonymous commentator—dealt with at least the first two hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides*.

4.3. The Existence–Life–Intellect Triad in Victorinus, Zostrianos, and Allogenes

At this point, one must raise the question whether traces of this common source can be detected in sources other than Victorinus and Zostrianos. A clue is offered by the fact that, at the beginning of their affirmative expositions, both authors explain the threefold character of the One as containing the three powers of Existence, Life, and Blessedness.[68] While the material shared between Victorinus and Zostrianos is obvious, Victorinus's version also contains material absent from Zostrianos but present in yet another Platonizing Sethian treatise, namely, Allogenes, which along with Zostrianos circulated in Plotinus's Roman seminar in the mid-260s CE.

Thus Victorinus's claim (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.17–18) that the supreme One is "without existence, life, or intellect" is absent from Zostrianos but present in Allogenes 61.36–37. Again, both Victorinus and Zostrianos agree that the supreme Spirit contains and co-unites each of its three powers of Existence, Life/Vitality, and Blessedness/Mentality.[69] But Victorinus's additional claim (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.12–15) that the One's *power of Existence*

68. *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.11–12 = Zost. 66.14–20. The primal unity prefiguratively contains its emanative products, whether intellect (as in the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*), or power and intellect (as in the Chaldaean Oracles), or Existence, Life, and Blessedness (as in Victorinus and Zostrianos), or Substantiality, Vitality, and Mentality (as in Allogenes).

69. Zost. 75.6–11: "The one [belonging to the Entirety] exists in Existence [and he] dwells in the [Vitality] of Life; and in Perfection and [Mentality] <and> Blessedness"; see *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.16–18: "It has its living and acting in its own nonexisting Existence" (my trans.; "et vivere et agere habens secundum ipsam suimet ipsius inexistentem existentiam") and Zost. 68.4–6: "And Life <is> [an] activity (ἐνέργεια) of the insubstantial [Existence] (ϯϩⲡⲁⲣⲍⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ)."

also contains its powers of Life and Blessedness, while absent from Zostrianos, is present in Allogenes 49.26–37.[70]

While unarticulated in the anonymous commentary, and partially articulated in Zostrianos, the complete scheme of the mutual inclusion and cyclical predomination of each term in the other two of the Being–Life–Mind triad is present in both Victorinus and Allogenes 49 as described (cited at note 21 above; see *Adv. Ar.* 1B.54.9–10; *Adv. Ar.* 2.3.39–44; *Adv. Ar.* 3.4.6–46; *Adv. Ar.* 4.5.36–45, 21.26–22.6; Proclus, *Inst. theol.* 103).

Both Allogenes and Victorinus are also aware of the concept of paronymic hierarchy, according which pure actions expressed by active verbs (*est*, *vivit*, *intellegit*) or activities expressed by absolute infinitives (*esse*, *vivere*, *intellegere*) always precede states of being such as essentiality, vitality, and mentality (*essentialitas*, *vitalitas*, and νοότης); in turn these states of being precede their substantive instantiations, such as the fully determinate and substantial being, life, and intelligence (*essentia*, *vita*, and *intelligentia*) that characterize the second One.[71]

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70. *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.10–15: "He (God) is one in his simplicity, co-uniting three powers: all Existence, all Life, and Blessedness; but all these are one, even a simple one, and it is predominantly in the power of being—that is, Existence—that the powers of Life and Blessedness exist, for that by which it is and exists is the power of Existence, and this is also the power of Life and Blessedness" (my trans.). See the parallel in Zost. 66.14–21: "For they are [triple] powers of his [unity: complete] Existence, Life and Blessedness. In Existence he exists [as] a simple unity, his own [rational expression] and idea." A closer but very fragmentary parallel occurs later in Zost. 75.7–11: "In Existence [is] Being; in [Vitality] <is> Life; and in perfection and [Mentality] is Blessedness." Although Victorinus's example of each power's mutual inclusion of the other two is here restricted to the inclusion of Vitality and Blessedness in Existence, Victorinus—but not necessarily the source he shares with Zostrianos—was certainly aware of the notion of each term's mutual inclusion of the other two in cyclic permutation, e.g., *Adv. Ar.* 3.4.36–38: "necessarily they are both three and nevertheless one since the three constitute together each unity that each one is singly" ("necessario et sunt tria at tamen unum, cum omne, quod singulum est unum, tria sunt" [*Opera pars prior*, 198) and *Adv. Ar.* 3.5.31–32: "Thus all are in each one, or each one is in all or all are one" ("ita in singulus omnia vel unumquidque omnia vel omnia unum" [*Opera pars prior*, 200]).

71. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:260–72. He cites John Lydus, who refers to an enneadic arrangement by Porphyry: "Divine is the number of the ennead completed by three triads and, as Porphyry says, maintained as the summits of the theology according to the Chaldean philosophy" (*Mens.* 4.122.1–4; Θεῖος ὁ τῆς ἐννάδος ἀριθμὸς ἐκ τριῶν τριάδων πληρούμενος, καὶ τὰς ἀκρότητας τῆς θεολογίας κατὰ τὴν Χαλδαϊκὴν φιλοσοφίαν, ὥς φησιν ὁ Πορφύριος, ἀποσώζων) and Augustine: "Dicit enim

In various places, Victorinus shows his awareness of this paronymic hierarchy of terms arranged according to the principle of mutual inclusion and predominance:

As infinitival acts: "God is triple-powered, that is, one having three powers, 'to be,' 'to live,' 'to intelligize,' so that in each one power there are three powers, and anyone of the three is three powers, receiving its name by the power wherein it predominates" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.21.26–28, translation slightly modified).[72]

As states of being:

> Thus ὀντότης, that is, existentiality or essentiality, or ζωότης, that is, vitality, that is the primary power of universal life, that is the primary life and source of living for all things, and likewise νοότης, the force, virtue, power, or substance or nature of thought, these powers, then, must be understood as three in one, but such that one names them and defines their proper being by the aspect according to which each has a predominating property. For there is none of them that is not triple, since being is being only if it lives, that is, is in life; likewise living: there is no living that lacks knowledge of the act of living. Appearing as a mixture, in reality they are simple, but with a simplicity that is triple. (*Adv. Ar.* 4.5.36–45, my trans.)[73]

Deum Patrem et Deum Filium, quem Graece appellat paternum intellectum vel paternam mentem.… non utique diceret horum medium, id est patris et filii medium" (*Civ.* 10.23; "He refers to God the Father, and God the Son, whom he calls in Greek the Intellect or Mind of the Father.… he would certainly not have said that this held the middle place between the two others, the Father and the Son"). For the critical texts see John Lydus, *De mensibus*, ed. Richard Wünsch, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898), 159.5–8; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, CCSL 47–48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 2:296. Translation of Augustine follows Henry Bettenson, *City of God* (London: Penguin, 1972), 403–4. Majercik also points out that, although they do not cite a specific verse, both Proclus and Damascius mention a doctrine of three triads in connection with the Oracles ("Chaldaean Triads," 276). See Proclus, *In Parm.* 1090.25–28: "It is necessary to keep in mind that among the intelligibles there are many orders, and as praised by the theologians, there are three triads among them" (my trans.); Damascius, *Dub. et sol.* §111: "For the theurgists hand down to us that there are three triads there, having been instructed by the gods themselves" (my trans.).

72. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 257–58: "τριδύναμος est deus, id est tres potentias habens, esse, vivere, intellegere, ita ut in singulis tria sint sitque ipsum unum quodlibet tria, nomen qua se praestat accipiens."

73. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 231: "Ergo ὀντότης, id est, existentiali-

And as substantives:

> There are three in one and for that reason the three are identical: *συνώνυμα ἄρα τὰ τρία* ["the three are then things of the same nature"] according to the name through which each one of them obtains its own power. Indeed, "to be" is both life and intelligence [*Etenim quod est esse, et vita et intelligentia*]. So also each one in relation to the other. They are therefore identical, identical and *συνώνυμα* ["of the same nature"]. They are therefore begotten at the same time and they are consubstantial. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.54.8–13)[74]

These parallels between Victorinus and Allogenes suggest that a similar—if not the same—source may have been available also to the author of Allogenes. Moreover, while Victorinus's excerpt from the source he shares with Zostrianos restricts the mutual inclusion of these powers in one another to the inclusion of Vitality and Blessedness in Existence, the excerpt from Allogenes (cited above, §2) gives the full cyclic permutation of each power's mutual inclusion of the other two according to Numenius's dictum, "All things are in all things, but in each thing appropriately in accord with its own essence" (frag. 31, my trans.).[75] With a slightly different nomenclature, the only other instance of the fully developed scheme of Allogenes occurs in Proclus's *Elements of Theology* 103.[76] But

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tas, vel essentialitas: sive *ζωότης*, id est, vitalitas, id est, prima universalis vitae potentia, hoc est, prima vita fonsque omnium vivendi. Item *νοότης*, intelligendi vis, virtus, potentia, vel substantia, vel natura: haec tria accipienda ut singula, sed ita, ut qua suo plurimo sunt, hoc nominentur et esse dicantur: nam nihil horum est, quod non tria sit: esse enim, hoc esse si vivat, hoc est in vita sit. Ipsum vero vivere, non est vivere quod vivat intelligentiam non habere: quasi mixta igitur et ut res est, triplici simplicitate simplicia."

74. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 151: "quoniam in uno tria, et idcirco eadem tria: *συνώνυμα ἄρα τὰ τρία*, secundum nomen quod obtinet unumquidque istorum potentiam suam. Etenim quod est esse, et vita et intelligentia: sic et aliud ad alia; eadem igitur et *συνώνυμα*, eadem congenerata, igitur et consubstantialia ista."

75. Numenius, *Fragments*, 90: *καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ὡσαύτως πάντα εἶναι ἀποφαίνονται, οἰκείως μέντοι κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν οὐσίαν ἐν ἑκάστοις*. See Porphyry (*Sent.* 10) and Syrianus (*In Metaph*. 82.1–2), who ascribes this saying to the "Pythagoreans."

76. Proclus, *Inst. theol.* 103: "All things are in all things, but in each thing in an appropriate manner. For in Being [*τὸ ὄν*] there is Life [*ζωή*] and Intellect [*νοῦς*], and in Life [*ζωή*] there is 'to be' [*εἶναι*] and 'to think' [*νοεῖν*], and in Intellect there is 'to be' [*εἶναι*] and 'to live' [*ζῆν*]" (my trans.).

it is Allogenes that offers the first known systematic presentation of this doctrine in religio-philosophical literature.

While the doctrine of the Existence, Life, and Intellect triad of powers or activities in the final fragment of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* (Anon. in Parm. 14.15–26) is clearly similar to that the Platonizing Sethian treatises, it seems to know nothing of the doctrines of the mutual inclusion of these powers within one another or the scheme of paronymic hierarchy attested in both Victorinus and the Sethian treatises. This raises interesting questions: Since the anonymous commentary breaks off at this point, (1) might it have originally gone on to develop this doctrine of the mutual inclusion of each of these three powers in each other? Or (2) do we have to do with yet another *Parmenides* commentary, similar to the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*, but that fully developed this doctrine that is only adumbrated in the final fragment of the anonymous commentary? Or (3) is it possible that the author of Allogenes was the first to elaborate on this doctrine by applying Numenius's principle of universal mutual inclusion to the material available to him in his source, perhaps the very one underlying Victorinus and Zostrianos?

4.4. Allogenes, Zostrianos, and Victorinus's Philosophical Sources

Not only Zostrianos but also Allogenes sustains several important relationships with the sources used by Marius Victorinus's Trinitarian treatises, among which Hadot has identified four literary groups of philosophical passages, the first three of which contain a distinctive Platonically inspired ontology, which he supposed to derive from one or several commentaries on Plato's *Parmenides* that were mediated to Victorinus by the writings of Porphyry.[77]

Group I, taken mainly from the first part of Victorinus's letter to Candidus (*Ad Cand.* 2.21–15.12), includes passages whose object is to determine the ontological status of God among the various classes of being and nonbeing distinguished by Plato and Aristotle,[78] concluding that

77. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:68–77, 102–46; gathered and reprinted in 2:13–55. The fourth group, drawn from Aristotle's *Categories*, is not immediately relevant to the present argument.

78. E.g., Plato, *Soph.* 240b3–12; 254c5–d2; Aristotle, *Cael.* 282a4–b7 (ἀεὶ ὄν, ἀεὶ μὴ ὄν, μὴ ἀεὶ ὄν, μὴ ἀεὶ μὴ ὄν); and Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.233.1–4: "Accordingly certain of the ancients call the noetic realm 'truly existent,' the psychic 'not truly existent,'

God is not among entities that have being, and is therefore the Nonbeing beyond being. Like this first group, Victorinus, Allogenes, and Zostrianos all implement a version of the doctrine of four modes of being and nonbeing derived from Plato's *Parmenides* and *Sophist*. While Victorinus applies these modes of being and nonbeing to the determination of God's ontological status as the nonbeing beyond being, Zostrianos uses them to characterize the ideal paradigms of all reality residing in the Kalyptos aeon, and Allogenes uses them to characterize the intelligible realms of the Barbelo aeon and the psychic and natural realms below it as the kinds of reality transcended by the Triple-Powered One.[79]

The hallmark of the texts in Group II (principally *Adv. Ar.* 1B.48–64 and *Adv. Ar.* 3.1–10) is their substitution of the term *Blessedness* (*beatitudo*) for *Intellect* or *Mentality/Intellectuality* (νοῦς or νοότης) as the third member of the triad. These texts juxtapose two Ones, wherein the Existence, Vitality, and Blessedness that preexist in the first One emanate as an otherness conceived as an indeterminate Vitality or Life that achieves

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the perceptible 'not truly non-existent,' and the material 'truly non-existent'" (διὸ καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν τινες ὄντως μὲν ὂν καλοῦσι τὸ νοητὸν πλάτος, οὐκ ὄντως δὲ ὂν τὸ ψυχικόν, οὐκ ὄντως δὲ οὐκ ὂν τὸ αἰσθητόν, ὄντως δὲ οὐκ ὂν τὴν ὕλην). According to Roland Tournaire, the predicate ὂν means "innately organized" (intelligible or psychic), οὐκ ὂν means "innately unorganized" (sensible, material), while the qualifier ὄντως signifies what is stable or stabilized (intelligible or material), and οὐκ ὄντως signifies perceptible or intelligible reality subject to change. See Tournaire, "La classification des existants selon Victorin l'Africain," *BAGB* 1 (1996): 55–63. See the historical discussion of Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:147–211.

79. In Zost. 117.1–14 these categories of nonbeing—"that which truly is non-existent," "that [which] is not-truly existent," and "the non-existent ones that are not at all" (τὸ ὄντως μὴ ὄν, τὸ μὴ ὄντως ὄν, τὸ μὴ εἶναι μὴ ὄν πάντως)—characterize the archetypes of gross matter, souls, and sensible reality contained in the highest, hidden level of the Barbelo Aeon named Kalyptos, which serves as the equivalent of the paradigmatic Living Being of *Tim.* 39e: "It is there that all living creatures are, existing individually, although unified. The knowledge of the knowledge is there as well as a basis for ignorance. Chaos is there as well as a (place) for all of them, it being [complete] while they are incomplete. True light (is there), as well as illumined darkness (i.e., intelligible matter) together with that which truly is non-existent (i.e., gross matter), that [which] is not-truly existent (i.e. souls), [as well as] the non-existent ones that are not at all (i.e., sensibles)." See Allogenes 55.19–30: "the [Triple-Powered] One exists before [those that] do not exist (i.e., matter or sensibles), [those that exist] without [truly] existing (i.e., souls), those that exist (i.e., particular ideas), [and those that] truly exist (i.e., universal ideas)"; and Cod. bruc. 15 (quoted at n. 9).

determinate identity as the second One in a subsequent act of intellectual reversion on its own prefiguration preexisting in the otherness declined from the first One.[80] Both Zostrianos and the final fragment of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*—which employs the term *intellection* (νόησις) rather than *Blessedness*—are clearly consonant with the doctrine of Group II, not to mention the doctrine of the previously discussed negative and positive theological source shared in common between Zostrianos and Victorinus's *Adv. Ar.* 1B. In Zostrianos generally, the three powers of Existence, Life, and Blessedness reside in the Invisible Spirit itself; and determinate being, the Barbelo aeon, results on a secondary level from the procession of an indeterminate Vitality from the first One, which is halted and instantiated by its intellectual reversion (as Blessedness) on the first level (the Invisible Spirit as Existence).[81] Here, the Barbelo aeon results from the third power's *post*emanative visionary reversion on its source,

80. E.g., in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.57.7–21, the Holy Spirit is conceived as both Life and Blessedness that achieves determinate identity (*identitas*/ταυτότης) by seeing and knowing the Father's preexistent *esse*, from which it has proceeded as an otherness (*alteritas*/ἑτερότης): "Thus the Holy Spirit, total Beatitude, in the first unengendered generation—which is and is called the only generation—was his own Father and his own Son. For by the self-movement of the Spirit itself, that is by the going forth of perfect Life in movement—wishing to see itself, that is, its power, namely the Father—there is achieved its self-manifestation—which is and is called a generation—and exteriorization. For all knowledge [*cognoscentia*] insofar as it is knowledge is outside of that which it wishes to know, I say 'outside' as in the action of perceiving, as when it sees itself, which is to know or to see that preexisting paternal power. Then in that moment—which is not to be conceived temporally—going forth, as it were from that which was 'to be,' to perceive what it was—and because all movement is substance—the *otherness* that is born returns quickly into *identity*." See Anon. in Parm. 12.16–35, cited in §3 above.

81. Thus Zost. 20.22–24: "[Existences are prior to] life, [for it is] the [cause of] Blessed[ness]"; 36.1–5: "[He] has [a Logos] of Existence [in order that he might become] Life [for all those that] exist on account of [an intelligent] rational expression [of the truth]"; 66.16–67.3: "For they are [triple] powers of his [unity, complete] Existence, Life and Blessedness. In Existence he exists [as] a simple unity, his own [rational expression] and idea…. [And in] Vitality, he is alive [and becomes; in Blessedness he comes to have Mentality]"; 68.4–11: "And the Life is [an] activity of the insubstantial [Existence]. That which exists in [them exists] in him; and because of [him they exist as] Blessed[ness] and perfect[ion]"; and 79.10–16: "[And from] the undivided One toward Existence in act move the [intellectual] perfection and intellectual Life that were Blessedness and divinity."

which would be its own first power or prefiguration still resident in the Invisible Spirit.

Like Group II, Group III (principally *Adv. Ar.* 4.1–29) also uses the Being–Life–Intellect (*intelligentia*, not *beatitudo*!) nomenclature, but its distinguishing feature is the characterization of the first One by the triad of infinitives *esse*, *vivere*, and *intellegere* (as well as the corresponding finite verbs and participles) according to the principle of paronymic hierarchy, namely, that infinitival acting (*actus*, *actio*, ἐνέργεια) always precedes formal qualities or states of being such as essentiality, vitality, and mentality (*essentitas*, *vitalitas*, and νοότης), which in turn precede substantive entities, such as the fully determinate and substantial being, life, and intelligence (*essentia*, *vita*, and *intelligentia*) that characterize the second One.[82] In Group III, whose notion of paronymous hierarchy is also found in Allogenes, the activities of infinitival intellection and living—which coincide with the divine infinitival being (*esse*)—exteriorize themselves as a second One by an immediate act of self-reflection, altogether bypassing any intermediate processing phase of infinitival living. By contrast with Group II, in Group III contemplative reversion of a product on its source *precedes* and *initiates* emanation rather than *following* and *terminating* emanation. This doctrine is implemented in both *Adv. Ar.* 4 and Allogenes, but not in Zostrianos or in the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, which both feature an intermediate phase of Life.[83] In Allogenes, the Powers of Existence, Vitality,

82. See n. 22 above on Proclus's theory of paronyms (*In Parm*. 1106.1–1108.19).

83. *Adv. Ar.* 4.24.9–20; 27.1–17; 28.11–22. See Allogenes 45.22–33: "For after it (the Triple-Powered One) [contracted, it expanded], and [it spread out] and became complete, [and] it was empowered [with] all of them, by knowing [itself in addition to the perfect Invisible Spirit], and it [became an] aeon. By knowing [herself] she (Barbelo) knew that one, [and] she became Kalyptos ('hidden') [because] she acts in those whom she knows." Here ontogenesis begins, not with the First One—the Invisible Spirit—but on a secondary level with the self-contraction of the Triple-Powered One as the prefigurative state of the second One prior to its expansion into the Aeon of Barbelo (the doctrine of Group III), who subsequently achieves full determination as the truly existent objects of intellection in Kalyptos (the doctrine of Group II). See also Allogenes 49.5–21 (cited above, n. 32), where, as in Group III, there is no intermediate phase of Life or Vitality, and the act of indeterminate knowing immediately precedes reversionary determination. In *Adv. Ar.* 1B.57.7–21 (cited above, n. 80), where *esse* gives rise to *vivere* and *intellegere*, the Father's *esse* must contain them already in a latent mode, suggesting that Victorinus conceives the *esse* which is the Father as a kind of life and self-apprehension, but one that is inward rather than outward and manifest. In *Adversus Arium*, the self-intellection of the Father has a kind

and Mentality become a median interhypostatic entity, the Triple-Powered One, whose first and third powers perhaps coincide with the Invisible Spirit/Unknowable One and the Barbelo aeon respectively. Although its median power of Vitality is identified as an activity (ἐνέργεια, XI 54.8–11) and is characterized as in motion (XI 59.14–16; 60.19–28), it does not seem to demarcate an explicit phase in the emanation of the Barbelo aeon. Thus, while the emanative doctrine of Zostrianos thoroughly reflects the doctrine of Group II, the emanative doctrine of Allogenes reflects that of Group III.

Among the Platonizing Sethian treatises, both Zostrianos and Allogenes show varying implementations of all three groups of doctrines,

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of triadic structure, involving life as well as intelligence, in which the Holy Spirit is *intellegere* while the Son is *vivere*. In this sense, the generation of the Son as a second One from the First One is conceived as a kind of dyad, a "One-One" that is two in one (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.22–24): "With this [First] One existing, One sprang forth, a One-One [*unum proexsiluit unum unum*], one in substance and one in motion, for motion is also an existence [*existentia*], since existence too is a motion" (my trans.). In *Adv. Ar.* 1A.13.36–40, Victorinus writes: "He (i.e., John 6:14) says 'He (i.e., the Spirit of truth) shall receive of me' because Christ and the Holy Spirit are one movement, that is, an act which acts [*actio agens*]. First there is *vivere* and from that which is *vivere* there is also *intellegere*; indeed, Christ is *vivere* and the Spirit is *intellegere*. Therefore the Spirit receives from Christ, and Christ Himself from the Father" (my trans.). Even so, there is a certain priority accorded to the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit is then the first interior movement, which is the paternal thought, that is, his self-knowledge [*excogitatio patria, hoc est sui ipsius cognoscentia*]. Indeed, pre-knowledge precedes knowledge [*praecognoscentia enim cognoscentiam praecedit*]. Therefore through this natural mode of knowledge, understanding [*intelligentiam*] was externalized, the Son was born, became life, not that there had not been life, but because life at its height is life externalized; for life is in movement. This is the *Logos* who is called Jesus Christ" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.57.28–34). Interestingly, a similar notion—but without a trace of the being, life, and mind triad—is used in the Apocryphon of John (NHC II 4.19–5.2), according to which the supreme Father contemplates himself in the light that surrounds him (see the self-contemplating God of Aristotle, *Metaph.* 12.9 1074b21–40), giving rise to a thought that actualizes itself as Barbelo, his First Thought and triple-powered image, whereupon she reverts back to her source in an act of praise. Indeed, in *Adv. Ar.* 4.24.21–31, Victorinus's summary of God's nature (as One alone; breathing spirit; illumining light; existing existence, living life, knowing knowledge; omnipotent, perfect; indeterminacy determining itself; beyond all, trancendent source of all; and single principle of all things) resembles that of the Apocryphon of John (BG 8502 25.13–19): the Monad is "the Eternal, giver of eternity, the Light, giver of light, the Life, giver of life, the Blessed, giver of blessedness, the Knowledge, giver of knowledge, the eternally Good, giver of good."

although their implementations of the emanative doctrine of Groups II and III differ. It certainly seems that all three authors have drawn these doctrines from a common source whose description of the emanation of a second One from the First was very similar to that of the concluding fragments of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, where the activities of existence, life, and intellection are somehow prefigured in the indeterminate otherness declined from the absolute being of the first One.[84] On the other hand, it seems that there was a distinct source or sources that amplified its notion of a succession of three activities—static, outer-directed, and inner-directed—by offering a theory about the cyclical predomination and inclusion of each activity in the other two. Although such a doctrine is not present in the extant fragments of the anonymous commentary, it is possible that they were present in the missing parts of this work. Moreover, among the emanative doctrines of Groups II and III, it is only Victorinus and Allogenes—but not Zostrianos—that portray *each* member of the Existence, Life, and Intellect triad as cyclically dominating and including the other two, while it is only Allogenes and *Adv. Ar.* 4.1–29 that arrange these powers into a hierarchy of three horizontal triads arranged in a paronymous sequence leading from infinitival acts through abstract qualities to substantive hypostases, a notion lacking in Group II, to which the source common to Victorinus and Zostrianos belongs.

5. Conclusion: Multiple *Parmenides* Commentaries?

Three things seem clear: first, several instances of Plotinus's apparent citations of passages in the Coptic versions of both Zostrianos and Allogenes[85] indicate that they are accurate reflections of their Greek exemplars that circulated and were read in Plotinus's mid-third-century Roman seminar (Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 16). Second, both Victorinus and Zostrianos reproduce portions of a pre-Plotinian common negative and positive theological source whose conceptuality strikingly resembles that of the anonymous

84. Anon. in Parm. 14.22–26: "With respect to Existence, activity would be static; with respect to Intellection, activity would be turned to itself; and with respect to Life, activity would be inclining away from Existence."

85. E.g., *Enn.* 3.8.9.29–39 = Allogenes 60.1–61.8, cited above in §3 and note 39, respectively, as well as *Enn.* 2.9.10.19–33 = Zost. 9.17–10.20, pointed out by Tardieu, not to mention the very close similarity of the general ontology of these treatises to Plotinus's description in *Enn.* 2.9.6.14–21 (Tardieu, "Plotin citateur du Zostrien").

Parmenides commentary. Third, Tardieu's observation that the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* contains a statement that depends on *both* the Chaldaean Oracles *and* the theological source common to Victorinus and Zostrianos—to the effect that the supreme One's power and intellect are co-unified in his simplicity—suggests that this common source predates even the anonymous commentary and that we may have to do with at least two theological expositions of the *Parmenides* in pre-Plotinian times. Or it may be that there was only one commentary—the anonymous one—whose missing portions included the negative and affirmative theological source common to Zostrianos and Victorinus.[86]

Taken together, these factors suggest four things. First, theological expositions and/or lemmatic commentaries on the *Parmenides* were available in the late second or early third century. Second, such expositions have influenced the versions of Zostrianos (ca. 225 CE) and Allogenes (ca. 240 CE) known to Plotinus and Porphyry. Third, they were probably pre-Plotinian and Middle Platonic (Tardieu and Luc Brisson suggest Numenian authorship, while Kevin Corrigan suggests Cronius, and Tuomas Rasimus a Sethian gnostic author).[87] And fourth, the anonymous Turin commentary need not necessarily be ascribed to Porphyry but may be dated earlier, before Plotinus, perhaps even a product of Sethian gnostic interpreters of Plato's dialogues, especially the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*. While certainty continues to elude us, one ought to take seriously at least the possibility that it was the Sethian gnostics rather than Porphyry or even other academic Platonists who—as common partisans of "Plato's Mysteries"—were genuine innovators, and that their role in the development of Neoplatonic metaphysics has been greatly underestimated in previous scholarship.

86. Of course, there is also the question the relation between these negative-theological sources and that shared by Allogenes (NHC XI 62.27–63.25) and the Apocryphon of John (BG 24.6–25.7 = NHC II 3.17–33 and parallels in NHC III and IV), let alone other similar Middle Platonic negative theologies.

87. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 112; Brisson, "Platonic Background," esp. 179–182; Corrigan, "Platonism and Gnosticism," 156; Tuomas Rasimus, "Porphyry and the Gnostics: Reassessing Pierre Hadot's Thesis in Light of the Second and Third-Century Sethian Treatises," in *Reception in Patristic, Gnostic and Christian Neoplatonic Texts*, vol. 2 of *Plato's "Parmenides" and Its Heritage*, ed. John D. Turner and Kevin Corrigan, WGRWSup 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 81–110.

Once Again: Marius Victorinus and Gnosticism

Chiara O. Tommasi

During the past twenty years I have published a series of articles in which, without neglecting or denying the unquestionable influence of Middle and Neoplatonism on Marius Victorinus, I tried to add another tessera to the mosaic of his sources, among which mention should also be made of some Christian documents pertaining to the Arian controversy.[1] Such research

1. See Chiara O. Tommasi, "*Tripotens in unalitate spiritus*: Mario Vittorino e la gnosi," *ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ* 20 (1996): 53–75; Tommasi, "L'androginia di Cristo-Logos: Mario Vittorino tra platonismo e gnosi," *Cass* 4 (1998): 11–46; Tommasi, "*Viae negationis* della dossologia divina nel medioplatonismo e nello gnosticismo sethiano (con echi in Mario Vittorino)," in *Arrhetos Theos: L'inconoscibilità del Primo Principio nel Medioplatonismo*, ed. Francesca Calabi (Pisa: ETS, 2002), 119–54; Tommasi, "Linguistic Coinages in Marius Victorinus' Negative Theology," StPatr 43 (2003): 505–10; Tommasi, "Introduzione," in *Opere teologiche di Mario Vittorino*, ed. and trans. Claudio Moreschini and Chiara O. Tommasi (Turin: Unione Tipografica-Editrice Torinese, 2007), 9–71; Tommasi, "Silenzio, voce, annunzio: la Trinità secondo Mario Vittorino," in *Silenzio e parola nella patristica: XXXIX Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma 6–8 maggio 2010*, SEAug 127 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2012), 521–36. Considered as one of the few examples of Latin metaphysics, if not the only one, Marius Victorinus's anti-Arian writings, probably composed between 356 and 363, provide a Trinitarian synthesis that in many respects is the most coherent and most original among the Latin theologians of the fourth century. Although potentially rich in fruitful suggestions, the extreme subtlety of this speculation prevented a large circulation among Christian theologians, with the invaluable exception of Boethius (Victorinus's dialectic style and obscure language is recalled by Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 101). Such peculiar and, so to say, idiosyncratic speculation is the result of a deep mastery of Greek sources and in particular Middle and Neoplatonic writings (Numenius, the Chaldean Oracles, and most of all an anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*) that have been recognized since Willy Theiler's *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*, reasserted in detail by Pierre Hadot and Paul Henry in their commentary to the *Opera theologica* and given precision by Pierre Hadot in his magisterial *Porphyre et Victorinus*,

has benefited from the seminal impulse of the late Pierre Hadot, who first advised me and suggested that the links between Victorinus and some gnostic texts from the Nag Hammadi library were worthy of a deeper investigation, as was shown in the seminal study he edited together with Michel Tardieu in 1996. This study identified a common passage in the gnostic Zostrianos (NHC VIII 1) and in Victorinus's *Adversus Arium*.[2] In particular, the description of the Father in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.49–50, with its singular intertwining of negative and positive theology together with a series of oppositive doxologies,[3] had been recognized as being very close, almost literally coincident, to the doxology recorded in Zostrianos (Zost. 64.13–66.15, 74.8–75.24). In order to explain the similarities between these two passages, Tardieu supposed the existence of a common source between the two and tentatively identified this source in the "orientalizing" figure of Numenius. The French scholar favored the hypothesis of a common source rather than the one of a direct influence, mainly on the basis that in

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and eventually summarized in more recent times by Matthias Baltes and others. See Theiler, *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*, QSGP 10 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1966); Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques sur la trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, 2 vols., SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960), Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2 vols., CEAug 33 (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1968). It is thanks to this heterogenous array of sources that Victorinus can develop his articulated scheme, which on one hand is still linked to archaizing patterns (such as in the *Logostheologie*), and on the other avoids any risk of subordinationism. Recent syntheses on Victorinus's philosophical formation include Matthias Baltes, *Marius Victorinus: Zur Philosophie in seinen theologischen Schriften*, BzAK 174 (Munich: Saur, 2002); and Stephen A. Cooper, "The Platonist Christianity of Marius Victorinus," *Religions* 7 (2016): 1–24.

2. See Michel Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 7–114; Pierre Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus: Questions et hypothèses," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 115–25. On Numenius's role, see also Luc Brisson, "The Platonic Background in the *Apocalypse of Zostrianos*: Numenius and *Letter II* attributed to Plato," in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. John J. Cleary (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 173–88.

3. This twofold way of describing God or the One, usually credited to be an original acquisition of Dionysius the Areopagite, has indeed many precedents, as stated by Antonio Orbe, *Hacia la primera teologia de la procesion del Verbo*, vol. 1.1 of *Estudios Valentinianos*, AnGr 99 (Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1958), 14–23. This has been more recently reasserted by Salvatore Lilla, "Ps. Denys l'Aréopagite, Porphyre et Damascius," in *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa Postérité en Orient et en Occident: Actes du Colloque International, Paris 21–24 Septembre 1994*, ed. Ysabel de Andia (Paris: IEA, 1997), 117–52. Lilla rightly emphasizes the role played in its development by the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*.

Zostrianos the section on apophatic theology is not followed by the same coherent description in positive terms found in Victorinus *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50, but on the contrary is very limited, looking like more a patchwork than a consistent piece.[4]

This discovery represented a further contribution in the scholarly debate about Gnosticism and Platonism, which had already been revived thanks to the publishing of many writings in the Nag Hammadi library that were inspired by Sethianism and fully permeated by Platonizing influences. This offers a confirmation of what Porphyry states in *Vit. Plot.* 16, when he deals with the Christian or heretical adversaries of his master in Rome and even mentions, as is well known, the apocalypses of Allogenes, Messos, and Zostrianos; moreover, Amelius and Porphyry himself are recorded as the authors of some antignostic works, directed against these writings and masters.[5] As for Plotinus, although the idea of his being influenced by gnostics in his earlier treatises has not been accepted by the majority of scholars,[6] his engagement in the debate is witnessed to by his *Großschrift*, in which a quotation of Zostrianos (Zost. 9.16–20) has been recently recognized in *Enn.* 2.9.10.19–33.[7] Generally speaking, if recent research has highlighted the osmotic and mutual relations between Gnosticism and Platonism, such an association was well established in late antiquity: not only did Tertullian label Valentinus as Platonic, but, to a greater extent, Plotinus's polemic against the gnostics is centered on what

4. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 112.

5. For a general recapitulation see Michel Tardieu, "Les gnostiques dans la Vie de Plotin: Analyse du chapitre 16," in *Porphyre: La Vie de Plotin; Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française, commentaire, notes complémentaires, bibliographie*, ed. Luc Brisson et al., HDAC 16 (Paris: Vrin, 1992), 2:503–63.

6. Jan Zandee, *The Terminology of Plotinus and of Some Gnostic Writings, Mainly the Fourth Treatise of the Jung Codex* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1961); Theo G. Sinnige, *Six Lectures on Plotinus and the Gnostics* (Dodrecht: Springer, 1999); Gilles Quispel, "Plotinus and the Jewish Gnōstikoi," in *Gnostica, Judaica, Catholica: Collected Essays of Gilles Quispel* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 583–626.

7. Michel Tardieu, "Plotin citateur de Zostrien," in *Plotin et les Gnostiques*, ed. Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete (Turnholt: Brepols, forthcoming); John D. Turner, "The Platonizing Sethian Treatises, Marius Victorinus's Philosophical Sources, and Pre-Plotinian *Parmenides* Commentaries," in *History and Interpretation from the Old Academy to Later Platonism and Gnosticism*, vol. 1 of *Plato's "Parmenides" and Its Heritage*, ed. John D. Turner and Kevin Corrigan, WGRWSup 2 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 131–72, 172.

he considers to be an erroneous interpretation of Plato; nor it should be forgotten that in Nag Hammadi library we find texts such as the Sentences of Sextus and a (partial) translation of the *Republic*.[8]

8. The relationship between Gnosticism and Platonism has been investigated by scholars since the seventies of the last century. See the excellent synthesis by Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 9–17; and more recently John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition*, BCNH, Études 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001); Turner, "The Gnostic Sethians and Middle Platonism: Interpretations of the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*," *VC* 60 (2006): 9–64; Turner, "Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition," in *Gnose et philosophie: Études en hommage à Pierre Hadot*, ed. Jean-Marc Narbonne and Paul-Hubert Poirier, CZ (Paris: Vrin, 2009), 147–221; Turner, "The Anonymous Parmenides Commentary, Marius Victorinus, and the Sethian Platonizing Apocalypses: State of the Question," in *Gnose et manichéisme: Entre les oasis d'Égypte et la Route de la Soie; Hommage à Jean-Daniel Dubois*, ed. Anna van den Kerchove and Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete, BEHER 176 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 93–126. For a philosophical perspective see Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete, "Tracing the Connections between 'Mainstream' Platonism (Middle- and Neoplatonism) and 'Marginal' Platonism (Gnosticism, Hermeticism and the Chaldean Oracles) with Digital Tools: The Database, the Bibliographical Directory, and the Research Blog The Platonisms of Late Antiquity," in *Theologische Orakel in der Spätantike*, ed. Helmut Seng and Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, BChald 5 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2017), 9–46. The same scholar is also going to publish the edition of Plotinus's *Treatise* 32 and 33 (with Michel Tardieu), and a miscellaneous volume about *Plotin et les Gnostiques*. For a general perspective on gnostic literature and philosophy see the considerations put forward by Zlatko Pleše, *Poetics of the Gnostic Universe: Narrative and Cosmology in the Apocryphon of John*, NHMS 52 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), which largely rely on modern literary theories on intertextuality. Giulia Sfameni Gasparro presents some religio-historical considerations on the question. See Gasparro, *La conoscenza che salva: Lo Gnosticismo, temi e problemi* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2013), 207–21; see also Dylan M. Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God: Platonism and the Exile of Sethian Gnosticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). In this regard I cannot but disagree with the considerations put forward by Mauro Bonazzi, "Platonismo e gnosticismo," in *Vérité et apparence: Mélanges en l'honneur de Carlos Lévy*, ed. Perrine Galand and Ermanno Malaspina, Ltn 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 26. Bonazzi states that the Roman adversaries of Plotinus could not be Sethians on the basis that these adversaries were Christians. The passage in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* (16) dealing with this issue, and in particular the interpretation of the wording τῶν Χριστιανῶν πολλοὶ μὲν καὶ ἄλλοι, αἱρετικοὶ δὲ ἐκ τῆς παλαιᾶς φιλοσοφίας ἀνηγμένοι, is well summarized by Tardieu, according to whose interpretation such a plurality reflects the different inspiration of the gnostic communities in Rome, where Sethians and Valentinians coexisted (besides, the Nag Hammadi Library itself testifies to the same variety, "Gnostiques dans la Vie de Plotin"). Moreover, it seems undeniable that Gnosticism as a whole developed

These considerations contributed to reviving the discussion on the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*, which, after the magisterial essay by Hadot, had always been considered the most important source for the understanding of Victorinus's metaphysical system. Indeed, if one supposes that Victorinus and Zostrianos were inspired by a Greek common source, it is possible to surmise that reflection on and elaboration of some tenets concerning the First Principle took place before Plotinus, and that the anonymous author of the commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* might have been influenced by some doctrines developed among the gnostics as well.[9]

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in the bosom of Christianity, even though its outcome was almost immediately an anti-Christian one: therefore, the almost total absence of references to Christianity in the so-called Platonizing texts of Nag Hammadi does not automatically imply that these texts were not Christian; the coincidence of the names mentioned by Porphyry and those found in the Nag Hammadi texts is too strong to be a mere coincidence. On the other hand, one could wonder whether the Coptic texts we read reflect a later stage, that is, whether they were reelaborated after the polemic with Plotinus, as suggested by Ruth Majercik, "The Existence–Life–Intellect Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism," *ClQ* 42 (1992): 475–88; Louise Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius und die römischer Gnostiker," *ZNW* 74 (1983): 108–28; Volker H. Drecoll, "The Greek Text behind the Parallel Sections in *Zostrianos* and Marius Victorinus," in Turner and Corrigan, *History and Interpretation*, 195–212. This is a supposition that I am inclined to consider as unlikely. See Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 112; Tuomas Rasimus, "Porphyry and the Gnostics: Reassessing Pierre Hadot's Thesis in Light of the Second- and Third-Century Sethian Treatises," in *Its Reception in Patristic, Gnostic and Christian Neoplatonic Texts*, vol. 2 of *Plato's "Parmenides" and Its Heritage*, ed. John D. Turner and Kevin Corrigan, WGRWSup 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 86–88; Zeke Mazur, "The Platonizing Sethian Gnostic Interpretation of Plato's *Sophist*," in *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy, and Other Ancient Literature; Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson*, ed. April D. DeConick, Gregory Shaw, and John D. Turner, NHMS 85 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 469–93; Turner, "Anonymous Parmenides Commentary," with further references to some unpublished work of Zeke Mazur. For the peculiar case of the Tractatus Tripartitus (NHC I 5), understood as a text "philosophizing" Valentinianism, see the conclusions put forward by Francesco Berno, "Rethinking Valentinianism: Some Remarks on the Tripartite Tractate, with Special Reference to Plotinus' Enneads II, 9," *Aug* 56 (2016): 331–45, with further bibliography.

9. On this question, see the recapitulation put forward in the introduction to the two volumes of Turner and Corrigan, *Plato's "Parmenides" and Its Heritage*, 1:6–10. Whereas Anglo-Saxon scholarship inclines to favor an early chronology, as suggested by Gerhard Bechtle in his edition, some other researchers (especially in Italy and France) emphasize that the anonymous commentary, influenced as it is by Aristotelian

1. Gnostic Influence in Trinitarian Discussions

Taking further steps on this capital discovery, I looked for some other passages where the influence of gnostic writings could be detected. On the basis of these analyses I became convinced that Victorinus had some first-hand knowledge of gnostic texts and doctrines, since many of the images he employs appear extraneous to purely Platonic literature and, conversely, find their roots in Gnosticism and in its "mythological Platonism."[10] Besides, Hadot himself partook of the same idea, when surmising that Victorinus as a Christian might have been aware of some trends in Christianity deeply inspired by philosophy, although not entirely fitting to the doctrines of the Great Church, just as he employed the Chaldaean Oracles to develop his metaphysical system.[11] That Victorinus had access to a plurality of sources is also witnessed by his free usage of contemporary

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language, is surely posterior to Plotinus, e.g., Riccardo Chiaradonna, "Nota su partecipazione e atto d'essere nel neoplatonismo: l'anonimo Commento al Parmenide," *StGA* 2 (2012): 87–97. See Bechtle, *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's "Parmenides,"* BRPS 22 (Bern: Haupt, 1999). However, even if the parallels between Zostrianos and Victorinus do not offer any hint about the chronology of the Commentary or help to establish the redactional status of Zostrianos's original text, they nevertheless offer a confirmation of the precision of the Coptic translation, so rich in technical language and philosophical tenets.

10. For Gnosticism as "mythological Platonism," see Ioan Petru Couliano, *Les Gnoses dualistes d'Occident: Histoire et mythes* (Paris: Plon, 1990); Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 132. A more general discussion on the philosophical elements borrowed by the gnostics is provided by Chiara O. Tommasi, "Gnosticismo," in Claudio Moreschini, *Storia della filosofia patristica* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2004), 37–57; and more recently by Winrich Löhr, "Christian Gnostics and Greek Philosophy in the Second Century," *EC* 3 (2012): 349–77; Einar Thomassen, "Gnosis and Philosophy in Competition," in *PHILOSOPHIA in der Konkurrenz von Schulen, Wissenschaften und Religionen: Zur Pluralisierung des Philosophiebegriffs in Kaiserzeit und Spätantike*, ed. Christoph Riedweg, PhAn 34 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 61–74.

11. See Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus, Questions," 125. After the seminal inquiries by Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*, 3rd ed., ed. Michel Tardieu, CEAug 77 (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 2011); and Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*; see Jordi Pia Comella and Min-Jun Huh, "Pour un index des références latines aux Oracles: Les exemples de Marius Victorinus et Martianus Capella," in *Oracles chaldaïques: Fragments et philosophie*, ed. Adrien Lecerf, Lucia Saudelli, and Helmut Seng (Heidelberg: Winter, 2014), 147–82; Serge Cazelais, "Prière, élévation spirituelle et connaissance de Dieu chez Marius Victorinus," *Dionysius* 29 (2011): 157–70.

Christian documents pertaining to issues of the Arian controversy, such as the letters of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia in *Epistula Candidi II*. On this point, it might be useful remembering that Father Antonio Orbe, SJ, even before massive research on the Nag Hammadi corpus began, had already outlined some parallels between Valentinianism and Victorinus.[12] In addition, we have evidence both of the development of Valentinian doctrines throughout the third century and of the presence of a Valentinian community in Rome at a later stage. Hence it is possible to affirm the surmise of Louise Abramowski and Mark Edwards that the gnostic community in Rome gradually switched toward pro-Nicene positions, sharing with the Catholic party a certain opposition to Arianism.[13] Moreover, it

12. Antonio Orbe's imposing five-volume *Estudios Valentinianos* is all the more important because it was written in a period when the Nag Hammadi texts were almost unpublished and unknown. See Orbe, *Estudios Valentinianos*, 5 vols. (Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1955–1966). Regretfully, such a seminal work has not been acknowledged by scholars as it deserves, certainly because of the difficult Spanish. It is also worth remembering that Hadot in his commentary on the *Opera Theologica* had also outlined some parallels with the Apocryphon Iohannis (BG 8502) and with some fragments of Heracleon (Marius Victorinus, *Traités Théologiques*, 2:847–48, 850, 867, 990, 1035).

13. This hypothesis has been formulated by different scholars on the basis of some gnosticizing passages or insertions in documents dating to the fourth century, such as some interpolations of Eunomian flavor in book 3 of the Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions (Tardieu) or in the Gospel of Truth and in the Epistle to Rheginus (Mortley, Edwards). See Michel Tardieu, "Une diatribe anti-gnostique dans l'interpolation eunomienne des Recognitiones," in *ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΙΝΑ: Hellénisme, judaïsme et christianisme à Alexandrie, Mélanges offerts au P. C. Mondésert* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 325–37; Raoul Mortley, "The Name of the Father Is the Son (Gospel of Truth 28)," in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, ed. Richard T. Wallis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 239–52; Mark J. Edwards, "The 'Epistle to Rheginus': Valentinianism in the Fourth Century," *NT* 37 (1995): 76–91. More recently, Edwards has identified the same passage of the Gospel of Truth in an anonymous homily belonging to the Priscillianist dossier. See Mark J. Edwards, "Pseudo-Priscillian and the Gospel of Truth," *VC* 70 (2016): 355–72. On the same ground Louise Abramowski suggests that Victorinus employed a gnostic pro-Nicene collection that was circulating in Rome during the fourth century without being aware of its gnostic inspiration. See Abramowski, "'Audi, ut dico': Literarische Beobachtungen und chronologische Erwägungen zu Marius Victorinus und den 'platonisierenden' Nag Hammadi-Traktaten," *ZKG* 117 (2006): 145–68. See also Abramowski, "Nicänismus und Gnosis im Rom des Bischofs Liberius: der Fall des Marius Victorinus," *ZAC* 8 (2005): 513–66. Another interesting text that documents some gnostic reminiscences in order to explain the birth of Christ

seems that radical Arians, such as the followers of Aetius and Eunomius, targeted as adversaries not only Nicenes but gnostics as well. Evidence of this attitude is recorded in Philostorgius's account (*Hist. eccl.* 3.15) of a dispute between Aetius and a "Borborite" (that is, a Sethian or Barbelognostic) in Cilicia. Similarly, the emperor Julian records a dispute between Arians and Valentinians in Edessa (Julianus imperator, *Ep.* 115). In Rome itself, the famous inscription of Flavia Sophe witnesses to the presence of Valentinians among the members of high society.[14]

A further example of this is Peter's doctrinal exposition in *Rec*. 3.2–12, a passage whose Eunomian—and notwithstanding the coherent narrative framework probably interpolated—character has long been recognized. Transmitted with some slight differences in the Latin and the Syriac tradition (the latter having nuanced its "heretical" contents),[15] the text touches

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is a short poem preserved in the Bodmer papyrus, recently edited and commented by Cristiano Berolli, "Il poemetto di Dorotheos ὁ δεσπό̣[τ]ης πρὸς τοὺς πά̣[σχο]ντας (P. Bod. XXXIV)," *AnPap* 25 (2013): 83–173.

14. The traditional chronology that assigns this inscription to the fourth century has been recently anticipated by Greg Snyder, who provides a detailed exam of the literary parallels and the archaeological evidence as well, suggesting that the epitaph represents the actualization of the bridal chamber ritual. See Snyder, "The Discovery and Interpretation of the Flavia Sophe Inscription: New Results," *VC* 68 (2014): 1–59. For the traditional chronology, see Paul McKechnie, "Flavia Sophe in Context," *ZPE* 135 (2001): 117–24, with previous literature, among which it seems worth remembering Ferrua and Guarducci.

15. For a recent reassessment of the entire problem (with excellent discussion of a lavish amount of previous literature), see Emanuel Fiano, "From 'Why' to 'Why Not': Clem. Recogn. III 2–11: Fourth-Century Trinitarian Debates, and the Syrian Christian-Jewish Continuum," *Adamantius* 20 (2014): 343–65. More generally, the chronology is also discussed by Alister Filippini, "Atti apocrifi petrini: Note per una lettura storico-sociale degli *Actus Vercellenses* e del romanzo pseudo-clementino tra IV e V secolo," *MedAnt* 11 (2008): 17–41. Filippini favors a date at the middle of the fourth century for the Greek *Vorlage* of this passage. That its content was perceived as not strictly orthodox is testified by the preface of Rufinus's Latin translation, where he states that he omitted translating the section about the begotten and unbegotten God as it surpasses his intelligence—a cautious and shrewd way to avoid dealing with the thorny question of *homoousios*. The Latin translation which we currently read, transmitted by a part of the manuscript tradition, dates some decades later (and is probably due to an African writer, according to Filippini). The actual interpolated status of this section is, however, debated: Bernard Pouderon suggests that probably some hints could be found already in the Greek Homilies (16.16.1–3), where the question of unbegottenness is discussed as well. See Pouderon, "La genèse du Roman clémentin et

a crucial question debated roughly in the same years of Victorinus's conversion, namely, the eternity of God the Father and his unbegottenness.[16] It is the same issue that our rhetor discusses with Candidus at the beginning of his *Opera Theologica* and quotes at length part of the correspondence between Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia. Yet the Clementine passage is also concerned with the idea of self-generation, refuting the possibility that the Father could be self-generated and self-begotten (3.3.7–8), for this would imply a sort of ditheism (3.11.3):

> We thus assert (and it is the unutterable Providence that demonstrates it) that God is without principle; for he was neither made by himself nor generated by himself. Indeed, he is without principle and unbegotten. The name of unbegotten allows us to understand not what he is but that he is not made. Those who called the unbegotten "self-father" and "self-begotten"—that is, Father to himself and Son to himself—have tried to offend him on basis of doubtful reasons. (Pseudo-Clement, *Rec.* 3.3.7–8)[17]

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sa signification théologique," StPatr 40 (2006): 498–500. On gnostic doctrines in the Pseudo-Clementine corpus, see also Luigi Cirillo, "Dottrine gnostiche nelle Pseudo-Clementine," *Prometheus* 5 (1979): 164–88. In the same line of discussion, Fiano deals with the question of a supposed continuity between motifs of Jewish Christianity and the emphasis on radical monotheism emerging from this section. On the theological implications of this passage see also Maurice Wiles, "Eunomius: Hair-Splitting Dialectician or Defender of the Accessibility of Salvation?," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 157–72.

16. It is worth remembering that the very term ὁμοούσιος was first coined and employed in gnostic or antignostic polemic, although with a different (that is, not involving the Trinity) meaning. See Ignatio Ortiz de Urbina, "L'homoousios preniceno," *OCP* 8 (1942): 194–209; George L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1952), 197–218; Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 190–202; Pier Franco Beatrice, "The Word Homoousios from Hellenism to Christianity," *CH* 71 (2002): 243–72.

17. Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitiones*, ed. Bernhard Rehm and Georg Strecker, GCS 51 (Berlin: Akademie, 1994), 97: "Sine principio igitur dicimus deum ineffabili providentia demonstrante; non a se ipso factus est nec a se ipso genitus; est enim sine principio et ingenitus. Ingeniti autem appellatio non quid sit, nobis intellegere dat, sed quod non est factus; autopatora[n] vero et autogeneton, hoc est ipsum sibi patrem ipsumque sibi filium qui vocaverunt illud quod est ingenitum, contumeliam facere conati sunt dubiis deservientes rationibus." All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

> If indeed, also after the birth, the substance never was divided nor differing in number—for it is not autopator, that is, father to itself—how wouldn't what is unbegotten in regard to substance but dual in number in regard to birth not have preferred to remain in a harmony that admits no birth? (Pseudo-Clement, *Rec*. 3.11.3)[18]

Together with the likewise rejected notion of an androgynous god, which is also reproached,[19] this was a capital tenet in gnostic doctrines, as, for example, passages dealing with the same question found in the Tripartite Tractate (NHC I 51.25–34) or Eugnostos (NHC III 3) show:

> He-Who-Is is ineffable. No principle knew him, no authority, no subjection, nor any creature from the foundation of the world, except he alone. For he is immortal and eternal, having no birth; for everyone who has birth will perish. He is unbegotten, having no beginning; for everyone who has a beginning has an end. No one rules over him. He has no name; for whoever has a name is the creation of another. He is unnameable. He has no human form; for whoever has human form is the creation of another. (NHC III 71.14–72.6)[20]

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18. Rehm and Strecker, *Recognitiones*, 106.4–7: "Si vero et post nativitatem substantia numquam ad dissensionem surrexit et hoc numero distans (nec enim est autopator, hoc est sibi ipsi pater), quomodo non magis innascibili consensu permanere diligeret, quod ingenitum quidem erat substantia, genitura vero in dualitatem dinumeratum." See this passage in the Syriac translation of the (lost) Greek of this work in F. Stanley Jones, *The Syriac Pseudo-Clementines: An Early Version of the First Christian Novel*, Apocryphes 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 198 (Jones also provides an English translation of Rufinus's Latin of *Rec.* 3.2–11).

19. See Pseudo-Clement, *Rec.* 3.9.6–7: "Sed nec in operationem veniens ipse sui aliquid genuit; non enim maneret inviolabilis et inpassibilis, operatus in se ipso; impietatis autem plena sunt haec de ingenito suspicari, periclitantur enim filii impiorum pie se putantes intellegere, magnam blasphemiam ingenito ingerendo, masculofeminam eum existimantes" ("But it is not that he [sc. the unbegotten] begat something of himself by coming to activity, for having been active in his own self, he would not be remaining imperishable and impassible. Now, these conjectures about the unbegotten are full of impiety, for the sons of the inpious, thinking that they understanding him in a pious way, run the risk of imposing a great blasphemy upon the unbegotten in supposing him to be androgynous").

20. Translations from the Nag Hammadi corpus follow *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M. Robinson, 4th rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), even when other and more recent texts are available. When commenting the passages, I took into consideration, however, both the English and the French editions of Laval University.

It has accordingly been inferred that the author (or interpolator) of the Clementine passage either disguised his Nicene adversaries under the cliché of Gnosticism or else intended to blame both gnostics and Nicenes. It might be of some interest to add that Eunomius had probably reproached Basil for being like "Valentinus, Cerinthus, Basilides, Montanus and Marcion," on account of his views about apophatism and negative theology, if this is the correct interpretation of what Gregory of Nyssa writes in *Eun.* 3.9.54.[21]

The present paper gives me the opportunity to reassert and recap the status of my previous research and to clarify that, besides representing the most economic hypothesis, the supposition that Victorinus had direct knowledge of some gnostic writings also implies that he rearranged the sources at his disposal. Therefore we ought to take into account that, together with passages that clearly derive from his scholarly experience and reflect his sources almost verbatim,[22] he could have

21. In this respect it is also worth quoting *Eun.* 2.445 (*Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, 1:356, 20–2), where apparently Eunomius had reproached Basil for being τὸν σπορέα τῶν ζιζανίων καὶ τὴν τοῦ καρποῦ πρόσοψιν καὶ Οὐαλεντίνου παραφθορὰν καὶ τὸν παρ' ἐκείνου καρπόν, "a sower of tares and presence of the harvest and the corruption of Valentinus and the fruit from him" (modified). See Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, vols. 1–2 of *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, ed. Werner Jaeger (Leiden: Brill, 1960). Translation follows Stuart G. Hall in *Contra Eunomium II: An English Version with Supporting Studies*, ed. Lenka Karfíková, Scot Douglass, and Johannes Zachhuber, VCSup 82 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 160. The translation of the entire paragraph runs: "Let us ignore Eunomius' insulting words, his mean uncultured style, and the stinking heap of vocal dung that with characteristic fluency emerges against our Master: 'The sower of weeds and presence of the harvest,' and 'the corruption of Valentinus and the fruit from him,' which he says is 'heaped up in the soul' of our Master. Let the rest of his disgusting remarks be veiled in silence, just as we bury putrefying corpses in the ground, so that the stench may not become offensive to many people." I wonder whether in this second expression one should read a pun on Valentinus's psalm, whose title is θέρος ("summer-harvest") and where καρπούς ("fruits") are explicitly mentioned. On the other hand, as Werner Jaeger suggests, the motif of assimilating contemporary heretics (i.e., the Arians) to gnostics does not depend only on a stereotype in polemic literature, but derives from the emphasis on the hiatus between the creator and the creature, which was a key concept in Gnosticism and was to be revived when stating the creatureliness of the Son. See Jaeger, review of Eduard Norden's *Agnostos Theos*, *GGA* 175 (1913): 569–610.

22. According to Volker Henning Drecoll, the passages introduced by formulas such as *audi, ut dico* or *ponamus* witness to the employment of some kind of source. See Drecoll, "Is Porphyry the Source Used by Marius Victorinus?," in *Its Reception in*

autonomously reworked previous literature, selecting some images or some concepts that might be susceptible of serving his own purposes. In addition, it ought to be considered that Victorinus often repeats his statements and employs a series of cross-references that are partly responsible for the obscurity and difficulty of his style. As for the long section in Zostrianos, Tardieu's objection, namely, the unfinished status of the positive passage, which, conversely, is well-structured in Victorinus, can be overcome by observing that the Coptic text is extremely corrupt and may have contained a subsequent exposition similar to what is attested in Victorinus.[23]

Patristic, Gnostic, and Christian Neoplatonic Texts, vol. 2 of *Plato's "Parmenides" and Its Heritage*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner, WGRWSup 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 80. This may be true; however, we should be cautious about too rigid an application of the *Quellenforschung* methodology. In addition, it is likely a surmise that when Victorinus employs Greek terms or formulas in the text he is quoting some source: however, research via informatics tools such as the Irvine University TLG, or a check on the Nag Hammadi concordances, did not produce any significant result as far as the following expressions are concerned: *in μήτρᾳ substantiae* (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.15); *συνώνυμα ἄρα τὰ τρία* (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.54), or the section on the spherical motion (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.60), which is likewise introduced by the words *audi, ut dico* (see, however, n. 83 below).

23. Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus, Questions," 125. Drecoll presents some considerations that agree with the conclusions I already put forward in my aforementioned works: "that Victorinus directly used Zostrianos (or an earlier stage of it) or a text that depended on it is an alternative we cannot exclude by referring to the common source"; likewise, Victorinus's text is "a kind of 'patchwork,' based on several different—including also gnostic—sources," and that his sources are not limited to the section coinciding with Zostrianos ("Greek Text," 211–12). Thus Drecoll: "There is no striking evidence for the assumption that the variety of extrinsic materials that appears in the different contexts in *Adversus Arium* belongs to one source or author. Perhaps we should better assume that Victorinus is puzzling over very different pieces of material, piecing them together in his own thought.… Perhaps the character of Victorinus as a creative and independent thinker who was inspired by several different philosophical and even Gnostic texts has to be reaffirmed. Of course we know only a small portion of the material he could have used, and perhaps even texts of Neoplatonic provenance belonged to such material" ("Is Porphyry the Source," 80). I wish incidentally to remark that my original purpose was not the exact identification of Victorinus's gnostic sources (which at present remains unidentifiable), but, conversely, to outline that he employed some imagery directly derived from gnostic literature.

For the sake of brevity, I will not treat the passage discussed by Tardieu and Hadot, whose analysis has been given greater precision by John Turner and somewhat qualified by Louise Abramowski. I limit myself here to the observation that this passage is of a piece with the progressive inclination toward apophatism observable in late antique Platonism, where attributes such as unknowable, unutterable, unspeakable, incomprehensible, indistinct, bodiless, formless or colorless, preexisting, and ingenerate—or, rather self-generated—and so on are frequently used and represent the development undergone by Plato's concise description of the Good as being beyond essence, ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας (*Resp.* 509b8–9).[24] That such a tendency toward apophatism is quite evident in the texts of Nag Hammadi allows us in all likelihood to surmise that it was gnostics who developed and popularized this tenet, surely because of their emphasis of a First Principle totally detached from earthly and material reality.[25] We can also add that the long section dealing with the four modes of being and nonbeing in Victorinus's *Epistle to Candidus*, usually referred to Porphyry, has been recently related to Zost. 117.[26]

2. Amalgams of Platonism and Gnosticism in Victorinus's Trinitarian Theology

When considering Victorinus's philosophical speculation, it is also significant to remember that his doctrine of the first principle cannot be disjoined from his general Trinitarian theology and from his interpreta-

24. The way in which Middle Platonists elaborated the concept is discussed in two seminal papers by John Whittaker, "Ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας," *VC* 23 (1969): 91–104; and "Neopythagoreanism and Negative Theology," *SO* 44 (1969): 108–25. For a detailed analysis of Victorinus's apophatic theology, see Tommasi, "Viae negationis." There the passage is also compared to other gnostic texts, in particular Allogenes.

25. A general perspective is provided by the excellent work of Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, 2 vols. (Bonn: Hanstein, 1986); see also Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995); and the detailed survey by Salvatore Lilla, "La teologia negativa dal pensiero greco classico a quello platonico e bizantino," *Helikon* 22–27 (1982–1987): 211–79; 28 (1988): 203–79; 29–30 (1989–1990): 97–106; 31–32 (1991–1992): 3–72.

26. Stephen Emmel, "Not Really Non-existent? A Suggestion for Interpreting and Restoring *Zostrianos* (Nag Hammadi Codex VIII, 1) 117," in Kerchove and Soares Santoprete, *Gnose et manichéisme,* 35–50.

tion of the Father-Son relationship. In particular, as is well known, the most important contribution of Victorinus toward the elaboration of a Trinitarian theology is represented by the superimposition of the Platonizing "intelligible triad" of being, life, intelligence on the three persons of the Christian Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose individuality is brought out thanks to the idea of predominance. Willy Theiler and Hadot had supposed that this scheme, deriving in the last analysis from Plato's *Sophist* and thus of Platonic provenance, was developed by Porphyry or later Platonic philosophers, who postulated an enneadic structure in which the triad is present three times and is distinguished by the predominance of one of its constituents.[27] Already introduced by Victorinus in Candidus's first epistle (*Cand.* 1.3),[28] the idea is reasserted

27. Besides some hints in Porphyry's *Sentences* 10, the idea is summarized and attributed to the Tyrian philosopher by John Lydus (*Mens.* 4.122), with the considerations of Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:260–72. Willy Theiler, "Die chaldaïschen Orakel und die Hymnen des Synesios," in Theiler, *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*, 252–301; Pierre Hadot, "Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin," in *Les sources de Plotin*, EnAC 5 (Vandoeuvres-Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1960), 107–57. More recent perspectives are provided by David N. Bell, "*Esse, vivere, intellegere*: The Noetic Triad and the Image of God," *RTAM* 52 (1986): 5–43; Mark J. Edwards, "Porphyry and the Intellegible Triad," *JHS* 110 (1990): 14–25; Peter Manchester, "The Noetic Triad in Plotinus, Marius Victorinus and Augustine," in Wallis, *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, 207–22; Gaetano Lettieri, "L'esegesi neoplatonica dei generi sommi del 'Sofista': Plotino e Mario Vittorino," *ASE* 10 (1993): 451–93 (with some seminal considerations about Victorinus and Gnosticism); Tuomas Rasimus, "Johannine Background of the Being–Life–Mind Triad," in *Gnosticism, Platonism, and the Late Ancient World: Essays in Honour of John D. Turner*, ed. Tuomas Rasimus and Kevin Corrigan, NHMS 82 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 369–409; Rasimus, "Stoic Ingredients in the Neoplatonic Being–Life–Mind Triad: An Original Second-Century Gnostic Innovation?," in *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, ed. Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 257–73. In the latter Rasimus highlights some influences of Johannine literature and (on Hadot's path) Stoic philosophy respectively.

28. See *Cand.* 1.3: "Ipse est unum et solum. Est enim esse solum. Et vero ipsum esse ipsum est et vivere et intellegere. Secundum enim quod est, et vivit et intellegit et, secundum quod vivit, et est et intellegit et, secundum quod intellegit, et est et vivit et secundum unum tria et secundum tria unum et secundum ter tria unum, unalitas simplex et unum simplex" ("He himself is the single one. For he is solely 'to be.' And indeed 'to be' itself is precisely to live and to understand. For insofar as it is, it lives and understands, and insofar as it lives, it is and understands, and insofar as it understands, it is and lives; and insofar as it is one, it is all three, and insofar as it

in various passages (*Adv. Ar.* 3.4; *Adv. Ar.* 1B.63), the most important of which is *Adv. Ar.* 4.25–26, where this idea is linked to the distinction between form and act:

> Indeed God lives. But he is "to be" and "to understand," and these three which are one, produce the three powers, existence, life and knowledge, but because the three are one—I have explained how they are one: they are one so that anyone among them is the three and these three are one, but in God these three are "to be," in the Son, "to live," in the Holy Spirit, "to understand"—it follows, therefore, that "to be," "to live," to understand, in God are form, for they come forth from the interior and hidden act of the one who is "to be," "to live," "to understand." (*Adv. Ar.* 4.25–26)[29]

Victorinus is the only Christian author to present such an equation, which, moreover, is connected to another peculiarity: that the distinction between Father and Son (or better, Son–Holy Spirit, according to his other favorite tenet of the double dyad)[30] is articulated in terms of

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is all three, it is one, and insofar as it is three times the three, it is one simple unity and unified simplicity"). For the critical text, see Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), 4.15–21. Here and in the following pages I cite Victorinus's theological treatises in the English translation of Mary T. Clark, *Marius Victorinus, Theological Treatises on the Trinity*, FC 69 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1981).

29. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 265.44–46, 1–7: "Etenim deus vivit. Id autem est esse et intellegere, quae ista unum tria conficiunt potentias tres, exsistentiam, vitam, intellegentiam, sed quia illa tria unum—quomodo sunt, docui: ut unum quodlibet tria sit, sic et ista tria unum sunt, sed in deo haec tria esse sunt, in filio vivere, in spiritu sancto intellegere—ergo esse, vivere, intellegere in deo esse sunt, exsistentia autem, vita, intellegentia forma sunt, actu enim interiore et occulto eius quod est esse, vivere, intellegere."

30. Like many writers in the fourth century still, Victorinus does not present a very developed pneumatology, which, has, however, some original elements, thanks to the superimposition of the triadic scheme. In general, see Manlio Simonetti, "Note di cristologia pneumatica," *Aug* 12 (1972): 201–32; Simonetti, "La processione dello Spirito Santo nei Padri latini," *Maia* 7 (1955): 308–24; Joseph G. Vergara, *La teología del Espíritu Santo en Mario Victorino* (Mexico City: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1959); Louise Abramowski, "Der Geist als 'Band' zwischen Vater und Sohn—ein Theologoumenon der Eusebianer?," *ZNW* 87 (1996): 126–32. According to Abramowski the image derives from the Chaldaean Oracles, frags. 4, 31.

the distinction between stasis and action, or potency and energy. Since the Father is conceived as immobile and invisible, the Son represents his visible form, or, in other words, the Son represents the exteriorization of the Father's abstract dimension, as is mainly stated in *Adv. Ar.* 4 and already hinted at in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.19–20 and *Adv. Ar.* 3.1.[31] Besides, in order to describe the process of generation, Victorinus usually employs images drawn from the stock language of the church fathers and in some respects endowed with an archaizing glaze, such as those explaining it in terms of splendor, ray, line, emanation, superabundance, image, motion, procession, type, sprout, and so on.[32]

Thus the three elements of the intelligible triad are characterized as abstract nouns or verbs when referring to the Father, whereas they appear as concrete substantives with reference to the Son. Scholars have unanimously recognized as one of Victorinus's peculiarities the employment of abstract paronyms to characterize the unmixed and pure nature of the Father (existentiality–vitality–intellectuality) as distinguishable from the concrete aspects of existence life and intelligence.[33] Conversely, the latter refer to the Son, who is God in action and represents movement. These abstract nouns recur in *Adv. Ar.* 4.5, a passage meant to explain the generation of the supreme genera of Platonic ascendance:

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31. In addition to the aforementioned passages see *Adv. Ar.* 4.30: "De eo enim quod diximus patrem, esse vivere intellegere, exsistentia genita est ut vita, intellegentia. Et haec est dei forma, haec est filius" (*Opera pars prior*, 271.42–44; "Indeed, from what we have called the Father: 'to be,' 'to live,' 'to understand,' there is begotten existence as life and knowledge. And this is the form of God, this is the Son").

32. These modes of generation are first described (and questioned, in accordance with the perspective maintained by the Arians) in *Cand.* 1.4–9, but discussion of them recurs throughout the whole *Opera theologica* and is summarized by means of brief and icastic formulas in the third hymn to the "blessed Trinity" (for this theme, see Orbe, *Hacia la primera*). The notion of image is discussed at greater length by Anca Vasiliu, "L'argument de l'image dans la défense de la consubstantialité par Marius Victorinus," *EPh* 101 (2012): 191–216; Alexei Fokin, "Act of Vision as an Analogy of the Proceeding of the Intellect from the One in Plotinus and of the Son and the Holy Spirit from the Father in Marius Victorinus and St. Augustine," StPatr 75 (2017): 55–68.

33. The following considerations resume what I already stated in Tommasi, "*Tripotens in unalitate spiritus*." Rasimus deals with the same question and outlines, surely in an independent manner, the same passages ("Johannine Background"). On the so-called abstract paronyms see Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:361–67.

> Plato calls these "ideas," the original forms of all the forms in existens; this kind, for example, is *ontotēs*: (existentiality), *zōotēs* (vitality), *nootēs* (intellectuality); and likewise *tautotēs* (similarity), *heterotēs* (differentiality), and others of this kind.… Therefore, *ontotēs*, that is, the quality of existing or quality of that which is an essence, or *zōotēs*, that is, vitality, that is, the first universal power of life, that is the first life, and the source of all living, likewise *nootēs*, the force, the strength, the power of the substance or nature of understanding, these three, then, should be considered, each one singularly, as being the three simultaneously, but in such a way, that they are said to be and are named in accordance with that which predominates in each one. (*Adv. Ar.* 4.5)[34]

These abstractions recur in *Adv. Ar.* 4.6 and *Adv. Ar.* 3.7, with reference to the Father alone. Thus the latter:

> For "to be" is existence or subsistence or indeed if, by a certain fear on account of these too well known names, one goes higher and uses the following expressions: existentiality or substantiality or essentiality, which correspond to *hyparktotēta* (superabundance), *ousiotēta* (substantiality) *ontotēta* (existentiality). (*Adv. Ar.* 3.7)[35]

With the remarkable exception of ὑπαρκτότης and νοότης, which do not occur in any extant Greek work, some of these abstract words, though rare and isolated, are already attested in late Greek literature. Yet they recur massively and together in gnostic writings to express the intelligible triad or its components (ⲡⲉⲧⲱⲟⲟⲡ, ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲱⲛϩ, ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲉⲓⲙⲉ, and the Greek loanword ⲛⲟⲏⲧⲏⲥ), as, for example, in Allogenes 47.34, 49.26–38; Three Steles of Seth 122.20; 125.28–32; Zost. 15.2–12.[36] What is more substantial,

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34. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 230.31–231.41: "Has Plato ideas vocat, cunctarum in existentibus specierum species principales; quod genus in exemplo est: ὀντότης, ζωότης, νοότης et item ταυτότης, ἑτερότης, atque hoc genera cetera.… Ergo ὀντότης, id est existentialitas vel essentitas, sive ζωότης, id est vitalitas, id est prima universalis vitae potentia, hoc est prima vita, fonsque omnium vivendi, item νοότης, intellegendi vis, virtus, potentia vel substantia vel natura, haec tria accipienda ut singula, sed ita ut qua suo plurimo sunt, hoc nominentur et esse dicantur."

35. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 202.9–12: "Id est existentia vel subsistentia vel, si altius, metu quondam, propter nota nomina conscendas dicasque vel existentialitatem vel substantialitatem, id est ὑπαρκτοτήτα, οὐσιότητα, ὀντότητα."

36. Majercik, "Existence–Life–Intellect Triad," 482; Tommasi, "*Tripotens in unalitate spiritus*," 67–68; Rasimus, "Johannine Background," 380. As to my knowledge,

however, is that the aforementioned idea of the interdependence between its constituents and their distinction by predominance[37] is clearly stated in Allogenes: "He is Vitality and Mentality and That-Which-Is. For then That-Which-Is constantly possesses its Vitality and Mentality and {Life has} Vitality possesses {non}-Being and Mentality. Mentality possesses Life and That-Which-Is. And the three are one, although individually they are three" (NHC XI 49.26–37). We can also infer a gnostic background for the apophatic characterization of the triad as deprived of being, life, and intellect because of its superiority, as is stated in *Adv. Ar.* 4.23:

> That is why it is said that he is *anuparktos*, *anousios*, *anous*, *azōn*, without existence, without substance, without understanding, without life, certainly not by *sterēsin* (privation), but through transcendence. For all things which words designate are after him; that is why he is not *on* (existent), but rather *Proon* (Preexistent). In the same way the realities produced in him are preexistence, the preliving, and preknowing. But all these things have been understood and named from secondary phenomena. For after knowledge had appeared, preknowledge was both understood and named; in the same way, for preexistence and previtality; certainly, they existed but were not yet recognized, not yet named.[38]

Whereas the adjective ἀνύπαρκτος is attested from the Hellenistic age, the other terms are extremely infrequent and employed in a different

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nobody has yet observed the mention of these terms in Damascius, *Dub. et sol.* 2.61: Ἆρα οὖν καὶ τὸ ὂν οὐχ ἁπλοῦν ἰδίωμα, οἷον οὐσιότης καὶ ἡ ζωότης ἐπὶ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἡ νοότης ἐπὶ νοῦ. For the critical text, see Damascius, *Traité des Premiers Principes*, 3 vols, ed. and trans. Leendert G. Westerink and Joseph Combès, Budé 309, 323, 341 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986–1991), 4.

37. The classical formulation of this concept is that of Proclus, *Inst. theol.* 103, three centuries later.

38. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 260.22–34: "Quare et ἀνύπαρκτος et ἀνούσιος et ἄνους et ἄζων, sine exsistentia, sine substantia, sine intellegentia, sine vita dicitur, non quidem per στερήσιν, id est non per privationem, sed per supralationem. Omnia enim quae uoces nominant post ipsum sunt, unde nec ὄν sed magis πρόον. Eodem modo praeexsistentia, praeviventia, praecognoscentia, haec quae conficiuntur; ipse autem praeexsistens, praevivens, praecognoscens, sed haec omnia, apparentibus secundis, et intellecta sunt et nominata. Postquam enim apparuit cognoscentia, et intellecta et appellata est praecognoscentia; eodem modo et praeexsistentia et praeviventia; erant quidem haec, sed nondum animadversa, nondum nominata."

acceptation.[39] They might have, however, a gnostic ascendance,[40] and furthermore, a similar idea that the intellegible triad is deprived of being-life and intellect is expressed in Allogenes 61.32–39: "Now he is something insofar as he exists in that he either exists and will become, or acts or knows, although he lives without Mind or Life or Existence or Non-existence, incomprehensibly."

In the aforementioned passage from Victorinus (*Adv. Ar.* 4.23) also recurs a series of attributes that strictly speaking are not negative but instead imitate the Platonic model, insofar as they stress the preeminence of the Father and his transcendence that is prior to every being or creature. In particular, according to the tripartite division of the three hypostases of being, life and intellect, the Father represents a higher step. Terms such as *praeexsistentia*, *praeviventia*, *praecognoscentia* recall another image employed by the Latin rhetor, namely, that the Father is the first cause or first principle (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.63) and is even prior to perfection and blessedness (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.3),[41] a passage in which Hadot saw an echo of Plotinus,

39. Ἄνους and ἄζωον are quite rare in Greek, and often bear a different, sometimes negative, meaning (they are in fact employed, already by Plato and later by the Neoplatonists, in order to characterize the lower nature of the soul). It seems interesting to note here that they are also attested in Epiphanius's *Panarion* when the heresiologist deals with Marcellus's views about the preexistent Logos (*Pan.* 3.261.3), and in Gregory of Nazianzus's *Ep.* 101.12. Gregory recalls Apollinaris and his doctrine on the Son deprived of νοῦς. The three terms are grouped together in Proclus, *In Parm.* 1005.18; Pseudo-Dionysius, *Div. nom.* 4.3.1. Thus the latter: καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ μόνῳ καὶ τὸ ἀνούσιον οὐσίας ὑπερβολὴ καὶ τὸ ἄζωον ὑπερέχουσα ζωὴ καὶ τὸ ἄνουν ὑπεραίρουσα σοφία (PG 3:697A; "in It [sc. The Good] alone Not-Being is an excess of Being, and Lifelessness an excess of Life and Its Mindless state is an excess of Wisdom"). Translation follows Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology*, trans. Clarence E. Rolt (London: SPCK, 1920), 89.

40. Concerning the notion of insubstantiality, which is prominent in Allogenes (see 47.34; 48.16; 55.28), in Victorinus we also find the Latin new formation *insubstantialis* (*Cand.* 1.8; *Ad Cand.* 13), exemplified in ἀνούσιος, a term that, although attested in the Anon. in Parm. 12.5, "appears to be a Gnostic coinage, though of course we cannot exclude the possibility that it was coined by Platonists whose works are no longer extant." Thus Birger A. Pearson, "The Tractate Marsanes [NHC X] and the Platonic Tradition," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, ed. Barbara Aland (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 384.

41. In Greek literature a probable parallel is to be found in Proclus, *Inst. theol.* 115: πᾶς θεὸς ὑπερούσιος καὶ ὑπέρζως καὶ ὑπέρνους ("Every god is above Being, above Life, above Intelligence"). For the critical text and translation, see Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*: *A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary*,

Enn. 5.8.5.21. Once again, however, it is possible to retrace this tenet, among other gnostic writings, in Allogenes (NHC XI 3):

> But concerning the invisible, spiritual Triple-Powered-One, hear! He exists as an Invisible One who is incomprehensible to them all. He contains them all within himself, for they all exist because of him. He is perfect, and he is greater than perfect, and he is blessed. He is always One and he exists in them all, being ineffable, unnameable, being One who exists through them all—he whom, should one discern him, one would not desire anything that exists before him among those that possess existence, for he is the source from which they were all emitted. He is prior to perfection. He was prior to every divinity, and he is prior to every blessedness, since he provides for every power. And he [is] a non-substantial substance, since he is a God over whom there is no divinity, the transcending of whose greatness and beauty. (Allogenes 47.7–34)

More significantly, another passage helps us by introducing a statement for which Victorinus is likely indebted to the gnostics. In *Adv. Ar.* 4.21 we read:

> God is *tri-dynamos* (tri-powered), that is, one having three powers, "to be," "to live," "to understand," so that in each one power there are three powers, and anyone of the three is three powers, receiving its name by the power wherein it predominates, as I have taught above and in many places. For nothing must be called "to be" unless it understands. Triple therefore in each individual, [is] their individuality and triple also their unity in trinity. (translation slightly altered)[42]

We can also add that the notion of the Father as triple power recurs in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50:

2nd ed., ed. Eric R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 100–101. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 166.32–33: "pater et filius ipsius animae motionis et creator et praecausa et praeprincipium" ("the Father and the Son are themselves creator and precause and preprinciple of the movement of the soul"). *Opera pars prior*, 59.27–28: "Supra enim beatitudinem est pater et idcirco ipsum requiescere" ("For the Father is beyond beatitude, and for that reason he is 'to repose' itself").

42. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 257.26–258.31: "Τριδύναμος est igitur deus, id est tres potentias habens, esse, vivere, intellegere, ita, ut in singulis tria sint sitque ipsum unum quodlibet tria, nomen, qua se praestat accipiens, ut supra docui et in multis. Nihil enim esse dicendum, nisi quod intellegit. Triplex igitur in singulis singularitas et unalitas in trinitate."

> This is God, this is the Father, preexisting preintelligence and preexistence keeping himself and his own happiness in an immobile movement, and because of that, having no need of other beings; perfect above the perfect, Spirit triple-powered in its unity [*tripotens in unalitate spiritus*], perfect and above the Spirit. (translation altered)[43]

A similar expression—*a tripotenti spiritu*—is found in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.56,[44] an expression that in my opinion confirms the validity of interpreting the syntagma *tripotens in unalitate spiritus* in the previous passage as a nominative form.[45]

The idea of a triple power is quite rare, also because in the fourth century the three persons were hypostatically distinguished in a way that affirmed the oneness of the unique divine substance or potency. Conversely, *tridynamos* is a key word in gnostic literature and shares some affinities with the notion of triple monad in Chaldaean Oracles 26.1.[46] Victorinus, however, employs the term *power* in order to develop his idea of distinction by predominance. I would like to suggest that Victorinus borrowed the image of a *tripotens spiritus* directly from gnostic literature, which identifies the triple-powered either with the Supreme being or with a subordinated entity located at the level of the intellect, as for example in Allogenes, where the Three-Powered One is linked to life and mind but also to the One.[47] This is likely a gnostic exegesis of the second hypothesis

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43. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 144.1–145.5: "hic est deus, hic pater, praeintellegentia praeexistens et praeexistentia beatitudinem suam et inmobili motione semet ipsum custodiens, et propter istud, non indigens aliorum, perfectus supra perfectos, tripotens in unalitate spiritus, perfectus et supra spiritum." [Editors' note: Clark's translation has been altered here according to Tommasi's interpretation of *spiritus* as nominative—Clark takes it as genitive—in the phrase *tripotens in unalitate spiritus*. See Tommasi, "*Tripotens in unalitate spiritus*."]

44. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 153.5: "Facta [sc. *anima*] enim a tripotenti spiritu." [Editors' note: Clark renders the phrase as "created by the Spirit to triple power," rather than "created by the triple-powered Spirit."]

45. Conversely, Abramowski and Drecoll propose to interpret it as "threefold in unity of the spirit," recalling the expression in *Adv. Ar* 1B.50.18: "indiscernibilis spiritus counitio." See Abramowski, "Nicänismus und Gnosis," 537; Drecoll, "Greek Text," 204.

46. For text and translation, see *Oracula Chaldaica*, ed. and trans. Ruth Majercik, SGRR 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 58–59.

47. Allogenes 49.26–38; Steles Seth 125.28–32; Zost. 15.2–12, 67.19, with the considerations of Turner, "Platonizing Sethian Treatises," 145.

of the *Parmenides* (Plato, *Parm.* 145e), which distinguishes the silent and ineffable One from the three-powered One that reveals itself under the three different aspects of existence, life, and mind (or beatitude). Probably the intertwining of the two aspects (the three-powered One as visible aspect of the Invisible Father and the fact that it contains in itself the supreme *genera*) influenced Victorinus's speculation. Indeed, according to him, Christ precisely represents the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, insofar as he is One-Who-Is, as in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.

We noted that the Three-Powered can be identified with the Supreme Being and that it contains being–life–mind. But we can proceed further, observing that these gnostic writings employ the same oscillation between concrete and abstract nouns, namely, ὄν/ὀντότης (or οὐσία/οὐσιότης, ὑπαρκτότης/ὕπαρξις), ζωή/ζωότης, νοῦς/νοότης. These abstractions are used to highlight the idea of transcendence and nonsubstantiality of the first principle. Finally, there is another element that I think decisive for postulating a direct link between Victorinus and the gnostics, namely, the characterization of the Holy Spirit as blessedness, which Victorinus employs three times. In the aforementioned passage of *Adv. Ar.* 1B.50 he writes:

> Being one in its simplicity, it unites these three powers: universal existence, universal life, and happiness, but all these realities are the One and the simple One, and by predominance in the power of "to be," that is, of existence, are present the powers of life and of happiness. For the power which is the power of existence, by the fact that it is and that it exists is the power likewise of life and of happiness; it is, itself and through itself, idea and logos of itself [*et idea et* λόγος *sui ipsius*],[48] having both "to live" and "to act" in its own nonexisting existence, union without distinction of the Spirit with itself, divinity, substantiality, happiness, power of intelligence, vitality, excellence and absolutely all things universally, purely unbegotten, *Proon* (Pre-existent) unity of every union, itself by no means a union.[49]

48. It was just this expression that led Tardieu and Hadot to posit the relation to Zostrianos (see Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 16).

49. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 145:10–21: "Simplicitate unus qui sit, tres potentias couniens, exsistentiam omnem, vitam omnem et beatitudinem, sed ista omnia et unum et simplex unum et maxime in potentia eius quod est esse, hoc est exsistentiae, potentia vitae et beatitudinis: quo enim est et exsistit, potentia quae sit exsistentiae, hoc potentia est et vitae et beatitudinis, ipsa per semet ipsam et idea et

The same concept recurs in a nearby passage (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.52), as well as in *Adv. Ar.* 3.10, which mentions the triad as *substantialitas*, *vitalitas*, *beatitudo*.[50] Such a usage not only depends on a generic Christian tradition but has a more precise reference. Indeed, Victorinus qualifies the Holy Spirit as "blessed" and links this notion to the other qualifying properties of the two persons, existence or being and life. The Spirit is therefore characterized either as mind or intelligence (νοῦς/νοότης) or as blessedness (*beatitudo*/μακαριότης), an oscillation that is to be found in gnostic writings as well. We see this, for example, in Allogenes 59.9 (the three moments of ascension are blessedness, life, existence) and Zost. 14–15, where the same triadic pattern appears in reverse order (existence–blessedness–life) and is linked to the three functions of divinity, knowledge, and life of the aeons Kalyptos–Protophanes–Autogenes.

As we have hinted, the idea of self-motion or of autoextension from Father to Son is the key to understanding Victorinus's demonstration of the *homoousios*. On the one hand, we find the characterization of God as unmixed simplicity (*Adv. Ar.* 4.13), which, at the same time, brings all beings to life, or as transcending simplicity, as in *Adv. Ar.* 4.19: "But the first 'to be' is so unparticipated that it cannot even be called one or alone, but rather, by preeminence, before the one, before the alone, beyond simplicity, preexistence rather than existence."[51] On the other hand, the

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λόγος sui ipsius, et vivere et agere habens secundum ipsam suimet ipsius inexsistentem exsistentiam, indiscernibilis spiritus counitio, divinitas, substantialitas, beatitudo, intellegentialitas, vitalitas, optimitas et universaliter omnimodis omnia, pure ingenitum, πρόον, unalitas counitionis nulla counitione."

50. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 148.3–5: "Deus potentia est istarum trium potentiarum, exsistentiae, vitae, beatitudinis, hoc est eius quod est esse, quod vivere, quod intellegere" ("God is the potentiality of these three powers, existence, life, happiness, that is, of 'to be,' 'to live,' 'to understand'"). *Opera pars prior*, 208.20–23: "Pater ergo, filius, spiritus sanctus, deus, λόγος, παράκλητος, unum sunt, quod substantialitas, vitalitas, beatitudo, silentium se apud se loquens silentium, verbum, verbi verbum" ("The Father, therefore, the Son, the Holy Spirit, God, Logos, the *Paraklet*os (Paraclete) are one because they are the power of substance, vitality, happiness, silence—but silence conversing with themselves—word, word from word").

51. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 244.18–20: "Non enim vere alterum in altero, sed unum simplici suo geminum, et idcirco in se quia ex se, et ideo ex se quia aliquid operatur in se prima simplicitas" ("For they are not truly one in the other, but they are one redoubled in its own simplicity, one, in itself because it is from itself, and one which is from itself because the first simplicity has a certain act within itself"). *Opera pars prior*, 254.10–13: "Verum esse primum ita inparticipatum est, ut nec unum

incarnation is therefore explained as the passage from potency to act, from δύναμις to ἐνέργεια, from silence to word, according to a metaphor that has its roots and is largely widespread in Platonic-Pythagorean philosophy but once again has a prominent development in Gnosticism as well.[52] Victorinus often repeats this explanation, employing an exegesis of the supreme genres of Plato's *Sophist* (254d–255), for example when dealing with the notions of alterity and identity.[53]

The generation of the Son is the result of a movement toward the outside, whereas, at the same time, the Father, though being still, has his own motion toward the inside. In this way, motion is actually self-motion and self-contemplation, so that the Logos is self-generated.[54] It seems worth

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dici possit, nec solum, sed per praelationem, ante unum et ante solum, ultra simplicitatem." The idea that the Paternal Monad progressively expands into a triad is probably inspired by Chaldaean theurgy, according to the witness of John Lydus: "That the monad is contemplated in a triad can be understood from the hymns: Proclus, on the 'once beyond,' [writes] thus: For the universe, seeing you, the monad, containing three, revered [you]" (*Mens.* 2.6). Victorinus attributes this notion to the Father, who is transcendent and superior to number (*Adv. Ar.* 3.1), but much more to the three Persons, based on the exegesis in the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* (9.3–4; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:90) where the power and intellect are co-unified in the Father's simplicity.

52. As the great scholar of Islamic philosophy (and particularly of its gnostic or Platonizing trends) Henry Corbin states that every speculation about God and the progression of beings can be traced back to Plato's *Parmenides* and to its Neoplatonic exegesis, since this dialogue clearly shows an attempt at connecting plurality to Being, or, in other words, at explaining how the diversity of creatures, insofar as images of being, can be integrated in the supreme Unity. See Corbin, *Le paradoxe du monothéisme* (Paris: Herne, 1981). This is possible due to the crucial distinction between *esse* (equal to the One, according to theomonism, that is a sort of onto-henology, or distinguished from it and at a lower level) and *ens*: an emanative series of theophanies originates the decreasing hierarchy of realms and allows the simultaneous vision of God in the creatures. If the first one represents absolute existence in itself, the second one is constituted by divine names and attributes in a sort of *Urbestimmtheit*, and only at a third step, by means of the "One-many," also in varied forms, the realization of an ontogenetic manifestation of beings becomes possible.

53. See Lettieri, "L'esegesi neoplatonica dei generi sommi." Christophe Erismann deals with an intertwined question in "Identité et ressemblance: Marius Victorinus, théologien et lecteur d'Aristote," *EPh* 101 (2012): 181–90.

54. *Adv. Ar.* 3.17: "Etenim, cum quasi geminus ipse pater sit: exsistentia et actio, id est substantia et motus, sed intus motus et αὐτόγονος motus et, hoc quo substantia est, motus, necessario et filius, cum sit motus et αὐτόγονος motus, eadem substantia est"

noting that this tenet is hinted at by Plotinus, *Enn.* 5.1.6.18, and in the Tri. Trac. 55.35–40.[55] This strong philosophical doctrine is somewhat nuanced by means of Victorinus's insertion of a scriptural image, namely, the metaphor of radiance, reminiscent of Wis 7:25–6 (ἀπαύγασμα γάρ ἐστι φωτὸς ἀϊδίου, etc.) and Heb 1:3 (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης). Victorinus expresses this with the rare Latin new formation *effulgentia*:

> But since movement goes from one point to another, in some way from the interior to the exterior, there is moved the power, the nature, the will for life, and this predominantly is its existence; this is why it is said to be the radiance [*effulgentia*], the procession, the manifestation of the Most High Spirit, life-giving creator for the universal totality of that which has the potentiality for "to be." (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.51)[56]

In this respect, we can highlight another kind of imagery that Victorinus favors to describe the Trinity. He often equates the Father to silence, the Son to word, and the Holy Spirit to the "word of the word" (*vox vocis* or *verbi verbum*).[57] The silence-word metaphor used to characterize the

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(*Opera pars prior*, 222.13–17; "Indeed, since the Father himself is in some way twofold as existence and action, that is, substance and movement, but interior movement, and *autogonos* (self-begotten) movement, movement by the very fact that it is substance, it follows necessarily that the Son, since he is movement and *autogonos* (self-begotten) movement, is the same substance as the Father"). The idea is also repeated in *Adv. Ar.* 4.13; *Ad Cand.* 22; *Hom. rec.* 3. The idea of self-born motion is a Platonic tenet, yet Victorinus connects it to the Gospel of John (5:26) as well. See Porphyry, frag. 223f, in *Fragmenta*, ed. Andrew Smith and David Wasserstein, BSGRT (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993), 245; already Plato, *Phaedr.* 245c–e.

55. On the similarities between Plotinus and Victorinus see Alain Petit, "Existence et manifestation: Le Johannisme platonicien de Marius Victorinus," *EPh* 101 (2012): 158. In a forthcoming paper I am going to deal with the relationship between these two passages, that of Plotinus (*Enn.* 5.1.6.18) and that in the Tripartite Tractate (55.35–40), which can help in establishing the disputed Greek text of the former (ἐπιστραφέντος … πρὸς αὐτό or πρὸς αὑτό).

56. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 149.32–37: "Sed quoniam motio aliunde ad aliud fertur, veluti ab eo quod est intus foras quod vitae et potentia est et natura et voluntas et maxime istud exsistentia ipsius, ideo effulgentia dicitur esse vel progressio aut elevati spiritus manifestatio, operatrix in vivefaciendum id quod omne totum est essentitatis."

57. See *Adv. Ar.* 1A.13: "Quod omnia tria unum, pater non silens silentium, sed vox in silentio, filius iam vox, paraclitus vox vocis" (*Opera pars prior*, 72.30–31; "That all three are one: the Father not an empty silence, but a silent voice, the Son already

Father-Son relationship and the incarnation falls in the same province of similar images meant to distinguish the immobile aspect and the exteriorized one, and as such was largely employed by the early fathers, who naturally relied on the Johannine prologue.[58] Probably Victorinus conveys here a reminiscence of the archaizing doctrine of the "double logos," which is peculiar to Clement or, more in general, of the second century. In all likelihood Victorinus is directly echoing Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the first Latin work dealing with Trinitarian questions.[59]

It is possible to surmise that Victorinus was influenced by the massive recurrence of such a metaphor in Gnosticism. Besides the first aeonic couple Sigê/Ennoia in Valentinianism, where Ennoia represents the exterior counterpart of an otherwise unfruitful silence and makes it necessary in order that the creation becomes effective, a famous fragment of Heracleon can be recalled as well:

> The Word is the Savior, the voice in the wilderness is that symbolized by John, and the whole prophetic order is a noise … the voice which belongs to the Word becomes the Word, as also the woman is changed into a man … the sound will change into voice, giving the position of a disciple to the voice which changes into the Word, and that of servant to

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a voice, the Paraclete, utterance of the voice"). This is an image literally reprised in *Adv. Ar.* 3.16; see also *Adv. Ar.* 3.10 (cited in note 50 with translation): "silentium, sed apud se loquens silentium, verbum, verbi verbum." I have discussed these passages at greater length in Tommasi, "Silenzio, voce, annunzio," with further bibliography. On the Trimorphic Protennoia, see now Tilde Bak Halvgaard, *Linguistic Manifestations in the Trimorphic Protennoia and the Thunder: Perfect Mind; Analysed against the Background of Platonic and Stoic Dialectics*, NHMS 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

58. A famous example is that of Ignatius, *Magn.* 8.2: "there is one God who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, who is His Word that proceeded from silence, who in all things was well-pleasing unto Him that sent Him" (Ehrman).

59. See Tertullian, *Prax.* 5.4: "Nam etsi deus nondum sermonem suum miserat, proinde eum cum ipsa et in ipsa ratione intra semetipsum habebat, tacite cogitando et disponendo secum quae per sermonem mox erat dicturus. Cum ratione enim sua cogitans atque disponens sermonem, eam efficiebat quam sermone tractabat" ("For although God had not yet uttered his Discourse, he always had it within himself along with and in his Reason, while he silently thought out and ordained with himself the things which he was shortly to say by the agency of Discourse: for while thinking out and ordaining them in company of his Reason, he converted into Discourse that (Reason) which he was discussing in discourse"). Text and translation follow *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1948), 93, 135.

> the change from noise to voice. (Heracleon, frag. 5, *apud* Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 6.109–112)[60]

I would like, however, to point to another text that presents some striking parallels with Victorinus, the gnostic Trimorphic Protennoia (NHC XIII 1). This text is structured in the mixed form of an I-aretalogy and an *Offenbarungsrede*, and shares many points with the Johannine prologue and is influenced by the Stoic doctrine of language as well.[61] Although for the most part the text presents the traditional bipartition silence versus voice, in some cases we have a threefold succession of φθόγγος, φονή, and λόγος in order to represent the three moments of a gradual evolution from inarticulate sound to discourse, as they are exemplified in passages such as 46.28–31 and 47.5–15:

> it is the Eye of the Three Permanences, which exist as Voice by virtue of Thought. And it is a Word by virtue of Speech.… I [told all of them about my mysteries] that exist in [the incomprehensible], inexpressible Aeons. I taught [them the mysteries] through the [Voice that exists] within a perfect Intellect.... The second time I came in the [Speech] of my Voice…. The third time I revealed myself to them [in] their tents as Word. (NHC XIII 46.28–31, 47.5–15)

In whatever sense the relationship between the Trimorphic Protennoia and the Johannine Prologue must be considered,[62] these similarities seem

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60. Translation follows Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. Ronald Heine, FC 80 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989). For similar tenets, see also Pseudo-Apuleius, *Asclep.* 20; Plotinus, *Enn.* 5.5.5.19–21.

61. Nicola Denzey provides an interesting comment about the similarities between Tertullian and the Trimorphic Protennoia: "During the course of his invective, Tertullian expresses in very different form much of the terminology shared between Trimorphic Protennoia and the Prologue: Voice, God's invocation of primordial Light, Wisdom, the 'first-begotten,' the 'form' and 'glorious garb.' At issue here may have been Praxeas' assertions that the Word was in some way subordinate to God—or just as shocking, to Wisdom. Tertullian endeavored to show, against Praxeas, that Wisdom was identical to the Word, as (properly interpreted) the Word was also identical to the Light God calls into being, and indeed, to the very substance of God's utterance itself. The exclusivity of Christ as Word could not be compromised by theologies that placed at their center a separate, superior Wisdom figure." See Denzey, "Genesis Traditions in Conflict? The Use of Some Exegetical Traditions in the Trimorphic Protennoia and the Johannine Prologue," *VC* 55 (2001): 43.

62. As probably one of the most crucial issues in the interpretation of the text, the question has been much debated among scholars. Besides earlier studies, see

to imply, once again, an osmosis between philosophical tenets and Christian doctrines, from which Victorinus could have benefited.

3. Gnostic Motifs of Christ's Androgyny

The most interesting aspect that I am inclined to connect to gnostic images is the presentation of the double sex of Christ, which Victorinus introduces in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.51 and repeats in chapter 64 of the same work.[63] In the first passage, moreover, this image marks the transition between a more philosophical digression and a Christian-oriented conclusion, not devoid of Pauline reminiscences, where Victorinus deals with Christ's descent on the earth and his virginal birth (he had earlier explained the Father-Son relationship on the basis of the exegesis of Plato's *Parmenides*, namely, equating the Father to the One and the Son to the One-Many):

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those of Yvonne Janssens, "The Trimorphic Protennoia and the Fourth Gospel," in *The New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honor of Robert McL. Wilson*, ed. Alastair H. B. Logan and Alexander J. Wedderburn (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 229–45; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Jewish Gnosticism? The Prologue of John, Mandean Parallels, and the Trimorphic Protennoia," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Roelof van den Broek and Maarten J. Vermaseren, EPRO 91 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 467–97; Craig A. Evans, "On the Prologue of John and the Trimorphic Protennoia," *JTS* 27 (1981): 395–401; James M. Robinson, "Sethians and Johannine Thought: The Trimorphic Protennoia and the Prologue of the Gospel of John," in *Sethian Gnosticism*, vol. 2 of *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the Conference at Yale, March 1978*, ed. Bentley Layton, SHR 41 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 643–70; Gesine Robinson, "The Trimorphic Protennoia and the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel," in *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World: In Honor of James Robinson*, ed. James E. Goehring (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1990), 37–50; Alastair H. B. Logan, "John and the Gnostics: The Significance of the Apocryphon of John for the Debate about the Origins of the Johannine Literature," *JSNT* 14 (1991): 41–69. Pheme Perkins states, "The Trimorphic Protennoia (*TriProt*) seems to have been influenced by both philosophical and Johannine traditions. It is more precise philosophically in its use of divine triad language than the *ApocryJn* / *GEgypt* tradition, but it may well have reformulated a tradition about the aeons similar to that found in those writings." See Perkins, "Logos Christologies in the Nag Hammadi Codices," *VC* 35 (1981): 381.

63. In addition to Tommasi, "L'androginia di Cristo-Logos," which I am summarizing here, see Serge Cazelais, "La masculoféminité d'Adam: Quelques témoins textuels et exégèses chrétiennes anciennes de Gen. 1, 27," *RB* 114 (2007): 174–88.

> Therefore this existence of all existents is life, and insofar as life is movement, it received a kind of feminine power, because it desired to vivify. But since, as has been shown, this movement, since it is one, is both life and wisdom, life converted to wisdom and, what is more, to the paternal existence, better still, by a movement of return toward the paternal power, and having been fortified by that, life, returning to the father, has been made male. For life is descent; wisdom is ascent. But it is also Spirit; the two are therefore Spirit; they are Two in One. And just as there was a necessity that life, existing as primal existence, should enter into the virginal power and by the masculine childbirth of the virgin be begotten as a man–Son of God—or in the first movement, I say first to be manifested, life was, first of all, as though alienated from the power of the Father and, in its natural desire to vivify, life, truly existing within, externalized itself by its own movement. When it once again turned towards itself, it returned toward the existence that it has in the Father, thus becoming male. And having come to the full completion of its all-powerful vigor, life became perfect Spirit, by turning above, that is, towards the interior, away from its tendency downward. The order to be realized also follows this model: as long as the Spirit was in the body, that is, in Jesus Christ, it was necessary for it to undergo a certain diminishment and be born of the Virgin and, as it were, because of this very diminishment, by the Fatherly power, that is, by its more divine and first existence, to arise, to be renewed, to return to the Father, that is, to the Fatherly existence and power. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.51)[64]

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64. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 147.19–43: "Ista igitur exsistentia totius existentiae, est vita, et iuxta quod vita motus, quasi femineam sortita est potentiam, hoc quod concupivit vivificare. Sed quoniam, sicut demonstratum, ista motio, una cum sit, et vita est et sapientia, vita conversa in sapientiam, et magis in exsistentiam patricam, magis autem retro motae motionis, in patricam potentiam, et ab ipso virificata, vita, recurrens in patrem, vir effecta est. Descensio enim vita, ascensio sapientia. Spiritus autem et ipsa, spiritus igitur utraque, in uno duo. Et sicut, exsistente vita prima exsistentia, necessitas fuit in virginalem potentiam subintrare et, masculari virginis partu, virum generari filium dei—in prima enim motione, primam dico in apparentiam venientem, veluti defecit potentia patris et, in cupiditate insita ad vivefaciendum, intus quidem exsistens vita, motione autem foris exsistens, in semet ipsam recucurrit, rursus in semet ipsam conversa, venit in suam patricam exsistentiam, vir effecta et, perfecta in omnipotentem virtutem, effectus est perfectus spiritus, nutu in superiora converso, hoc est intro—sic, secundum typum, oportuit ordinem esse et cum est in corpore spiritus, hoc est filio Christo et quasi deminutionem pati et a virgine nasci et, in ipsa veluti deminutione sua, patrica virtute, hoc est exsistentia diviniore et prima, resurgere et renovari et reverti in patrem, hoc est in exsistentiam et potentiam patricam." See also *Adv. Ar.* 1B.64: "Si autem et istud dicit: "fecit ipsum masculofeminam"

Thus Victorinus establishes a link between the double dyad and the idea of movement as exteriorization: the descent of Christ is compared to life—that is, to femaleness—while the subsequent ascent is paralleled to return and virilization. A similar tenet also recurs in Victorinus's *In Gal.* 4.3–4, a passage whose tenor shares some ideas with the infamous anti-feminist logion 114 in the Gospel of Thomas,[65] or with two passages in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (*Exc.* 21 and 68), likewise influenced by a strong encratism. This description of Christ shares striking similitudes with the descent of the Logos presented in the late Valentinian Tripartite Tractate in strong dialectical terms, underlining the two aspects of maleness and femaleness: "When he who produced himself as perfect actually did bring himself forth, he became weak like a female nature which has abandoned his virile counterpart" (Tri. Trac. 78.8–17). This process concludes with

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et praedicatum est: "fecit hominem iuxta imaginem dei," manifestum, quoniam et iuxta corpus et carnem valde mystice τοῦ λόγου et mare et femina existente, quoniam ipse sibimet filius erat in primo et secundo partu spiritaliter et carnaliter" (*Opera pars prior*, 166–67.23–28; "But if he also says this: 'He made him male-female,' and it was previously said: 'He made man according to the image of God,' it is evident that also according to the body and the flesh, extremely mystically, he made him according to the image of God, the *Logos* being himself both male and female, since he was for himself his own Son, in the first and the second birth, spiritually and carnally").

65. Translation follows Stephen A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 305–6: "All things that are perfect are said to be a man and all things that are imperfect, a female. In short, when all things have been perfected, sanctified, and justified, we will have begun to come together into a man. One may understand what has been said thus: since the world, or we who have been set in this world, are not perfect, we lead a woman's life in the way of women. Therefore, in order that Christ might come to us, providing or about to provide salvation for us, he was born of a female. This means he received even the sort of birth which would render him imperfect, such that he would put himself on a level with us. That is, he received flesh or the world, because he had been born in this world, or in this flesh, of a female—clearly, born of things that were imperfect. Having been sanctified by the Mystery's fulfilment, Christ arose as a man, even after his suffering and his resurrection. This means that having and receiving a perfected spirit, he could provide for us a likeness in order that we too could grow up into a 'man' from a 'female' [*ut et nos in virum consurgeremus ex femina*]—that is, from this life which, as it is has been subject to corruption, is rightly called female or woman [*vel femina vel mulier*]." Gos. Thom. 114: "Simon Peter said to them, 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.' Jesus said, 'I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

the return, when Christ becomes mediator of salvation: the redemption process is narrated some lines after (Tri. Trac. 78.20–22), and the Logos's *epistrophe* is equated to *metanoia* (Tri. Trac. 80.11). Even more striking are the similitudes with the figure of the gnostic male-virgin Barbelos and her acting as a sort of superior Sophia.

As is well known, in many gnostic systems, Barbelos, the firstborn aeon, represents the first thought or idea of the Father, the visible image of the invisible One, his ἐνέργεια, or his dynamic aspect. In some respects, she has been paralleled to the figure of Hekate in the Chaldaean Oracles, where, as a female entity, she is considered a dynamic medium between the Father and the Nous.[66] Furthermore, Barbelo's vital and feminine part is endowed with a hidden nous or intelligence, which therefore is meant to explain her androgynous nature. The male/female dichotomy is a constant pattern in Zostrianos, as in other gnostic writings. There Barbelos is characterized as male (Zost. 97.1), because she is intellect, while at the same time life (Zost. 87.17); she is also "Knowledge of the Invisible Triple Powerful Perfect Spirit" (Zost. 118.10); in a previous section the alternation of the two aspects culminated with the delimitation of Life thanks to the Intellect (Zost. 66–76). Allogenes 49.5–14 develops the same doctrine, employing the theme of the return. Similarly, Three Steles of Seth (NHC VII 5) describes Barbelo as potentially existing in the Father (Steles Seth, 121.20–30), representing at the same time his formed and dynamic aspect. That Barbelo descends on earth as a woman and returns to heaven as male is summarized in Marsanes (NHC X 1) as well (Marsanes 8.13–9.28). Barbelo thus forms a dyad with the Father, being at the same time herself a dyad, because she gives life and, after returning to the Father, becomes νοῦς. She represents the self-objectivation of the paternal *ennoia* and can be completed by means of *nous*, that is, by knowing the Father. This doctrine can be considered a gnostic myth meant to represent the philosophical tenet of the self-extension of the One that becomes a dyad

66. See especially frags. 6, 50. The most detailed analysis on Hekate is that of Sarah I. Johnston, *Hekate Soteira: A Study of Hekate's Roles in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990). But see already John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 394–95; Michel Tardieu, "La gnose valentinienne et les Oracles chaldaïques," in *The School of Valentinus*, vol. 1 of *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, March 28–31, 1978*, ed. Bentley Layton, SHR 41 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 194–237.

and eventually completes into a triad; at the same time, it is possible to link this process to some ascetic and encratite late antique tendencies that aim at eliminating the difference between feminine "feebleness" and masculine strength.[67] Barbelos's androgynous nature and her triple aspect—the threefold division into Kalyptos, Protophanes, and Autogenes—represent a development of the triad that is at the basis of the Sethian metaphysics, Father–Mother–Son. At the same time it is linked to the being–life–mind triad, as well as to the idea of procession and return, which in later Platonism would be the summarized in the three moments of μονή, πρόοδος, and ἐπιστροφή.[68]

This idea is clearly very close to the image employed by Victorinus: the Son is the hidden form of the Father and constitutes a dyad with him; in addition, the Son is at the same time Life (on the basis of John's Gospel) and Intellect. This latter distinction allows Victorinus to develop his theory in order to explain the differences between the persons. As Antonio Orbe explains it, "The theme of the personal Trinity develops, along nuptial routes, in a manner parallel to the development of the *pneuma*, which passes from the Father to the Son, and from the Son (the Only-begotten) is projected: imperfect—as feminine *pneuma*—in the future wisdom, and perfect—as masculine—in the Firstborn or subsistent Word." In this way the Valentinian syzygy Christ-Spirit signifies the twofold activity of Christ on the earth, which becomes accomplished thanks to the Spirit, namely, to the final stage, "at which boundless Life becomes bounded and defined as intellect in contemplative reversion upon its source."[69]

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67. John D. Turner, "The Figure of Hecate and Dynamic Emanationism in the Chaldean Oracles, Sethian Gnosticism, and Neoplatonism," *SecCent* 7 (1989–90): 221–32; Alexander Böhlig, "Triade und Trinität in den Schriften von Nag-Hammadi," in Layton, *School of Valentinus*, 617–34; Mariano Troiano, "Padre femenino: El Dios-Madre de los gnósticos," in Kerchove and Soares Santoprete, *Gnose et manichéisme*, 127–59.

68. See Turner, "Figure of Hecate," 231: "Since the term being, although of neuter gender, thus transcending sexual differentiation, is in some sense logically prior to life and intelligence, while life, of feminine gender, depends on being and is requisite to the existence of the third term, intelligence, of masculine gender."

69. Antonio Orbe, "Los Valentinianos y el matrimonio espíritual: Hacia los orígenes de la mística nupcial," *Greg* 58 (1977): 51. See also John Turner's commentary in "NHC XI,3: *Allogenes*: Notes to Text and Translation," in *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick, NHS 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 266. Irenaeus shows some similarities with Victorinus (*Haer.* 4.38).

In this regard, it is possible to note that the identification Life-Son and Intellect-Spirit presupposes the canonical order of the triad being, life, mind, whereas in some other passages, Victorinus identifies the Son-Logos with the Intellect and the Spirit with the Life. Such an oscillation in all probability derives from the superimposition of the Plotinian scheme One–Nous–World Soul, at the same time influenced by the notion of a feminine Spirit, attested to in nonorthodox currents, on the basis of the Semitic feminine noun *rûaḥ*.[70] Victorinus explicitly designates the Holy Spirit as a female entity in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.57–58. Because the Spirit is "the first interior movement, which is the paternal thought" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.57), he can make the startling claim that "sanctum spiritum matrem esse Jesu" ("the Holy Spirit is the mother of Jesus") (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.58). We must thus distinguish the idea of a masculine Spirit who is in charge of performing τελείωσις, "fulfillment," and that of the Spirit conceived as the Mother of the Logos, a tenet that sounds somewhat archaizing and that is exemplified in Gnosticism by means of the *ennoia* delimiting herself as λόγος.[71]

Finally, the mention of Barbelos, who has been considered as a double and nobler figure of Sophia, can perhaps explain the address at the beginning of *Adv. Ar.* 1A.16, which may contain an echo of Tertullian in his apostrophizing Valentinus: "Why then, Valentine, do you too say: 'The first eon came forth and was not able to see the Father although wishing to'? John says that the Son is 'in the bosom of the Father' and that he is always there; not only therefore does he see the Father, but he is always in

70. Tommasi, "L'androginia di Cristo-Logos," 70; Turner, "Platonizing Sethian Treatises," 144; Rasimus, "Johannine Background," 379. The question is acutely summarized by Edwards: "It appears, then, that one series has been imposed upon the other, and it is natural to infer that it is the system of Victorinus which has supervened upon the Numenian triad. Both formulations appear to be indebted to the vocabulary of fourth-century Christian authors, since pagans were not accustomed to substitute Blessedness for Mind. Unless we postulate two independent borrowings from the Gnostics, one by Porphyry and one by Victorinus, we shall conclude that the confusion in these documents results from the attempt to keep pace with a century of Platonic innovation" ("Porphyry and the Intellegible Triad," 25). On the same question see also Salvatore Lilla, "Un dubbio di S. Agostino su Porfirio," *NAFM* 5 (1987): 319–31.

71. The question is magisterially treated by Antonio Orbe, *La teologia del Espíritu Santo*, vol. 4 of *Estudios Valentinianos*, AnGr 158 (Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1966).

the Father."[72] This passage not only calls into account the crucial issue of knowing God, which is often identified with the idea of seeing God,[73] but appears somewhat odd, because the doctrine here ascribed to Valentinus is quite different from the one that other sources unanimously attribute to the Alexandrian heresiarch (or, rather, to his disciple Ptolemy): in fact, according to the standard Valentinian system, the haphazard desire of knowing the Father, and the subsequent "original accident" that gave rise to creation, was provoked by Sophia, the thirtieth and last of the aeons.[74]

If Tardieu blames Victorinus for having a pitiful knowledge of Gnosticism, Hadot supposes that Victorinus could have been inspired by the doctrines of Eudoxus and, probably, Aetius, anathematized as blasphemous at the Council of Seleucia,[75] probably deriving his knowledge from a (now lost) homoiousian dossier. On her part, Abramowski suggests one can find a parallel expression in Tertullian's *Prax.* 8.1–3, with its implied reference to the same Johannine verse:[76]

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72. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 77.1–4: "Quid igitur et tu, Valentine, dicis: processit primus aeon et volens videre patrem non potuit? In gremio patris esse filium et semper esse Ioannes dicit; non solum ergo patrem videt, sed etiam in patre semper est." Tertullian, *Praescr.* 37.3: "Quo denique, Marcion, iure silvam meam caedis? qua licentia, Valentine, fontes meos transvertis? qua potestate, Apelles, limites meos commoves? [mea est possessio,] quid hic, ceteri ad voluntatem vestram seminatis et pascitis?" (Tertullian, *Opera*, 1:217–218.11–15; "Indeed, Marcion, by what right do you hew my wood? By whose permission, Valentinus, are you diverting the streams of my fountain? By what power, Apelles, are you removing my landmarks? [This is my property.] Why are you, the rest, sowing and feeding here at your own pleasure?" [*ANF* 3:261]).

73. See the old, though still invaluable, contribution by Rudolf Bultmann, "Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε, Untersuchungen zum Iohannesevangelium," in *Exegetica: Aufsätze zur Erforschung des Neuen Testaments*, ed. Erich Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), 174–97. The idea is partly rooted in Platonic philosophy as well (see Plato, *Resp.* 507b–c; *Tim.* 28); see Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 67; Abramowski, "Nicänismus und Gnosis," 533. For some parallels with other gnostic and Hermetic texts and in particular with the fiery vision in the Flavia Sophê inscription, see Gilles Quispel, "The Original Doctrine of Valentinus the Gnostic," *VC* 50 (1996): 339.

74. It should be noted only incidentally that Sophia is recorded as first aeon in Sophia Jesu Christi (BG 109.3).

75. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 112; Marius Victorinus, *Traités Théologiques*, with the mention of Hilary of Poitiers, *Const.* 13 (PL 10:592a) and Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 2.27.

76. Abramowski, "Nicänismus und Gnosis," 544.

> If anyone thinks that hereby I introduce some "projection" [προβολὴν], that is, prolation of one thing from another, as Valentinus does who produces aeon from aeon one after another, in the first place I shall say to you, "The Truth does not abstain from using that word and the fact and the origin represented by it, on the ground that heresy uses it."… Valentinus secludes and separates his "projections" from their originator, and places them so far from him that an aeon is ignorant of its father: at length it desires to know him and is unable, in fact it is almost consumed and dissolved into residuary substance. But with us the Son alone knows the Father, and himself has declared the bosom of the Father, and has both heard and seen all things in the Father's presence: and whatsoever things he has been commanded by the Father, those he also speaks: and has accomplished not his own will but the Father's, which he knew intimately, yea from the beginning. For who knows the things which be in God, except the Spirit who is in him?[77]

Unless supposing the likely presence of a "polar error" (*primus* instead of *ultimus*) either due to Victorinus or to the medieval scribe,[78] it is possible to surmise that Victorinus (who, moreover, does not explicitly mention the name of Sophia) had in mind other gnostic speculations on the figure of Sophia. According to scholars such as Jan Zandee and Christopher Stead, the original myth of Valentinus presented a superior Sophia, who was understood as the spouse of the Highest God or as corresponding to the Holy Spirit, a division in all likelihood inspired by Philo's speculations on the Wisdom of God and aimed at reproducing the model of

77. I quote Tertullian here according to Evans's text and translation (*Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 96, 138–39): "Hoc si qui putaverit me προβολὴν aliquam introducere, id est prolationem rei alterius ex altera, quod facit Valentinus alium atque alium aeonem de aeone producens, primo quidem dicam tibi, non ideo non utitur et veritas vocabulo isto et re ac censu eius quia et haeresis utatur.… Valentinus προβολὰς suas discernit et separat ab auctore, et ita longe ab eo ponit ut aeon patrem nesciat; denique desiderat nosse nec potest, immo et paene devoratur et dissoluitur in reliquam substantiam. apud nos autem solus filius patrem novit, et sinum patris ipse exposuit, et omnia apud patrem audivit et vidit, et quae mandatus est a patre ea et loquitur, nec suam sed patris perfecit voluntatem, quam de proximo immo de initio noverat."

78. On this kind of fault in a manuscript tradition where the correct reading is substituted by its opposite, see Ward W. Briggs Jr., "Housman and Polar Errors," *AJP* 104 (1983): 268–77.

a *Familientrias* and an inferior or "fallen" one.[79] This is clearly shown in Irenaeus's account of the Barbelognostics (*Haer.* 1.29) but also in the Apocryphon of John.

There is, however, a Valentinian text that testifies to a later stage of the doctrine in which the aeonic system is de facto reduced to the minimum. There the Logos is described in terms that come very close to both John's Gospel and the Stoic Logos, which, in its two aspects of λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and λόγος προφορικός, plays the role originally played by Sophia. I am referring to the already mentioned Tripartite Tractate (NHC I 5), which, according to Francesco Berno, is "the only Valentinian source in which the cosmic fall is distinctly attributed to the Logos, withholding Sophia."[80] Thus in this tractate we witness, as Berno observes,

> a programmatic de-apocalyptization of Valentinianism, obtained by the deep reconfiguration of some of its key issues, that is to say through 1) the overexposure of the bi-univocal bond between God and Being, 2) the reduction of the functional relevance of the aeonic world, 3) the "logicisation" … of the fall myth, traditionally linked to the figure of Sophia and 4) the softening of the eschatological gap between psychics and pneumatics.[81]

Although the Tripartite Tractate is clearly inspired by a positive *Weltanschauung*—the action of the Logos is inspired by the very Father's will, so

79. Jan Zandee, "Die Person der Sophia in der Vierten Schrift des Codex Jung," in *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13–18 aprile 1966*, ed. Ugo Bianchi, SHR 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 203–14; George W. McRae, "The Jewish Background of the Gnostic Sophia Myth," *NovT* 12 (1970): 86–101. Quispel maintains the idea that Valentinus knew only one Sophia, that is, he did not postulate the figure of the repentant Acamoth ("Original Doctrine"). See also Manlio Simonetti, "Psyché e psychikos nella Gnosi valentiniana," *RSLR* 2 (1966): 1–47.

80. Berno, "Rethinking Valentinianism," 337.

81. See Berno, "Rethinking Valentinianism," 332–32, with previous literature on the *vexata quaestio* of the chronology of this text, which personally I incline to consider as pre-Plotinian. My interpretation of this passage has been inspired by Gilles Quispel, "Origen and the Valentinian Gnosis," *VC* 28 (1974): 29–42; and by the considerations put forward by Harold W. Attridge and Elaine Pagels in *Nag Hammadi Codices I (The Jung Codex)*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, NHS 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 182. It should be remarked that the Logos is in fact characterized as the last of the aeons, but these are to be understood as the "ideas" of the Father (in a way like the doctrine exposed by Tertullian, *Val.* 4, who ascribes it to Valentinus), and the Logos alone acquires a clear, distinct personality.

that, in the last analysis, the events fall within a providential plan and are part of a theodicy—it is nonetheless true that in some respects the Logos plays here the usual role of Sophia, attempting an hybristic act. This is evident in the following passage:

> It came to one of the aeons that he should attempt to grasp the incomprehensibility and give glory to it and especially to the ineffability of the Father.… The Father and the Totalities drew away from him, so that the limit which the Father had set might be established—for it is not from grasping the incomprehensibility but by the will of the Father,—and furthermore, (they withdrew) so that the things which have come to be might become an organization which would come into being. If it were to come, it would not come into being by the manifestation of the Pleroma.… The Logos himself caused it to happen, being complete and unitary, for the glory of the Father, whom he desired, and (he did so) being content with it, but those whom he wished to take hold of firmly he begot in shadows and copies and likenesses. For, he was not able to bear the sight of the light, but he looked into the depth and he doubted. Out of this there was a division—he became deeply troubled—and a turning away because of his self-doubt and division, forgetfulness and ignorance of himself and <of that> which is. (Tri. Trac. 75.18–77.25)

4. Gnostic Motifs in Victorinus's Doctrine of the Soul

As a final point, I wish to draw attention to the concluding section of *Adv. Ar.* 1B, where, after having introduced the twofold distinction between Father and Son and between Son and Holy Spirit, Victorinus deals with psychology and states that the soul is created as image of Trinity and, more exactly, as image of the image, that is, of the Logos. As Stephen Cooper observes, "Chapter 62 contains a passage of mixed exegetical and philosophical argumentation, which is important for understanding how Victorinus correlated his Platonist anthropology with the creation account in Genesis."[82]

82. Cooper, "Platonist Christianity," 8. In the pages that follow, Cooper offers an excellent summary of Victorinus's doctrine of the soul, outlining its most distinctive similarities with Plotinus and, more generally, with the Platonic tradition. On this theme, see also Pierre Hadot, "L'image de la Trinité dans l'âme chez Victorinus et chez Saint Augustin," StPatr 6 (1962): 409–42; Werner Steinmann, *Die Seelenmetaphysik des Marius Victorinus*, HamThSt 2 (Hamburg: Steinmann & Steinmann, 1990). This section is preceded by a discussion in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.56, a digression on the soul that is not

This section is quite elaborate and presents the intertwining of some complex metaphors, which, although susceptible of being redolent of some earlier sources, remain so far unparalleled. On the one hand, we have a probable Pythagorean theme that emphasizes the stretching of a point into a line and then in a circle, to conclude that the movement of the Father and the Son is a spherical one, that is, a perfect one (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.60–61).[83] On the other hand, when dealing with the descent of the soul into the material realm, where it abandons its intelligent condition and progressively acquires defectuosity, Victorinus states that the soul has an intermediate status between the intelligible and the sensible realm, and, thanks to its

really consistent with the main argument, namely, a discussion on the Trinity. That the soul is image of the Trinity and is consubstantial is expressed in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.32 as well.

83. Although not really coincident, Marsanes shares some close features with Victorinus's statements. See Birger Pearson, "Gnosticism as Platonism: With Special Reference to Marsanes (NHC 10,1)," *HTR* 77 (1984): 66–67: "One interesting aspect of Marsanes' doctrine of the soul is its treatment of the 'spherical shape' (σφαιρικὸν σχῆμα) of the soul, and the spherical parts of which it is made up. To be sure, the relevant passages are very garbled and difficult to construe (see esp. 25*,21–29*,1), dealing as they do not only with the soul but also with the letters of the alphabet in various combinations. Nevertheless the basic notion of the sphericity of the soul is clear enough. In contemporary Platonist speculation on the Psychogonia in Plato *Tim.* 35a–36d the human soul, as well as the world soul, is regarded as made up of seven parts conceived as circular or spherical (e.g., Plutarch *De an. procr.* 1028b; Diog. Laert. 3.71). The later Neoplatonists tie this doctrine of the sphericity of the soul to their concept of the soul's immaterial 'vehicle' (ὄχημα: e.g., Proclus, *In Tim.* 2.72.14; *Inst. theol.* 210; Iamblichus, *In Tim.* frag. 49 [Dillon]), which is considered to be put on during the soul's descent from heaven. Marsanes also seems to know Numenius' teaching on the descent of the soul into the world of generation, as presented in Macrobius' commentary on the 'Dream of Scipio' found in Cicero's *Republic*. In this doctrine the soul originates in heaven in the region of the fixed stars (Macrobius, *In somn.* 1.11.10; cf. Num. frag. 35 [des Places]). From its original divine state as a 'monad' (*In somn.* 1.12.5; cf. Num. frag. 42), it experiences 'division' (*In somn.* 1.12.6,12), and becoming a 'dyad' (*In somn.* 1.12.5) it descends through the intersection of the Zodiac and the Milky Way through the planetary spheres down to earth (*In somn.* 1.12.1–4,13–14). As usual, the text in Marsanes is fragmentary and garbled, but this basic doctrine can be seen can be seen nevertheless. At 25*,16–19, immediately after a fragmentary passage on the Zodiac, the soul's 'division' (ⲡⲱⲣⲭ = μερισμός) 'in these regions' (i.e., in the lower realms) is mentioned, followed by the passage cited above on the 'spherical shapes' of the soul. In an earlier passage in Marsanes (5,7–8), 'soul garments' (ⲛ̄ⲉ[ⲃⲥⲱ ⲙ̄]ⲯⲩⲭⲏ) are mentioned which may relate to the attributes put on by the soul in its descent (cf. Macr., *In somn.* 1.12.13)."

divinely inspired free will, it can again ascend to its celestial birthplace. At the same time, Victorinus concludes the book (chs. 63–64) by explaining the verses about the creation of humankind (Gen 1:26–27; 2:7) asserting that the two sexes represent the image of the Logos's androgyne nature.[84]

This consideration, namely, the exegesis of a distinctly Christian text, allows us to infer that in all likelihood Victorinus employed also a Christian or a gnostic source, together with doctrines currently attested in Platonic philosophy or in Chaldaean literature.[85] Not only is the descent of the soul described in terms that come very close to other typical images, as in the case of the wantonness of the *anima petulans*, a clear reminiscent of the Plotinian—and before that the gnostic—τόλμα,[86] or the idea of its contamination with matter. But also the mention of "a feeble spark of its own *nous*" (*scintilla tenuis proprii νοῦ*) in *Adv. Ar.* 1B.61 is a clear hint of Gnosticism, where the luminous spark represents a portion of the Godhead now a prisoner in this world, whose reawakening enables the elect to regain the primeval unity with the divine world.[87] In addition to this, I

84. Earlier I suggested that this might be a brief allusion to the so-called doctrine of the double creation (see Tommasi, "L'androginia di Cristo-Logos").

85. They emerge from a comparison with Macrobius, *In Somn.* 1.12, inspired in turn by Numenius. Besides the considerations at n. 83, see Meine A. Elferink, *La descente de l'âme d'après Macrobe*, PhA 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1968); Herman De Ley, *Macrobius and Numenius: A Study of Macrobius, In Somn., I, c. 12*, CollLat 125 (Brussels: Latomus, 1972). A useful comparison between the two texts is provided by Massimo Stefani, "Sull'antropologia di Mario Vittorino (La 'discesa' vivificante dell'anima in prospettiva cosmologica)," *ScrTh* 19 (1987): 63–111. Stefani also suggests a Christian background for the final passage and provides some parallels with Philo, Clement, Theodotus, Origen, and Ambrose.

86. The adjective also recurs in *Adv. Ar.* 4.11, on which see *infra*, and in Ambrose, *Isaac* 2.5, a text whose strong Neoplatonic background is well known. On this theme in Plotinus and Gnosticism, see Mariano Troiano, "Plotin et les Gnostiques: l'audace du Demiurge," *JCoptS* 13 (2015): 209–35; and, earlier, Naguib Baladi, "L'audace chez Plotin," in *Le Néoplatonisme: Royaumont 9–13 juin 1969*, ed. Pierre-Maxime Schuhl and Pierre Hadot, CICRNS 535 (Paris: CNRS, 1971), 89–97.

87. For an excellent survey and discussion see Michel Tardieu, "ψυχαῖος σπινθήρ: Histoire d'une métaphore dans la tradition platonicienne jusqu'à Eckhart," *REAug* 21 (1975): 225–55. Tardieu does not deny a possible Chaldaean influence (as suggested by Hadot and testified to by Synesius, *Hymn.* 1.560–69); however, he favors the gnostic derivation. In addition, he shows how this image in Victorinus influenced subsequent authors such as Augustine and, through him, many medieval writers (*Civ.* 22.24.2); see Jerome, *Comm. Ezech.* 1.1.

can further point out that there are some similarities with the doctrine of the two souls, the material and the celestial one ("duae animae, caelestis et hylica") in *Adversus Arium* 1B.62,[88] which is probably echoed in the Trimorphic Protennoia (41.22), when the material soul is mentioned and is object of the exegesis in *Exc.* 27 and 50:

> Now the soul, stripped by the power of him who has knowledge, as if it had become a body of the power, passes into the spiritual realm and becomes now truly rational and high priestly, so that it might now be animated, so to speak, directly by the Logos.… So that it belonged to the dispensation to wear the plate and to continue the pursuit of knowledge, but the work of power was that man becomes the bearer of God, being controlled directly by the Lord and becoming, as it were, his body. (Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 27)[89]

> "Taking dust from the earth": not of the land but a portion of matter but of varied constitution and colour, he fashioned a soul, earthly and material, irrational and consubstantial with that of the beasts. This is the man "according to the image." But the man who is "according to the likeness" of the Creator himself, is he whom he has breathed into and inseminated into the former, placing in him by angels something consubstantial [ὁμοούσιος] with himself. Inasmuch as he is invisible and immaterial, he called his substance "the breath of life," but that which was given form became a "living soul," and he himself confesses that it is so in the prophetic writings. (Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 27)

Before concluding, I wish to propose a suggestion about the anonymous quotation at the end of this section that has puzzled interpreters, *Adv. Ar.* 1B.61: "quare enim dictum est: 'et ista discernis.'"[90] While Hadot counts this passage among the thus far unknown citations, Abramowski suggests a parallel with one of Numenius's fragments.[91] Once again, I

88. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 163, 21–24. This doctrine is usually ascribed to Numenius, frag. 44.

89. This and the following translation of *Excerpta ex Theodoto* follow *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, ed. and trans. Robert Pierce Casey, SD 1 (London: Christophers, 1934).

90. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 162.26–27. "That is why it was said: 'You discern also these things.'"

91. Abramowski, "Nicänismus und Gnosis," 521, with reference to Numenius, frag. 11 (*apud* Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praep. ev.* 11.17.11–18.5). I quote according to

would propose to individuate a gnostic background, for in gnostic literature the verb διακρίνω or the noun διάκρισις acquires a technical meaning, individuating the division of the refined element from the coarse.[92] It is

George Boys-Stones: "Someone who is going to understand about the first god and the second must first distinguish each part of the question according to its place in the overall arrangement, and with some sense of order.… Calling upon god to be his own interpreter and to show us by reason the treasury of his thoughts, let us begin like this: we should pray, and we must make our distinctions." See Boys-Stones, *Platonist Philosophy 80 BC–250 AD: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 179. According to Hadot, there are other unattributed quotations in Victorinus, among which are *Adv. Ar.* 1A.31, 33; *Adv. Ar.* 4.24, 31 ("Porphyre et Victorinus, Questions," 123). I wonder whether the *beati* to whom Victorinus refers in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.33, attributing them the idea that the One is in repose and that "he is conceived by preknowledge which through itself is nothing, but is formed from the conception that he preexists" ("et dicunt istud praenoscentia concipi quae ipsa per semet nihil est, sed conceptione quod praeexistit suscipitur"), are to be identified with some gnostic authorities, on the basis that preknowledge seems to be a gnostic tenet. Henry and Hadot suggest to emend the text in *beata* (to connect it with the following words *in quiete*): this would be a more "natural" syntax, yet the question of these unnamed authorities is still open (*Opera pars prior*, 115.10). If we accept *beati* as subject, however, this usage points to a Christian *Fachsprache*. Nevertheless, the end of the previous chapter has a patent reference to the image of the "source" (*Opera pars prior*, 115.76–78: "in fontanam vitam … et fontanam intelligentiam"), which is of Chaldaean derivation, so that these unknown authorities might be also the Chaldaean Oracles or their commentators. The aforementioned passage of *Adv. Ar.* 4.24, where is put forth the idea of God sitting in the center of the universe, whose bright eye perceives the ideas of all beings ("unde dictus est et sedere quasi in centro τῶν πάντων ὄντων, id est omnium quae sunt, unde universali oculo, id est lumine substantiae suae, qua vel esse est vel vivere vel intellegere, ideas τῶν ὄντων non versabili aspectu videt, quia et quies est et a centro simul in omnia unus est visus"), has been paralleled to a similar passage in Pseudo-Clementine, *Hom.* 17, a text where, interestingly enough, Peter defends the notion of a corporeal God. This reference, which was first outlined by Shlomo Pinès, represents another inconsistency in the "pure" Platonic tradition, which usually stresses the bodiless nature of the godhead. See Pinès, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: The Implications of the Resemblance," *PIASH* 7 (1989): 63–142, esp. 99–100. Victorinus and the *Homilies* in all likelihood rely on a common source; and is striking to note that Victorinus did his best to insert such a deviant imagery in an otherwise philosophically influenced passage, as is testified by some expressions that seem an explanatory gloss (introduced by *id est*).

92. See, e.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 48.1; Irenaeus, *Haer*. 1.5.2; also Marsanes 4.23–5:26, a passage where the theme of the garment of the soul also is present. In the second occurrence of this word (5.22), the use of διακρίνω has been compared to

also worth noting that Victorinus employs the same expression (with a more usual significance, however) when commenting Eph 1:4, a passage that likewise contains an interpretation of the doctrine of the soul: "This is the virtue of a Christian, to distinguish [*discernere*] and separate things that are eternal and that are perishable, those which lead to ruin, and those which lead to salvation."[93]

Elsewhere (*Adv. Ar.* 4.10–11), moreover, Victorinus deals again with the notion of a *fons animae* (Clark: "soul-source")[94] that is endowed with self-generative capability and, on the ground of the famous passage in the *Phaedrus* (245c), always in motion. From this world soul individual souls derive, like a golden chain winding from the Godhead through the angelic hierarchies and eventually reaching and being chained to earthly bodies, suffering contamination and yet providing them with life.[95] I

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the technical Platonic usage and translated as "deliberate" (see Pearson, "Gnosticism as Platonism," 70).

93. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior: Opera exegetica*, ed. Franco Gori, CSEL 83.2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986), 29.90–92: "Haec est enim virtus Christiani, discernere ista et separare quae sint aeterna, quae mortalia, quae ad perniciem ducant, quae ad salutem."

94. Editors' note: We cite selections of this extraordinary passage in Clark's translation: "Truly, since, by the force of things and the course of nature itself, all things would be nothing if they did not live, and deprived of vital movement, they would be thought to neither material mass nor any appearance or form of existence—for the nature of the disorderly flux and reflux, a force that is deceptive and without consistency, is incapable of 'to be'; nor does it receive form so that it is said to be something.… Therefore force and vital power [*vis potentiaque vitalis*] cause existing material things to appear to be. (This force and vital power) flowing from that *Logos* who is life, whom we call the Son, as it makes its way and moves through archangels, angels, thrones, glories and the rest that are above the world—first in incorporeal things and those *aüla* (without matter) clean and purer by their natural substance—imparts its light in a greater communication of itself. Coming by degrees, the force arrives soon at the soul and at the soul-source of the soul. And because the soul is the image of the *Logos,* this kind of relationship gives a more rapid rhythm to the wave of the descent. And since the soul hastens toward the beings it must animate, the élan of the vital force toward the beings that it must animate becomes itself more impetuous. Hence, immersed in matter, having become prisoner of the elements of the world and finally of carnal ties, mingling in corruption and death, it lends then an appearance of life to the dregs of matter."

95. On the Neoplatonist interpretation of his Homeric image, see Ludwig Edelstein, "The Golden Chain of Homer," in *Studies in Intellectual History*, ed. George Boas et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953), 48–66. The same idea

wonder whether this section has some relation to Valentinus's famous psalm, Θέρος, "Summer Harvest" (frag. 8, in Hippolytus, *Haer.* 6.37.7), which presents the same theme of the chain of beings and is informed by a certain optimistic and positive attitude.[96] Nonetheless, there is a gnostic passage that comes even closer to Victorinus, namely, what pseudo-Hippolytus ascribes to the Sethians in *Haer.* 10.11.7–10, which describes the same urgency of generating and the same rush through the elements, though in even more mythical language:

> From the water arose, they say, the firstborn principle, a strong and violent wind. This is the cause of all generation. It produces a boiling and stirring in the world from the movement of the waters.… As the world fixed its gaze on it, it swelled like a womb and initiated the process of generation. From this process, they desire to concoct the origin of the universe. This blast of wind they say is a "perfect god" who came to be from the movement of waters, from the fragrance of Spirit, and from the brilliance of the Light. He is the offspring of a female; he is a mind. The spark from above, though mixed in the morass of the body down below, rushes to escape. When it escapes and flies high, it still does not find release, because it was chained in the waters.… The only concern of the higher Light is to devise a means to deliver the spark below from the lower father, or wind. This father stirred up a boiling confusion and made a mind for himself as a son. This mind is not, they claim, his own [son] according to nature. The perfect Word of Light from above, after transfiguring himself into the form of a snake, came into the womb so that he could take up the mind, that is, the spark from the Light.[97]

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is hinted at in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.25. For some considerations on these passages see Chiara O. Tommasi, "Gli Oracoli Caldaici come supporto all'esegesi virgiliana tardoantica: Favonio Eulogio e altri neoplatonici latini," in Lecerf, Saudelli, and Seng, *Oracles chaldaïques*, 181–82. Another Platonic reminiscence: see *Phaed.* 67d, where it is said that the soul must be "freed from the body as from fetters" (Fowler).

96. On which see the recent reassessment by Francesco Berno, "*Valentinus gnosticus*: Note a *Ref.* vi 36, 6–8," *SMSR* 82 (2016): 239–62, with sound discussion of previous literature. Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, ed. and trans. M. David Litwa, WGRW 40 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 438–41: "Everything by spirit I see suspended, / Everything by spirit I sense conveyed: / Flesh suspended from soul, / Soul hanging on air, / Air suspended from aether. / From the depth are borne fruits. / From the womb is born a baby."

97. Translation follows Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, trans. Litwa, 712–14.

5. Conclusion

The former considerations, then, suggest that Victorinus had at his disposal some gnostic material, of whatever origin, and made free use of that. The dynamics of text circulation in late antiquity are too little known to infer how this happened, but Victorinus's tendency to eclecticism, already witnessed by his peculiar employment of Platonic sources to defend Nicene dogma, may again be apparent. One can well envision him taking into consideration such a heterogeneous variety of texts, which are on the one hand characterized by a deep philosophical background (Zostrianos, Allogenes, Three Steles of Seth, partly the Tripartite Tractate), and on the other may have attracted him for their Christian character, despite their inconsistencies with the doctrines proclaimed by the great church. Gnosticism, understood with Adolf von Harnack's well-known definition as an "acute … hellenising of Christianity,"[98] could thus have fed Victorinus's penchant for an intellectualized and esoteric explanation of Christian doctrine. In this respect, an interesting passage is the conclusion of *Adv. Ar.* 4.17, which states that the human soul would be freed from earthly bondages by means of knowledge of itself and of divine realms.[99] Such eclectic borrowings are all the more likely when Victorinus was faced with doctrines that have only little or no Platonic elements but deal instead with Christian concepts such as the perfect Spirit, Christ, or the creation of humankind in the image and likeness of God.

98. Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), 1:227.

99. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 250.38–43: "Quae cum intellexissent, facillius ad dei lumen homines sui divinorumque intelligentia liberarentur terrenorum mundanorumque contemptu et desiderio quod exicitat scientia divinorum" ("When they will have understood these things, men would be more easily freed by their knowledge of themselves and of divine things to attain the light of God because of their contempt for worldly and earthly things and by the desire which knowledge of divine things excites").

Metaphysical Systems in the Theological Work of Marius Victorinus

Václav Němec

The problem of the philosophical sources of Victorinus's theological work is one of the most puzzling questions in the area of philosophy and theology in late antiquity. The specific character, structure, and vocabulary of the writings show that his treatises were strongly influenced by one or more lost Greek philosophical sources whose identity is unknown.[1] The metaphysical concepts included in those texts are of great interest for many reasons. They contain some seminal ideas that played a very important role in the subsequent development of the Western philosophical and theological traditions: the distinction between "to be" (*esse*) and form (*forma*), the concept of God as a pure act of being, and the metaphysical triad being–life–intelligence. The concepts included in Victorinus's writings are probably Platonic in origin but not identical to any of the known Neoplatonic metaphysical systems, such as those of Plotinus, Iamblichus, or Proclus.

The detective story about the search for identity of Victorinus's sources is well known. In the 1960s, Pierre Hadot put forward the hypothesis that the main sources of Victorinus's theological work were the philosophical writings of Porphyry, who had been inspired by the Chaldean Oracles.[2] Hadot

This publication is the outcome of the project "Metaphysical Systems in the Theological work of Marius Victorinus and Their Sources," no. 14-35803S, supported by the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR) and completed at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

1. See Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, CEAug 33 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968), 1:67.

2. Pierre Hadot, "La métaphysique de Porphyre," in *Porphyre*, EnAC 12 (Vandoeuvres-Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1966), 127–57; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:461–67.

showed that there are certain terminological and doctrinal commonalities between Victorinus's work and the anonymous commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* discovered at the University of Turin library, which he attributed to Porphyry.[3] Consequently, Hadot was convinced that the theological writings of Victorinus, the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary, and the fragments of or witnesses to Porphyry's metaphysical doctrine enabled him to reconstruct the metaphysical system of Porphyry. Unfortunately, shortly after Hadot's book *Porphyre et Victorinus* had been published, much closer similarities and parallels between Victorinus's theological writings and the treatises of Platonizing Sethian Gnostics—especially Zostrianos, Allogenes, and Three Steles of Seth—were recognized.[4] Porphyry famously in his *Life of Plotinus* (*Vit. Plot.* 16.1–9) makes reference to certain gnostic "revelations" (e.g., under the titles "Zostrianos" and "Allogenes") that circulated

3. Pierre Hadot, "Fragments d'un commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide," *REG* 74 (1961): 410–38. The fragments of the anonymous commentary were first edited by Bernardino Peyron, "Notizia di un antico Evangeliario Bobbiese che in alcuni fogli palimpsesti contiene frammenti d'un greco trattato di filosofia," *RFIC* 1 (1873): 53–71, and by Wilhelm Kroll, "Ein neuplatonischer Parmenides-kommentar in einem Turiner Palimpsest," *RhM* 47 (1892): 599–627.

4. Already in 1973, Michel Tardieu and James M. Robinson noticed the similarities between Victorinus's theological work and the Sethian Platonizing treatises. See Michel Tardieu, "Les Trois Stèles de Seth. Un écrit gnostique retrouvé à Nag Hammadi," *RSPhTh* 57 (1973): 558; James R. Robinson, "The Three Steles of Seth and The Gnostics of Plotinus," in *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Gnosticism: Stockholm, August 20–25, 1973*, ed. Geo Widengren and David Hellholm (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1977), 141. The parallels are discussed in more detail in the following works: Luise Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius und die römischen Gnostiker," *ZNW* 74 (1983): 108–28; Ruth Majercik, "The Existence–Life–Intellect Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism," *ClQ* 42 (1992): 475–88; Michel Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 9–113; John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition*, BCNH, Études 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 736–44; Turner, "Victorinus, *Parmenides* Commentaries and the Platonizing Sethian Treatises," in *Platonisms: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner, SPNPT 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 55–96; Turner, "The Platonizing Sethian Treatises, Marius Victorinus's Philosophical Sources, and Pre-Plotinian *Parmenides* Commentaries," in *History and Interpretation from the Old Academy to Later Platonism and Gnosticism*, vol. 1 of *Plato's "Parmenides" and Its Heritage*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner, WGRWSup 2 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 131–72; Volker H. Drecoll, "The Greek Text behind the Parallel Sections in *Zostrianos* and Marius Victorinus," in Corrigan and Turner, *History and Interpretation*, 195–212.

in Plotinus's school and were criticized by Plotinus and his students, and this reference seemed to support the conclusion that the Sethian Gnostics writings were older than Plotinus and Porphyry.[5]

As far as I can see, some of the existing hypotheses about Victorinus's sources, however, fail to distinguish clearly among different metaphysical systems present in Victorinus's theological work (see §5 and §7 below). Moreover, the intertextual affiliations between Victorinus's theological writings and the cognate philosophical or gnostic texts tempt some researchers to interpret the different texts by means of one another. In consequence, they occasionally obscure the dissimilarities between these texts or even misinterpret their content in order to bring them into harmony (see §2; 3; 4.3; and 6.3 below). Accordingly, what I want to offer is a new, concise reconstruction of the metaphysical concepts involved in individual theological treatises of Victorinus. Such reconstruction should provide a reliable basis for a comparison with the other cognate antique texts and authors such as the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, some of the anonymous authors mentioned in Proclus's *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, and the treatises of the Platonizing Sethian gnostics.

1. Metaphysical Systems in Victorinus's Theological Works

1.1. The Metaphysical System in *Letter to Candidus*

In his *Letter to Candidus*, Victorinus presents God the Father as the One (*unum*) who is the cause of both the existent and the nonexistent and transcends all existents, including the true existent itself (ὄν *ipsum*, *Ad Cand.* 12.2–4). Accordingly, God the Father may be named "the non-existent beyond the existent" (τὸ μὴ ὄν *super* τὸ ὄν, 13.10–14.1), which is "the power of the existent" (*potentia* τοῦ ὄντος, 2.25–27) or "the pre-existent" (προόν, 2.27–28).[6] The transcendent God the Father begets and surpasses

5. See below, note 110. See Tardieu, "Trois Stèles de Seth"; Robinson, "Three Steles of Seth"; John H. Sieber, "An Introduction to the Tractate *Zostrianos* from Nag Hammadi," *NT* 15 (1973): 233–40; John D. Turner, "The Gnostic Threefold Path to Enlightenment," *NT* 22 (1980): 324–51; Antoinette C. Wire, "Introduction: NHC XI,3: Allogenes 45,1–69,20," in *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick, NHS 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 187–88.

6. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), 29–31; 18.

all intelligible entities and genera including existence (*exsistentia*), life (*vita*), and intelligence (*intellegentia*):

> He produces … existence, the intellect [*nous*] and life, not as one who is these things but as above all things. (*Ad Cand*. 2.21–23, slightly altered)[7]

> Necessarily we say that … God is above all existence, above all life, above all knowledge, above every existent [*on*], and the truly existents [*ontōs onta*]. (*Ad Cand*. 13.5–8, slightly altered)[8]

The Son, on the other hand, is identified with the true existent itself (ὄν *ipsum*, *Ad Cand.* 7.1–7), which encompasses all intelligible entities and genera, including existence, life, and intelligence: "This is Jesus Christ … the first and universal existence, the first and universal intelligence, the first and totally perfect existent [*on*]" (*Ad Cand.* 2.31–33, slightly altered).[9]

Apart from such substantives Victorinus also uses the abstract forms "existentiality" (*exsistentialitas*), "vitality" (*vitalitas*), and "intellectuality" (*intellegentitas*); these may signify potential modalities of the genera.[10] Nevertheless, both the genera and their potential modalities are embraced by the highest form or genus, which represents the existent itself:

> Among those which exist there are certain existents which are evident by nature: … existence, life, intelligence, and still higher, existentiality, vitality, and intellectuality, and above all that, existent [*on*] alone, the very one who is the one and only existent [*on*]. (*Ad Cand.* 7.1–7, slightly altered)[11]

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7. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 18: "Praestat … exsistentiam, νοῦν, vitam, non, qui sit ista, sed supra omnia." Unless otherwise noted, translations follow Mary T. Clark, *Marius Victorinus*: *Theological Treatises on Trinity*, FC 69 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001).

8. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 30: "Necessario … deum dicemus supra omnem exsistentiam, supra omnem vitam, supra omnem cognoscentiam, supra omne ὄν, et ὄντως ὄντα."

9. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 18–19: "hic Iesus Christus … prima et omnis exsistentia, prima et omnis intellegentia, primum et omnimodis perfectum ὄν."

10. As Pierre Hadot has shown, the triad being–life–intelligence represents the *genera*, i.e., the different aspects of the one hypostasis in Plotinus or of the one divine substance in Victorinus (*Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:245). Victorinus himself calls the members of the triad *genera* (*generum*) in *Adv. Ar.* 4.5.34.

11. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 22: "Sunt quaedam eius quod sit natura

God the Father as "the non-existent beyond the existent" is further identified with "to be" (*esse*), while the Son is equated with the movement or the act or "to act" (*moveri*, *agere*): "If therefore the cause of action is 'to be' itself, 'to act' is begotten from 'to be.' But 'to be' is the Father; therefore 'to act' is the Son" (*Ad Cand.* 20.16–18).[12] In this context, Victorinus applies the principle of mutual implication and dominance:[13] "To be" in its absolute simplicity implies the movement or the act, just as the movement or the act implies "to be" insofar as the latter is nothing but the actualization and exteriorization of the former. Since "to be" implies the movement, and the movement implies "to be," the Father and the Son are of the same substance (*Ad Cand.* 20.11–18).

To summarize, Victorinus in his *Letter to Candidus* attributes the metaphysical triad existence–life–intelligence (or existentiality–vitality–intellectuality) to the Son. The triad represents only the three most significant genera of the intelligible world,[14] which are included in the existent itself or the Son without being used as an explanatory model for the divine Trinity. This metaphysical system is presented schematically in table 1.

Table 1. The Metaphysical System in *Letter to Candidus*

(1) *pater* = τὸ μὴ ὄν *super* τὸ ὄν = προόν = *potentia* τοῦ ὄντος = *esse*			
(2) *filius* = ὄν *ipsum* =	*moveri* *agere* *operari*	{	*exsistentia–vita–intellegentia* or *exsistentialitas–vitalitas–intellegentialitas*

manifesta, sicuti sunt … exsistentia, vita, intellegentia, et adhuc superius existentialitas, vitalitas, intellegentitas et supra ista omnia ὄν solum istud ipsum quod est unum et solum ὄν."

12. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 38: "Si igitur causa est ipsum esse ad actionem, generatur agere ab eo quod est esse. Esse autem pater est, operari ergo filius."

13. On the principle of mutual implication and dominance, see Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:239–46.

14. For the triad being–life–intellect as genera of the intelligible world in Plato and in Plotinus, see Pierre Hadot, "Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin," in *Le sources de Plotin*, EnAC 5 (Vandoeuvres-Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1960), 101–41; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:214–22.

1.2. The Metaphysical System in *Against Arius 1B* and *Against Arius 3*

In *Adv. Ar.* 1B, Victorinus has modified this scheme in the following way: the movement identified with the Son is conceived as a double movement that involves life (*vita*/*vivere*) and intelligence (*intellegentia*/*intellegere*) as its two moments or phases. The modified schema became the pivotal explanatory model of the consubstantiality of the Trinity in *Adv. Ar.* 1B and *Adv. Ar.* 3. God the Father is considered as the transcendent "inexistent One" (*inexsistentialiter unum*), who is said to be beyond existence, existentiality, being, substance, intelligence, and so on from the standpoint of negative theology:

> Before all the truly existents was the One or Monad, or the One in itself, One before "to be" came to it.… It is the One before all existence, before all existentiality … before the existent [*on*] itself; indeed this One is prior to the existent [*on*]; it is therefore before every entity, substance, subsistence, even before those things which are more powerful. It is the One without existence, without substance, without intelligence. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.49.9–18, slightly altered)[15]

However, the Father is also named "the triple powered spirit" (*tripotens spiritus*), which includes "to be" (or existence), life, and intelligence (or blessedness), from the point of view of affirmative theology. Finally, God the Father is identified with pure "to be" (*esse*), which in its transcendent unity implies life and intelligence as a "pre-life" (*praeiventia*) and "pre-intelligence" (*praeintellegentia*):

> This is God, this is the Father, pre-existing pre-intelligence and pre-existence … triple powered spirit in unity.… It unites these three powers: universal existence, universal life, and happiness, but all these are the One and the simple One, and by predominance in the power of "to be," that is, of existence, are present the powers of life and happiness. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.1–15, slightly altered)[16]

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15. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 143: "Ante omnia quae vere sunt unum fuit, sive unalitas, sive ipsum unum, antequam sit ei esse, unum … unum ante omnem exsistentiam, ante omnem exsistentialitatem … ante ipsum ὄν; hoc enim unum ante ὄν; ante omnem igitur essentitatem, substantiam, subsistentiam et adhuc omnia quae potentiora; unum sine exsistentia, sine substantia, sine intellegentia."

16. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 144–45: "Hic est deus, hic pater, praeintellegentia praeexsistens et praeexsistentia … tripotens in unalitate spiritus … tres potentias couniens, exsistentiam omnem, vitam omnem et beatitudinem, sed ista

> God is the potentiality of these three powers, existence, life, happiness, that is, of "to be," "to live," "to think." … And the "to be" is first, and this first "to be" insofar as it is "to be" is, by that very fact, "to live" and "to think," without any union, but as simplicity at its simplest, and that is also evident. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.52.3–9, slightly altered)[17]

Nevertheless, life and intelligence in their potential preexistence in "to be" are nothing but an interior and hidden movement of God the Father, who manifests himself in the second One, that is to say, in the "existent One" (*exsistentialiter unum*) or the "One-One" (*unum unum*):

> Therefore with this One existing, the One leapt forth, the One who is One, one in substance, one in movement.… This One is therefore the existent One, but not as the Father the non-existent One who is the existent One according to power. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50.22–26, slightly altered)[18]

Accordingly, exterior life (*vita*/*vivere*) and intelligence (*intellegentia*/*intellegere*) occur only at the level of the second One as two phases of its movement, as progression (*progressio*) and return (*regressus*). Even these manifested or exterior life and intelligence are equated with the Son and the Holy Spirit:

> For, advancing from its power, … this movement nowhere in repose, … truly a life which is infinite, this movement in its vivifying action has, in some way, appeared outside.… But life is the Son, life is movement, life is existence which comes forth from vital pre-existence.… Therefore this existence of all existents is life, and insofar as life is movement, it received a kind of feminine power, because it desired to vivify. But since … this movement, since it is one, is both life and wisdom, life converted

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omnia et unum et simplex unum et maxime in potentia eius quod est esse, hoc est exsistentiae, potentia vitae et beatitudinis."

17. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 148: "Deus potentia est istarum trium potentiarum, exsistentiae, vitae, beatitudinis, hoc est eius quod est esse, quod vivere, quod intellegere.… Et quod est esse primum, et secundum quod est esse, secundum ipsum, vivere et intellegere, sine ulla unitione, sed simpliciter simplicitas, et istud manifestum."

18. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 145: "Isto igitur uno exsistente, unum proexsiluit, unum unum, in substantia unum, in motu unum.… Istud igitur unum exsistentialiter unum, sed non ut pater inexsistentialiter unum qui est secundum potentiam exsistentialiter unum."

> to wisdom and, what is more, to the paternal power, and having been fortified by that, life, returning to the Father, has been made male. For life is descent; wisdom is ascent. (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.51.10–27, slightly altered)[19]

Consequently, being, life, and intelligence present the phases of the self-constitution of the divine substance: remaining, progression, and return (see *Hymn.* 3.71–74).[20] While the substantial identity of the three members of the triad or the three persons of the Trinity is guaranteed by their mutual implication, their hypostatical difference is based on their predominance: each involves the others, but each is predominant at a certain stage of the timeless process of self-constitution.[21]

To sum up, the metaphysical triad existence/being–life–intelligence, which in *Letter to Candidus* represents the three genera included in the existent itself or the Son, is used in *Adv. Ar.* 1B and 3 as the central explanatory model for the divine Trinity. Nevertheless, Victorinus does not clearly distinguish between the infinitive forms (*esse*, *vivere*, *intellegere*) and the corresponding substantives (*exsistentia*, *vita*, *intellegentia*) even though he reserves the infinitive "to be" to God the Father. In *Adv. Ar.* 1B, the abstract forms existentiality, vitality, and intellectuality also occur and are attributed to the Father from the point of view of affirmative theology. This metaphysical system is represented schematically in table 2.

19. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 146–47: "potentia enim progrediente … ista motio nusquam requiescens … quippe vita quae sit infinita, et ipsa in vivificatione veluti foris apparuit.… Vita autem filius, vita motio, a vitali praeexsistentia vita exsistentia.… Ista igitur exsistentia totius exsistentiae est vita, et iuxta quod vita motus, quasi femineam sortita est potentiam, hoc quod concupivit vivificare. Sed quoniam … ista motio, una cum sit, et vita est et sapientia, vita conversa in sapientiam et magis in exsistentiam patricam, magis autem retro motae motionis, in patricam potentiam, et ab ipso vi[r]ificata, vita recurrens in patrem vir effecta est. Descensio enim vita, ascensio sapientia." See also *Adv. Ar.* 1B.52.20–35.

20. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 297: "Status, progressio, regressus, O beata trinitas" ("Repose, Progression, Return, O Blessed Trinity").

21. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:239–46.

Table 2. The Metaphysical System in *Adv. Ar.* 1B and *Adv. Ar.* 3

(1) *pater = status = inexsistentialiter unum*		
= *tripotens spiritus*	{	*esse/praeexistentia*–vita/praeviventia–intellegentia/praeintellegentia* or *exsistentialitas/substantialitas–vitalitas–intellegentialitas*
(2) *filius*		{*exsistentia–vita–intellegentia*
	}	
(3) *spiritus sanctus*		{*exsistentia–vita–intellegentia*
*Underlining indicates the predominance of a member of a triad.		

1.3. Metaphysical Scheme in *Against Arius* 4

In *Adv. Ar.* 4, the concept is again modified in the following way: in place of the polarity "being–movement (or act)," the polarity "pure act–form" makes an entrance, grammatically expressed by means of the distinction between the verb in the infinitive or in the third-person singular form—*esse*, *vivere*/*vivit*, *intellegere*—and the corresponding substantives: *exsistentia*/*essentia*, *vita*, *intellegentia*.[22] When Victorinus uses the abstract forms existentiality, vitality, and intellectuality, he understands them as synonyms of the substantives. The Father is initially identified with the pure act "to live" (*vivere*), while the Son with the form "life" (*vita*), which is begotten by the act "to live" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.6.8–18). Subsequent to that, Victorinus shows that the pure act, as well as the form, has a triadic structure: the Father begets not only life or vitality but existence or existentiality and intelligence or intellectuality as well. All the genera are begotten from their

22. See Marius Victorinus, *Traités Théologiques sur la Trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 2:975; see also Pierre Hadot and Ursula Brenke, *Christlicher Platonismus: Die theologischen Schriften des Marius Victorinus. Übersetzt von Pierre Hadot und Ursula Brenke, eingeleitet und erläutert von Pierre Hadot*, BAW.AC (Zurich: Artemis, 1967), 419.

corresponding acts: existence or existentiality from "to be," life or vitality from "to live," and intelligence or intellectuality from "to think":

> Therefore, because God is "to live," the supreme, the first, the source, the originally original "to live," he has begotten these three.… Therefore by this action they came forth, and this offspring, this begetting is such that … from the "to be" is born the essentiality or the essence, from the living is born vitality or life, from thinking is born intellectuality [*nootes*], there is born the universal intelligence of universal intelligences. (*Adv. Ar.* 4.6.1–7, slightly altered)[23]

Consequently, God the Father is characterized as a "triple powered" (*tripotens*/τριδύναμος),[24] which consists in the pure acts "to be" (*esse*), "to live" (*vivere*), and "to think" (*intellegere*), although "to be" is predominant:

> God is triple powered [*tridynamos*], that is, one having three powers, "to be," "to live," "to think," so that in each one power there are three powers, and any one of the three is three powers, receiving its name by the power wherein it predominates. (*Adv. Ar.* 4.21.26–28, slightly altered)[25]

Occasionally, Victorinus also mentions the corresponding participles "existing" (*exsistens*), "living" (*vivens*), "thinking" (*intellegens*), which are understood simply as synonyms of the infinitives (*Adv. Ar.* 4.6.1–18; 21.26–23.11). "To live" and "to think" are considered interior movements that manifest themselves in the exterior movements as life and intelligence. While the exterior and substantive life is identical with the Son, the exterior and substantive intelligence is equated with the Holy Spirit (*Adv. Ar.* 4.16.1–18.59). Furthermore, because life and intelligence are nothing but an exteriorization and substantiation of "to live" and "to think," which are their preexistent modalities present at the level of the transcendent "to be,"

23. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 231–32: "Deus igitur quod est vivere, quod summum, primum, fontaneum, principaliter principale, tria ista genuit… Ista igitur opere provenerunt et haec proles, ista generatio est, ut … ab eo quod est esse essentitas vel essentia, a vivente vitalitas vel vita, ab intellegente νοότης, intellegentiarum universalium universalis intellegentia, nasceretur."

24. See Chiara O. Tommasi, "*Tripotens in unalitate spiritus*: Mario Vittorino e la Gnosi," *KOINΩNIA* 20 (1996): 52–75.

25. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 257–58: "Τριδύναμος est deus, id est tres potentias habens, esse, vivere, intellegere, ita ut in singulis tria sint sitque ipsum unum quodlibet tria, nomen, qua se praestat, accipiens."

all members of the triad or persons of the Trinity imply each other, even though each of them is predominant at a certain stage (*Adv. Ar.* 4.16.1–17.14). Moreover, it is shown through the manifestation of existence, life, and intelligence that God the Father is not only the triad of the pure acts "to be," "to live," and "to think" but also the triad of the interior forms "pre-existence" (*praeexsistentia*), "pre-life" (*praeviventia*), and "pre-intelligence" (*praeintellegentia*; *Adv. Ar.* 4.23.26–34). Consequently, the transcendent God the Father may be known not only as the corresponding pure acts but also as "the forms preceding the forms" or, more precisely, as the act in which the act and the form coincide with each other. The metaphysical system included in *Adv. Ar.* 4 is represented schematically in table 3.

Table 3. The Metaphysical System in *Adv. Ar.* 4

(1) *pater*	= *unum*	= *tripotens spiritus*	{*esse**–*vivere–intellegere* or: *exsistens–vivens–intellegens* or: *praeexsistentia–praeviventia–praeintellegentia*
(2) *filius*		{	*exsistentia–vita–intellegentia* or: *exsistentialitas–vitalitas–intellegentialitas*
(3) *spiritus sanctus*		{	*exsistentia–vita–intellegentia* or: *exsistentialitas–vitalitas–intellegentialitas*
*Underlining indicates the predominance of a member of a triad.			

2. Porphyry and the Chaldean Oracles

As Pierre Hadot has convincingly shown, Victorinus in his works on the Trinity uses extensively a Greek philosophical source,[26] which Hadot

26. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:45–77.

himself identifies with Porphyry. Hadot believed that substantial parts of Porphyry's lost writings that contained his metaphysical doctrines inspired by the Chaldean Oracles were preserved in the philosophical passages of Victorinus's theological treatises.[27] In accordance with his hypothesis, Hadot attempted to reconstruct Porphyrian metaphysics, relying not only on Porphyry's extant fragments and reports about his doctrines but also on metaphysical passages of Victorinus's theological works and on the fragments of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, which he also attributed to Porphyry.[28]

Hadot points out that Porphyry was later criticized for the fact that he identified the transcendent One with the Father, the supreme deity of the theological system of the Chaldean Oracles.[29] The Chaldean Oracles designate the supreme divinity as "once transcendent" or "paternal monad" (ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα, πατρικὴ μονάς; frags. 11 and 169), but at the same time they attribute to it the "power" (δύναμις) and the "intellect" (νοῦς; frag. 4), which together with the Father form a triune divinity: "the triadic monad" (μονάς τριοῦχος, frag. 26).[30] Neoplatonists such as Damascius and Proclus closely associated the Chaldean triad Father–power–intellect with the triad existence–life–intellect, which they situated at the intelligible, intelligible-intellectual, and intellectual levels beneath the transcendent One.[31] If Porphyry, unlike the later Neoplatonists, identified the Father of the Chaldean Oracles with the One itself, he coordinated, according Damascius, "the incommesurable and unspeakable cause" with the level of the intelligible being, and, consequently, compromised the One's transcendence (*Dub. et sol.* 43).[32] The Porphyrian interpretation of the Chaldean Oracles is also

27. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:260–78; 461; Min-Jun Huh, "L'usage du vocabulaire chaldaïque chez les Néoplatoniciens latins: Marius Victorinus, Saint-Augustin, Martianus Capella," in *Oracles chaldaïques: Fragments et philosophie*, ed. Adrien Lecerf, Lucia Saudelli, and Helmut Seng, BChald 4 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2014), 195–230.

28. Hadot, "Métaphysique de Porphyre"; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:79–461.

29. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:258–59.

30. *Oracula Chaldaica*, ed. and trans. Ruth Majercik, SGRR 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 48, 52, 58, 112.

31. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:260–72.

32. For the critical text, see Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis, in Platonis Parmenidem*, ed. Charles Émile Ruelle (repr., Brussels: Culture et civilisation, 1964), 1:86.12–15. See Hadot, "Métaphysique de Porphyre," 132; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:258–59.

confirmed by Augustine's testimony in the *City of God*, according to which Porphyry in his doctrine of the highest principles distinguished between Father, "paternal intellect" (*paternus intellectus*), and "that which is in the midst of them" (*horum medium*; *Civ.* 10.23).[33] Augustine also explicitly mentions that Porphyry, unlike Plotinus, who subordinated the intellect and the soul to the transcendent One, did not place "that which is in the midst of them" at a lower level but between the Father and the paternal intellect. That is why Augustine saw the parallel between the Neoplatonic (Porphyrian) doctrine of principles and the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Other texts, however, give evidence that Porphyry agreed with Plotinus and other Neoplatonists in conceiving the One as totally transcendent and incommensurable with all beings or ontological levels caused by itself.[34] According to Hadot, the metaphysical parts of Victorinus's theological writings provide the key to solve the apparent contradiction: Porphyry's metaphysical doctrine emphasizing the transcendence of the One and, at the same time, identifying the One with the first member of the intelligible triad existence–life–intellect, corresponds to the concept present in *Adv. Ar.* 1B. On the one hand, Victorinus there conceives the One as an absolutely transcendent divinity and, accordingly, deprives it of all positive attributes—including being (or existence), life, and intelligence—by means of negative theology; on the other hand, from the point of view of affirmative theology, he considers the One as the universal cause that contains, in a transcendent and potential way, all that it causes. In the end, Victorinus identifies the One with the pure being or existence that presents the first moment of the self-development of the divine intellect. Consequently, the first One is both incommensurable and commensurable with the triad existence–life–intellect, which forms the three phases of the constitution of the reflexive intellect.[35] While Plotinus expounded, by means of the triad being–life–intellect, the reflexive structure of the divine intellect, which he conceived as a distinct hypostasis beneath the transcendent One itself, Porphyry, according to Hadot's hypothesis, introduced into the triad the term *existence* (ὕπαρξις), understood as synonymous with the pure act of being that he equated with the transcendent One from

33. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, CCSL 47 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 296. See Hadot, "La métaphysique de Porphyre," 138; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:266.

34. See Hadot, "Métaphysique de Porphyre," 131.

35. See Hadot, "Métaphysique de Porphyre," 135.

the perspective of affirmative theology. Therefore, Porphyry made from the two hypostases of Plotinus integral parts of one complex metaphysical process of the self-constitution of the divine intellect whose starting point and point of return the transcendent One itself represents.[36]

According to another testimony, by Johannes Lydus, Porphyry also placed an ennead consisting of three triads at the top of the theological system of the Chaldean Oracles (*Mens.* 4.122.1–4).[37] Lydus's report is, according to Hadot, in agreement with Victorinus's writings *Adv. Ar.* 1B and 3, in which the principle of the mutual implication of members of the triad being–life–intellect plays a significant role.[38] Each of the individual members of the triad implies the other two, so that each member of triad is structured triadically and the whole triad is constituted by "three times three" members.[39] It was the concept of mutual implication and predominance that enabled Porphyry to systematize the different statements about the highest principles present in the Chaldean Oracles. In addition to the abovementioned paternal intellect, which is the Father's own power and as such belongs to the highest monad, the Chaldean Oracles recognize a second "demiurgic" intellect characterized by its dyadic structure and therefore called "twice transcendent" (δὶς ἐπέκεινα). The Chaldean Oracles speak also about Hekate, the goddess of life, as borne "in the midst of the fathers" (μέσσον τῶν πατέρων, frag. 50).[40] According to Hadot's hypothesis,[41] Porphyry equated the three divine entities with the Neoplatonic triad existence–life–intellect and interpreted their relationship by the principle of mutual implication and predominance: the Father or the One (being or existence) implies power (life) and paternal intellect (intellect) in its transcendental unity. The demiurgical intellect (intellect) is a manifestation of the paternal intellect, which originally merges into indiscriminate unity with the Father (existence); Hekate (life) is a manifestation of father's power and as such stands "in the midst" of the Father and his intellect, both horizontally (as Father's power) and vertically (as

36. See Hadot, "Métaphysique de Porphyre," 135–36.

37. John Lydus, *De mensibus*, ed. Richard Wünsch, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898), 159.5–8. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:264.

38. Hadot, "Métaphysique de Porphyre," 137.

39. Hadot, "Métaphysique de Porphyre," 140.

40. Majercik, *Oracula Chaldaica*, 68.

41. See Hadot, "Métaphysique de Porphyre," 139; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* 1:265–67.

the movement of progression and life giving). Because each member of the triad includes the other two in its own way, although each of them predominates over the others at a certain moment, the triad actually forms an ennead. Hadot assumed that it was Porphyry who founded the tradition of the Neoplatonic interpretation of the Chaldean triad Father–power–intellect in the sense of the Neoplatonic triad existence–life–intellect but, unlike subsequent Neoplatonists, identified the first member of the triad with the Neoplatonic supreme principle.

Although Hadot's hypotheses seem quite plausible, their limits become apparent if we compare the above reconstructed metaphysical system with the few pieces of textual evidence that report doctrines demonstrably attributed to Porphyry. According to Augustine's testimony, Porphyry distinguished between Father, paternal intellect, and "that which is in the midst of them." The terminology corresponds to the Chaldean system, but nothing is said about the triad existence–life–intellect and the mutual implication of its members. The conclusion that Porphyry equated the Chaldean triad with the triad existence–life–intellect is based only on the fact that later Neoplatonists such as Proclus and Damascius interpreted the Chaldean system in a similar way and that the triad occurs in Marius Victorinus. The idea of the mutual implication and dominance of the members of the triad existence–life–intellect, which plays a significant role in Victorinus's trinitarian doctrine, is attributed to Porphyry by Hadot only because it appears in later Neoplatonists and on the basis of Lydus's report that Porphyry placed the ennead at the top of the Chaldean system. Hence, the metaphysical use of the triad existence–life–intellect by Porphyry is not convincingly proven.

3. The Anonymous Commentary on *Parmenides*

One of the main conceptual similarities between Victorinus's theological work and the anonymous commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* consists in the fact that the commentator considers the highest divinity as the "One without substance" (ἓν ἀνούσιον, 12.5), also said to be the "One beyond substance" (τὸ ἓν τὸ ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας, 12.23) and at the same time as the "act of being" or "to be" that precedes the existent itself (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι τὸ πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος, 12.26–27).[42] The existent or "that which is" itself (τὸ ὄν) is iden-

42. Anonymus in Parmenidem, in *Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini, Parte III: Commentari*, ed. Alessandro Linguiti, STCPF (Florence: Olschki, 1995), 126, 128. For translation and discussion of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, see

tified with the second One, who is also called the "One with substance" (ἓν ἐνούσιον, 12.5–7). While the first One does not have any substantial character at all, and it is nothing else than a pure activity (αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν καθαρόν) of being (12.25–26) that causes the derivative being of the second One (12.34–35), the latter represents the intelligible existent in its very substantiality. The author of the commentary uses the distinction between the infinitive "to be" and the participle "existent" or "that which is" in order to express precisely these different characters of both Ones. Consequently, in the anonymous commentary occurs—for the first time in the history of philosophy—the concept of the pure act of being and the ontological difference[43] between being (or "to be") and existent (or "that which is"). The author of the commentary came to that distinction in his effort to solve a problem arising from the formulation of the second hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* (142b): "If the One is, can it be and not participate in substance?" For a proponent of the metaphysical interpretation of *Parmenides*, one who understands the first two hypotheses as statements concerning the first two hypostases, a serious difficulty follows from the suggestion about the participation of the second One in substance. According to this interpretation, the first substance (or the existent itself) is the same as the second One. Therefore, Plato's formulation would seem to suggest that before the first substance there is another, higher substance that the first substance participates in. Yet for the proponents of a metaphysical interpretation of the dialogue, the second One is preceded only by the first One, which is beyond substance. What then should be that substance that the second One participates in, if besides the second One there is solely the first One? This reasoning led the commentator to the idea that Plato could not have been thinking of anything but the first One (11.1–5 and 12.10–22). That said, Plato may have used the word οὐσία here in a figurative sense, since—as the anonymous commentator puts it—"the One is beyond substance and beyond 'that which is' and it is not substance nor act, but it

Gerald Bechtle, *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's "Parmenides,"* BRPS 22 (Bern: Haupt, 1999).

43. The notion of ontological difference was coined by Heidegger in a 1927 lecture to signal the difference between Being (*Sein*) and beings (*Seiende*), which is similar but not identical to the Neoplatonist distinction here discussed. For discussion of the Heideggerian concept, see Jan Slaby, "Ontology," in *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon*, ed. Mark A. Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 551–59.

rather acts and is pure 'to act' itself and 'to be' itself before 'that which is'" (12.22–27).[44] The participation of the second One in substance means that the second One has its derivative being through the participation in that pure being or "to be." In this sense, the first One or "to be" is "the idea, as it were, of 'that which is'" (ὥσπερ ἰδέα τοῦ ὄντος, 12.32–33).

In addition, the author of the commentary conceives the first and second Ones as two levels or moments of one deity. The conception implies a sort of ontological coordination between the first One and the second One. The second One is considered as a divine intellect that is differentiated into its inner phases or acts by its eternal movement of self-knowledge. On the other hand, the first One is regarded as a transcendent act or moment of the intellect that dwells above the intellect's division into the knowing and the known. This transcendent act, which is identified with the first One, "touches" both moments of the reflexive intellect—the knowing and the known—and establishes their unity (13.1–23).[45] Consequently, the divine intellect consists of two levels: (1) the absolutely unified act of thinking, which transcends or precedes the difference between the knowing and the known; and (2) the intrinsically differentiated intellect, which realizes the reflexive movement of self-knowledge.[46] Moreover, the commentator specifies that the acts or the phases of the intellect's reflexive movement are precisely three: existence (ὕπαρξις) as the known, intelligence (νόησις) as the knowing, and life (ζωή) as the mediating act that differentiates between the known and the knowing: "According to existence, the intellect is both the knowing and the known, but if it proceeds from existence to the knowing in order to return to the known and see itself, it is life" (14.16–21).[47] Both the levels of the divine intellect correspond to the first and second hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides* respectively, that is,

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44. Linguiti, *Corpus dei papiri filosofici*, 126: Ὅρα δὲ μὴ καὶ αἰνισσομένῳ ἔοικεν ὁ Πλάτων, ὅτι τὸ ἓν τὸ ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας καὶ ὄντος ὂν μὲν οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲ οὐσία οὐδὲ ἐνέργεια, ἐνεργεῖ δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν καθαρόν, ὥστε καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι τὸ πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος. Translations my own unless otherwise noted.

45. See Václav Němec, "Die Theorie des göttlichen Selbstbewusstseins im anonymen *Parmenides*-Kommentar," *RhM* 154 (2011): 185–205.

46. In this point, my interpretation of the sixth fragment of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* differs from Hadot's (Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:133–34) and Bechtle's (Bechtle, *Anonymous Commentary*, 185–86, 191–196). See also Linguiti, *Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici*, 193, and Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen Selbstbewusstseins," 188–89.

47. Linguiti, *Corpus dei papiri filosofici*, 132: καὶ τὸ νοοῦν καὶ τὸ νοούμενον ὑπάρξει,

to the first and second Ones (12.26–34). Nevertheless, the two levels represent, at the same time, two different perspectives in which the one sole divinity can be considered: (1) the One "in itself," which, in fact, cannot be thought at all since it surpasses all intelligible categories or attributes and, accordingly, is to be denied all predicates including the "One"; (2) the One that is, or the intellect, which is differentiated into the plurality of its inner moments, that is, existence, life, and intelligence:

> According to the first viewpoint, i.e., "this itself" considered in itself, it is One and simple, power—or whatever name it is proper to give to it in order to indicate it even though it is unspeakable and incomprehensible—but it is not One and not simple according to existence, life, and intelligence. (14.10–16)[48]

In other words, the commentator uses the triad existence–life–intelligence to express the reflexive structure of the intellect, so that the triad is associated with the level of the second One or "that which is," whereby both of them—the first and second Ones—form one deity encompassing the reflexive intellect and the transcendent One as its unifying act or root. The metaphysical system offered by the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* is represented schematically in table 4.

Table 4. The Metaphysical System in the Anonymous Commentary on *Parmenides*

(1) the One without substance = the One beyond substance = "to be" itself (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι) = unifying act of the intellect
(2) the One with substance = the existent = the intellect {existence–life–intelligence

τὸ δὲ νοοῦν, ἢν ὁ νοῦ[ς μετε]ξ[έλθῃ] ἀπὸ τῆς ὑπάρξεως εἰς τὸ νοοῦν, ἵνα ἐπανέλθῃ εἰς τὸ νοητὸν καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἴδῃ, ἐστὶν ζωή.

48. Linguiti, *Corpus dei papiri filosofici*, 132: ἓν μὲν οὖν ἐστιν καὶ ἁπλοῦν κατὰ τὴν πρώτην καὶ "αὐτὸ τοῦτο" αὐτοῦ το{α}ύτου ἰδέαν, δύναμις ἢ ὅτι καὶ χρὴ ὀνομάζειν ἐνδείξεως <χ>άριν ἄρρητον οὖσαν καὶ ἀνεννόητον, οὐχ ἓν δὲ οὐδὲ ἁπλοῦν κατὰ τὴν ὕπαρξιν καὶ ζωὴν <καὶ> τὴν νόησιν.

This conception shares a number of features in common with the metaphysical systems included in the Victorinus's theological work. First of all, the commentator identifies the (first) One with the pure act of being or "to be" that is different from and transcendent to the level of the intelligible and substantive being or "that which is." Furthermore, in the anonymous commentary the triad existence–life–intelligence occurs and explicates the structure of the second One, the self-knowing intellect. Some conspicuous dissimilarities, however, cannot be disregarded. Particularly notable is the fact that the commentator never applies the triad existence–life–intelligence (or "to be"–"to live"–"to think") to the (first) One, let alone supposes any presence of the corresponding preexistent forms in the transcendent One.[49] On the contrary, he criticizes the Chaldean Oracles in one passage for daring to ascribe a triadic structure to the highest deity (9.1–10.11).[50] Neither does the anonymous author speak about corresponding potential modalities that are situated between the pure activity and the substantiality and are labeled by abstract terms in Victorinus.[51] In the anonymous commentary only the substantive triad existence–life–intelligence appears, which is associated solely with the level of the second One or the reflexive intellect. Although the commentator admits a sort of ontological coordination between the first and second Ones, he does not consider the first One as a point of departure or starting phase of the self-constitution or self-knowledge of the whole divinity in its proceeding from and returning to the first One as its transcendent depths by the movement of life and of intelligence. Accordingly, the first One is not an object to which the second

49. Both John D. Turner and Luc Brisson suppose that the triad preexists in the first One in some way. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 725–26, and also Turner's chapter in this volume; Luc Brisson, "Reception of the *Parmenides* before Proclus," in *Its Reception in Patristic, Gnostic, and Christian Neoplatonic Texts*, vol. 2 of *Plato's "Parmenides" and Its Heritage*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner, WGRWSup 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 59. Nevertheless, the preexistence or "prefigurative existence" of the triad in the first One cannot be attested in the extant fragments of the anonymous commentary.

50. See Luc Brisson, "A Criticism of the *Chaldean Oracles* and of the Gnostics in Columns IX and X of the *Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides*," in Corrigan and Turner, *History and Interpretation*, 233–41. For the triadic structure of the highest deity in Chaldean Oracles see §2 above.

51. As far as I can see, there is no hint of the "Triple Powered One" as a mediating level between the first and second Ones in the commentary, as Turner has suggested (*Sethian Gnosticism*, 725–26; see also Turner's chapter in this volume).

One's knowledge turns in order to know itself in its own potential and transcendent preexistence. On the contrary, the first One is nothing else but an act operating in all three acts or moments of the reflexive intellect, establishing their unity and transcending them all. Even though the anonymous commentator identifies the first One with the pure act of being, he never equates the act of being or "to be" with existence,[52] and nothing seems to speak for the assumption that existence coincides with the transcendent moment of the intellect (i.e., with the first One), as Hadot in his interpretation of the sixth fragment of the commentary suggests.[53] The principle of the mutual implication and of dominance, which characterizes the relationship between existence, life, and intelligence in *Adv. Ar.* 1B, 3, and 4, cannot be found in the anonymous commentary either. The interpretation according to which the commentator conceived of a prefigurative existence of the triad preceding the level of the intelligible being, or applied the principle of mutual inclusion and predominance to the triad, projects onto the commentary doctrinal elements stemming from other texts in the attempt to harmonize its metaphysical scheme with the metaphysical systems present in Victorinus's theological writings (especially *Adv. Ar.* 1B and 3) or in Sethian Platonizing treatises (especially Allogenes; see §6.2.3 and 6.3 below).

If we compare the doctrine of the anonymous commentator with different concepts included in Victorinus's theological writings, we can conclude that the closest similarity is to be found between the metaphysical systems present in the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* and those in *Letter to Candidus*. In contrast to Victorinus's other treatises, in *Letter to Candidus* the transcendent One or God the Father is considered only as the pure act of being without having any triadic structure, whereas the triad existence–life–intelligence is associated exclusively with the level of the existent itself or the Son (see §1.1 above). In spite of the conceptual affinity between both texts, we can note, however, some dissimilarities: for example, the relationship between God the Father and the Son is explained in *Letter to Candidus* by means of the terms *potency–act*,

52. See Andrew Smith, "Ὑπόστασις and ὕπαρξις in Porphyry," in *Hyparxis e hypostasis nel neoplatonismo*, ed. Francesco Romano and Daniela P. Taormina (Florence: Olschki, 1994), 41; Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen Selbstbewusstseins," 200.

53. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:139. For a more detailed argumentation against Hadot's interpretation, see Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen Selbstbewusstseins," 188–89.

while in the anonymous commentary, the first One is never considered as potency in relation to the second One, which would be its act. Such application of the terms *potency–act* to the first and second Ones not only is not attested in the extant fragments of the anonymous commentary, but it would hardly be compatible with the general concept set forth there. Furthermore, in the anonymous commentary the abstract forms existentiality, vitality, and intellectuality never occur, while they are present in *Letter to Candidus* alongside the triad existence–life–intelligence as a part of the existent itself.

4. Anonymous Metaphysical Systems in Proclus's *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*

In a passage of his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, Proclus reports on three metaphysical concepts of his predecessors, who are said to be "persuaded that one must establish some nature or characteristic for the One" (*In Parm.* 1105.30–1106.2).[54] The reason these theologians feel that one should do so is that they are afraid that if everything were to be "removed from the One," our imagination would have nothing "to grasp onto," and the pure negations would consequently "lead us into the absolute non-existent" (*In Parm.* 1105.26–27).[55] Proclus refutes these doctrines by arguing that they bring into the One a multitude, which is absolutely incompatible with the transcendent Deity. The first and the third of the concepts mentioned in Proclus's *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* remind us of the metaphysical systems present in Victorinus's theological writings.[56]

54. Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, ed. Carlos Steel, OCT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007–2009), 3:85: χρή τινα φύσιν εἰσηγεῖσθαι καὶ ἰδιότητα τοῦ ἑνός. Unless otherwise noted, translations follow Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, trans. Glenn R. Morrow and John M. Dillon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 451.

55. Steel, *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, 3:85: εἰς τὸ μηδαμῶς ὂν ἀπάγειν ἡμᾶς.

56. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:355–75. As Hadot points out, in *Adversus Arium* IA an allusion to the second of the three doctrines mentioned by Proclus also occurs, which distinguishes between God and "being God." See Proclus, *In. Parm.* 1106.26–28: Εἰσὶ δὲ οἳ διακρίνειν ἠξίωσαν θεὸν καὶ τὸ θεῷ εἶναι, καὶ ἀπονέμειν τῷ πρώτῳ τὸ θεῷ εἶναι, καὶ ὡς ταύτην ἰδιότητα παραδιδόναι τοῦ ἑνός (Steel, *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, 3:86; "There are other commentators, who wish to distinguish between God and the state of being God, and to allot to the primal reality the state

4.1. Degrees of Unity and the Method of Paronymy

One of the anonymous authors cited by Proclus distinguishes, in the realm of the highest principles, different degrees of unity by expressing them grammatically by means of the method of paronymy,[57] that is, through the use of different word forms created from the same root: (1) mere noun, (2) corresponding abstract noun formed by attaching the suffix -της, (3) participle of the corresponding verb, and finally, (4) noun with the suffix -μα. The unnamed commentator places, for instance, intellectuality (νοότης) above intellect (νοῦς), and even higher "that which intelligizes" (τὸ νοοῦν) as the cause of the intellection of everything else. The reason, as Proclus explains, is that "the theologian" supposes "activities are prior to essences … being more unitary than them." The highest degree, then, represents "the thought" (τὸ νόημα) that is "the first as being most partless" and coincides with the transcendent One:

> Some proceed upwards from intellect and intellectual being to the One, and want to place above intellect "intellectuality," as being something simpler than intellect, and as it were the condition of intelligizing taking place. For, they say, activities are prior to essences, as being more unitary than them, and so prior to intellect they rank that which intelligizes, not calling this the active agent, but rather the cause of activity as causing intellection.… And prior to this again they place the thought, and this

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of being God, and to give this as the distinguishing characteristic of the One"). See Marius Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* IA 33.4–9: "Primum inquirendum, si idem est deus et deo esse, an aliud aliquid.… Si autem aliud deo esse, aliud deum esse, praeexistentiale est deo esse" (*Opera pars prior*, 115; "First is to be questioned whether God and 'being God' are the same thing or something different?… But if 'being God' is different from God, then for God 'to be' is preexistent" [slightly altered]). However, Hadot overlooks the fact that Victorinus does not accept this doctrine but, on the contrary, he criticizes it. See *Adv. Ar.* 1A.33.14–16: "Sed scriptura et omnis intellegentia istum deum et esse dicit et ante ipsum nihil esse, qui et id est quod est esse et id quod operari" (*Opera pars prior*, 115; "But Scripture and common knowledge affirm both that this God is and there is nothing before him, him who is at once 'to be' and 'to act'"). The doctrine distinguishing between God and "being God" reported by both Victorinus and Proclus does not correspond with any of the abovementioned metaphysical systems present in Victorinus's theological work; consequently, the author of the doctrine can hardly be identical to the source of Victorinus's writings.

57. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:361–67.

> they claim to be the first as being most partless. (*In. Parm.* 1106.2–10, slightly altered)[58]

The anonymous author proceeds in this way not only in the case of the intellect but also in the case of each of the ideas or forms, so that the ascent from a particular form to its higher degree of unity seems to lead, finally, to the One (*In. Parm.* 1106.11–14). Consequently, the One is considered as the indivisible unity of various aspects that appear in their differentiated and substantialized form in the intelligible realm.

To some extent, this concept resembles the metaphysical system included in Victorinus's treatise *Adv. Ar.* 4. As we have seen, Victorinus does not dwell primarily on the relationship between the members of triad being–life–intelligence in this treatise but focuses on the relation between the different terms formed from the same root. Thus God the Father unifies the pure acts "to be" (*esse*), "to live" (*vivere*), and "to think" (*intellegere*), which produce the corresponding forms existence/essence (*exsistentia*/*essentia*), life (*vita*), and intelligence (*intellegentia*) that are encompassed in the Son. In addition, in *Adv. Ar.* 4 occur also the abstract forms existentiality (*essentitas*/οὐσιότης/*exsistentialitas*), vitality (*vitalitas*/ζωότης), and intellectuality (*intellegentialitas*/νοότης), which are understood as synonyms of the substantives (*Adv. Ar.* 4.5.31–40). At the same time, Victorinus expresses the triad of acts present in God the Father not only by the bare infinitives but also by the corresponding participles *existing* (*exsistens*), *living* (*vivens*), and *thinking* (*intellegens*; *Adv. Ar.* 4.6.4–7; see §1.3 above). Consequently, like the anonymous author reported by Proclus, Victorinus in *Adv. Ar.* 4 assumes the whole hierarchy of terms created from the same root by the method of paronymy: *esse—id quod est esse—essentitas*/οὐσιότης/*exsistentialitas–exsistentia*; *vivere–vivens–vitalitas*/ζωότης–*vita*; *intellegere–intellegens–intellegentialitas*/νοότης–*intellegentia*.[59] The only significant difference consists in the fact that the anonymous author does

58. Steel, *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, 3:85: οἱ μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τῆς νοερᾶς οὐσίας ἐπὶ τὸ ἓν ἀναβαίνοντες ἀξιοῦσι τοῦ μὲν νοῦ τὴν νοότητα προτάττειν τῆς νοότητος, ὡς ἁπλουστέρας οὔσης τοῦ νοῦ καὶ οἷον ἕξεως τοῦ νοεῖν· αἱ γὰρ ἐνέργειαι, φασὶ, πρὸ τῶν οὐσιῶν εἰσιν ὡς ἐνικώτεραι αὐτῶν, καὶ πρὸ τούτου τὸ νοοῦν, οὐ τὸ ἐνεργοῦν τοῦτο λέγοντες, ἀλλὰ τὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας αἴτιον ὡς νόησιν ποιοῦν … καὶ πρὸ τούτου πάλιν τὸ νόημα, καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ πρῶτον ἀξιοῦντες ὡς ἀμερέστατον. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* 1:361; Jens Halfwassen, "Das Eine als Einheit und Dreiheit: Zur Prinzipienlehre Jamblichs," *RhM* 139 (1996): 70.

59. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:368.

not make use of the simple infinitives but of the nouns with the suffix -μα in order to designate the highest degree of unity. As Hadot suggests, however, according to the first authority mentioned in the passage of Proclus's *Commentary on Parmenides*, the nouns also mean—following the Stoic terminology—a pure activity and at the same time a source of the corresponding activity for everything else, rather than the result of the activity, as the suffix -μα might evoke at the first glance.[60] Another striking difference between the anonymous authority and Victorinus is that the former refers to the various ontological degrees by the use of various grammatical forms, while the latter reduces the complex structure to only two ontological levels. Thus, in *Adv. Ar.* 4, both the nouns and the corresponding abstract terms designate the genera of the intelligible realm, whereas the participles and the infinitives express the pure acts that are united in the transcendent God the Father or the (first) One. Nevertheless, the possibility is not excluded that Victorinus in *Adv. Ar.* 4 used a source containing a hierarchical system of various ontological levels, which he adapted to the orthodox Christian idea of consubstantiality and to the metaphysical scheme of *Adv. Ar.* 1B and *Adv. Ar.* 3.

4.2. Preexistence of the Triad Being–Life–Intelligence in the One

Another anonymous author Proclus cites focuses on the issue of the relationship of the One to the intelligible forms and especially to the triad being–life–intelligence, which he solves in the following way. On one side, he admits that the One surpasses the intelligible triad, but on the other side, he attributes the triad to the One, arguing that the One encompasses the triad—as well as other intelligible genera and forms—in an ineffable and incomprehensible way corresponding to its unity and transcendence. Thus, the triad being–life–intelligence is present in the One in the manner of hidden transcendent forms preceding the intelligible forms themselves:

> There are other authorities, however, who have said that since the first principle is cause of all things, situated above life, above intellect, above being itself, it possesses within itself in some way the causes of all these things unutterably and unimaginably and in the most unified way, and in a way unknowable to us but knowable to itself; and the hidden causes of all things in it are models prior to models, and the primal entity itself is

60. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:361–62.

> a whole prior to wholes, not having need of parts. (*In. Parm.* 1107.8–14, slightly altered)[61]

As Hadot had shown, this doctrine is closely cognate with the metaphysical concept included in the second part of *Adv. Ar.* 4. Particularly, Hadot calls attention to the passages in chapter 23 where Victorinus stresses the incomprehensibility of the triad being–life–intelligence as contained in the transcendent God the Father, and he accordingly refuses to attribute the triad to God at first (*Adv. Ar.* 4.23.18–24; 25.44–26.10). Nevertheless, despite the fact that God the Father, or the One, is ineffable and incomprehensible, by virtue of the manifestation of the intelligible triad being–life–intelligence it becomes apparent that he is, at the same time, a "triple power" that involves not only the triad of the pure acts "to be"–"to live"–"to think" but also the triad of the interior forms preexistence–prelife–preintelligence (*praeexsistentia–praeviventia–praeintellegentia*). Consequently, Victorinus attributes to God the Father or the transcendent One the triad being–life–intelligence in the manner of hidden forms preceding the forms or *genera*, which are actualized only at the level of intelligible and substantive being (*Adv. Ar.* 4.23.26–34). However, the metaphysical concept of the anonymous authority mentioned in Proclus seems to correspond even more closely to *Adv. Ar.* 1B and *Adv. Ar.* 3, with regard to the fact that Proclus, in the passage in question, does not make any reference to other modalities of the triad, such as existentiality–vitality–intellectuality, or "to be"–"to live"–"to think," which occur in *Adv. Ar.* 4. It is therefore very probable that this passage of Proclus's *Commentary on Parmenides* brings us into the proximity of the source whose metaphysical scheme may have inspired the treatises *Adv. Ar.* 1B and *Adv. Ar.* 3.

4.3. Problem of the Identity of Anonymous Authors in Proclus's *Commentary on Parmenides*

In view of the similarity of these doctrines presented by Proclus to the metaphysical systems in *Adv. Ar.* 4, *Adv. Ar.* 1B, and *Adv. Ar.* 3, the pressing

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61. Steel, *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, 3:87: Ἄλλοι τοίνυν εἰρήκασιν ὅτι πάντων αἴτιον ὂν τὸ πρῶτον ὑπὲρ ζωὴν, ὑπὲρ νοῦν, ὑπὲρ αὐτὸ τὸ ὂν ἱδρυμένον, ἔχει πως τὰς τούτων αἰτίας ἁπάντων ἀφράστως καὶ ἀνεπινοήτως καὶ τὸν ἑνικώτατον τρόπον καὶ ἡμῖν μὲν ἀγνώστως, καὶ ἔστι τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ κρύφια τῶν ὅλων αἴτια παραδείγματα πρὸ παραδειγμάτων, καὶ τὸ πρῶτον αὐτὸ ὅλον πρὸ ὅλων, οὐ δεηθὲν μερῶν.

question of the identities of the anonymous authors arises. Hadot assumed that Proclus in both passages in question reported on lost parts of the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary that Hadot himself attributed to Porphyry.[62] Nevertheless, not only is there scarcely any hint of the distinction of different ontological levels situated between the substantial intelligible forms and the pure unity of the transcendent One, or of the corresponding method of paronymy in the extant fragments of the anonymous commentary, but it is difficult to imagine that these ideas would play any role in its metaphysical system. Nor there is any evidence for the identification of the second anonymous author with the author of the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*: the latter makes no mention of the preexistence of the intelligible triad or of the other forms in the first One,[63] and he even criticizes the Chaldean Oracles for its attribution of the triad to the transcendent One. Moreover, it is quite obvious that Proclus does not refer to one doctrine coming from a single author or even from the only writing in the given passage of his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*. The way in which Proclus introduces the anonymous authorities shows that he has in mind three different authors or circles. This evidence may be seen as a further convincing argument against Hadot's hypothesis that Proclus reports on lost parts of the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*.

For this reason, John Dillon has proposed an alternative identification of the anonymous authorities mentioned in Proclus's *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*.[64] Dillon admits that the first authority may have been Porphyry, but he also considers the possibility that it could have been Amelius.[65] Jens Halfwassen ascribes the former view to Porphyry as well. Nevertheless, Halfwassen, like Dillon himself, gives no other evidence for this assertion than the occurrence of similar terminology in *Adv. Ar.* 4.5.33–39, in spite of the fact that he supposes that the source of another passage of the same treatise (*Adv. Ar.* 4.23.27–34) may have been Iam-

62. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:374–75.

63. The only evidence could be the occurrence of the term προέννοια in the anonymous commentary 2.20, which Hadot considers as an equivalent of the Latin term *praeintellegentia*. However, this reading represents Hadot's own emendation of the original term προ[ς]έννοια.

64. See Morrow and Dillon, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, 396, 452 n. 91.

65. Dillon cites no other evidence for his identification of the first authority as Porphyry, however, than the occurrence of a similar terminology in *Adv. Ar.* 4.5.33–39. Indeed, for his identification of the first anonymous authority as Amelius, Dillon provides no evidence at all.

blichus's work. The only thing we can be sure about is that if the former authority is Porphyry, he cannot at the same time be the author of the latter view reported by Proclus. For this very reason, Dillon attributes the latter view to Iamblichus, and Halfwassen corroborates his hypothesis.[66]

As Cristina D'Ancona points out, however, it is hard to believe that the doctrine according to which the One is equated with "the first principle" and called "the cause of all things" could originate from Iamblichus, who put a completely transcendent "ineffable" principle above the One. As D'Ancona further suggests, it seems to follow from Proclus's report that the anonymous author attributed the preexistence of the triad being–life–intelligence to the highest divinity itself. Consequently, she assumes that the latter doctrine referred to and criticized by Proclus was in fact from Plotinus.[67] However, D'Ancona does not take into account the striking similarity between the doctrine reported by Proclus and the metaphysical concepts included in Marius Victorinus's theological work, whose source could hardly be Plotinus.[68] It is obvious that we have no evidence that would enable us to identify the anonymous authorities more precisely. Nevertheless, Proclus's report indicates an existence of a whole tradition, or a common intellectual milieu, in which the cognate metaphysical conception was used and developed in different modifications and variations. The first of these variations is very close to the metaphysical scheme in *Adv. Ar.* 4, while the second one resembles the scheme in *Adv. Ar.* 1B and *Adv. Ar.* 3, even though the idea of the preexistent forms preceding the forms is also present in *Adv. Ar.* 4.

5. Metaphysical Systems in Neoplatonists after Plotinus and Porphyry

As mentioned above, Halfwassen has suggested that the source of some passages in *Adv. Ar.* 4 may have been Iamblichus.[69] This hypothesis is, among

66. See Morrow and Dillon, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, 396, 452 n. 91; Halfwassen, "Eine als Einheit und Dreiheit," 69–70.

67. See Cristina D'Ancona, "Primo principio e mondo intelligibile nella metafisica di Proclo," *Elenchos* 2 (1991): 285–86. D'Ancona refers especially to *Enn.* 5.4.2.38–39 and 5.3.15.31–33. However, the statements indicating a sort of preexistence of caused beings in the One are very rare in Plotinus. Moreover, he does not speak about the hidden forms preceding the forms, as is the case in Marius Victorinus and in the anonymous doctrine reported by Proclus.

68. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:79.

69. See Halfwassen, "Eine als Einheit und Dreiheit," 54, 73–77.

others, based on the excerpts from Iamblichus's *Collection of Pythagorean Doctrines* preserved in Michael Psellos's work *On Numbers*, according to which Iamblichus calls the One "unity and triad."[70] Psellos's testimony seems to be in accordance with Proclus's and Damascius's reports where they reproach Iamblichus for introducing multiplicity into the One. Part of Halfwassen's hypothesis is the identification of the second of the aforementioned anonymous authorities reported in Proclus's *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* with Iamblichus. According to Halfwassen, the triad mentioned in the fragment of Iamblichus's *Collection of Pythagorean Doctrines* means nothing but the triad of the forms preceding the forms, that is, preexistence (*praeexsistentia*), prelife (*praeviventia*), and preintelligence (*praeintellegentia*). If this is the case, the intelligible triad being–life–intelligence would be prefigured in the "incommensurable One" that is situated between the intelligible level and the transcendent ineffable principle. As we have seen, however, the identification of the anonymous authority with Iamblichus is doubtful because the highest deity is for Iamblichus not the incommensurable One but the transcendent ineffable principle above the One.

If we admit that Victorinus at least in some passages in *Adv. Ar.* 4 drew on Iamblichus, we would come to the inevitable conclusion that he transformed the metaphysical system of his source to the effect that he eliminated the highest deity (the ineffable principle), and reduced the complicated hierarchical system of the divine hypostases to the constitutive parts or the structural moments of the only divine substance. Under these circumstances, however, the question could arise why the metaphysical system of the first anonymous authority reported by Proclus, whose traces we also find in *Adv. Ar.* 4, should be ascribed to Porphyry—as Dillon and even Halfwassen do, despite the latter's hypothesis that the source of some passages of the same writing was Iamblichus. In this case, it would make more sense to identify Victorinus's source as Theodorus of Asine, whose hierarchical system of hypostases exhibits more remarkable points of contact with *Adv. Ar.* 4 than that of Iamblichus. Indeed, Theodorus is the only ancient Platonist proven to distinguish between the triad of the pure acts expressed by the verbs in the infinitive and the triad of the forms named by the corresponding substantives. As Proclus reports, Theodorus, in his metaphysical system, situated the triad "to be"–"to live"–"to think" between the One and the intelligible triad being–life–intelligence: "After

70. Halfwassen, "Eine als Einheit und Dreiheit," 53–54, 72.

this triad is another that defines the intellectual level and another that defines the demiurgic [level]. The first is 'to be' prior to being, 'to think' prior to intellect, and 'to live' prior to life" (*In Tim*. 2:274.23–26).[71] In other words, Theodorus put the triad "to be"–"to live"–"to think" above the triad being–life–intelligence (τὸ εἶναι πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος, τὸ νοεῖν πρὸ τοῦ νοῦ, τὸ ζῆν πρὸ τῆς ζωῆς), much as Victorinus does in *Adv. Ar.* 4. Moreover, Theodorus probably applied the principle of mutual implication and of the dominance to the "demiurgic" triad being–life–intelligence.[72] The only difference is that Victorinus connected the triad of the pure acts with the One or God the Father, while Theodorus subordinated the triad to the One and, moreover, like Iamblichus, postulated the highest ineffable divinity (τὸ πρῶτον ἄρρητον) above the One (*In Tim*. 2.274.13–23).[73]

Matthias Baltes is another researcher who put forward the hypothesis that Victorinus used a Neoplatonic source later than Plotinus and Porphyry. Baltes does not believe Victorinus's source can be identified as Iamblichus, but he insists that it was one of the later Neoplatonists after Porphyry and before Proclus.[74] As Baltes points out, Victorinus's source had a lot of elements typical of later Neoplatonism, such as the principle of mutual implication and of the dominance of the members of the triad being–life–intelligence, or the metaphysical theory of causality and participation. The theory postulates the triad remaining–procession–return and a three-membered scheme of unparticipated–participated–participant (τὸ ἀμέθεκτον–τὸ μετεχόμενον–τὸ μετέχον; see §1.2 above)[75] as the basic structure of the dynamic constitution of the universe. These doc-

71. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, 3 vols., ed. Ernst Diehl, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1906): ἄλλη δὲ μετὰ ταύτην τριὰς ὁρίζει τὸ νοερὸν βάθος καὶ ἄλλη τὸ δημιουργικόν· ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστι τὸ εἶναι πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος, τὸ νοεῖν πρὸ τοῦ νοῦ, τὸ ζῆν πρὸ τῆς ζωῆς. Translation follows *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus 4: Book 3 Part III: Proclus on the World Soul*, trans. Dirk Baltzly, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 265, slightly altered. See Theodorus of Asine, *Sammlung der Testimonien und Kommentar*, ed. Werner Deuse (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1973), 3–4, 23, 32.

72. See Deuse, *Sammlung der Testimonien*, 23.

73. See Brisson, "Reception of the *Parmenides*," 60–61.

74. Matthias Baltes, *Marius Victorinus: Zur Philosophie in seinen theologischen Schriften*, BzAK 174 (Munich: Saur, 2002), 125.

75. See Baltes, *Marius Victorinus*, 24, 116–17, 119; Marius Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 4.19.10–12: "Verum esse primum ita inparticipatum est, ut nec unum dici possit, nec solum, sed per praelationem, ante unum et ante solum, ultra simplicitatem" (*Opera pars prior*, 254; "But the first 'to be' is so unparticipated that it cannot even be called

trines clearly evoke and anticipate the metaphysical systems of Proclus and Damascius.[76]

Although the doctrine of Victorinus's source, as Baltes suggests, has much in common as well with the metaphysical systems of Amelius, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Theodorus of Asine, and the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, it clearly differs from all of these authors. According to Baltes, Victorinus's source exhibited a hierarchical system of hypostases distinguishing between the transcendent One and the enneadically structured intellect.[77] In the metaphysical system reconstructed by Baltes, the highest principle is (1) the transcendent One (*unum*/τὸ ἕν) beyond being and intellect that is at the same time regarded as the unparticipated being or "to be" (*esse inparticipatum*/τὸ εἶναι τὸ ἀμέθεκτον). From the first One there proceeds (2) the One-One (*unum unum*/τὸ ἓν ἕν), that is, the One that exists, or the existent itself (ὄν *ipsum*) that is considered as the participated being or "to be" (*esse participatum*/τὸ εἶναι τὸ μετεχόμενον) and that coincides with the hypostasis of the intellect (νοῦς). The second One or the intellect becomes differentiated into the ennead, encompassing the three triads: (a) the triad *esse–vivere–intellegere* (τὸ εἶναι–τὸ ζῆν–τὸ νοεῖν), which represents the phase of remaining (*mansio*) in the process of the constitution of the intelligible reality; (b) the triad *exsistentialitas–vitalitas–intellegentialitas* (ὀντότης–ζωότης–νοότης), which is identical to the phase of progression (*progressio*); and (c) the triad *exsistentia–vita–intellegentia* (ὕπαρξις–ζωή–νοῦς), which corresponds to the phase of return (*regressus*). As Baltes argues, Victorinus transformed the metaphysical system of his source in order to adapt it to the intention of the Nicene Creed and its formula of the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. Victorinus's transformation of his source, according to Baltes, consisted in equating the levels 1 and 2a with God the Father, and the levels 2b and 2c with the Son and the Holy Spirit respectively. At the same time, because he considered the Son as begotten by God the Father and as consubstantial with him, Victorinus equalized or coordinated the levels 1 and 2a with the

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one or alone, but rather, by preeminence, before the one, before the alone, beyond simplicity").

76. For the principle of mutual implication and of the dominance of the members of the triad being–life–intelligence see Proclus, *Inst. theol.* 101–3; on the triad remaining–procession–return, see *Inst. theol.* 25–39; for the three-member scheme of unparticipated–participated–participant, see *Inst. theol.* 23, 24, 63, 64, 81.

77. See Baltes, *Marius Victorinus*, 116–21.

levels 2b and 2c and made them all constitutive parts of the one and only divine substance.[78]

However, Baltes's reconstruction of the metaphysical system of Victorinus does not take into account the differences between the concepts present in Victorinus's individual trinitarian treatises. In fact, it is possible that at least a part of *Adv. Ar.* 4 was inspired by a hierarchical system consisting of various ontological levels—similar to the systems of Iamblichus or Theodorus of Asine or the first anonymous authority mentioned in Proclus's *Commentary on Parmenides*—that Victorinus adapted to the Christian idea of the consubstantiality of the persons of the Trinity. Nonetheless, Baltes's hypothesis is hardly tenable in view of the metaphysical schemes of *Letter to Candidus*, *Adv. Ar.* 1B, and *Adv. Ar.* 3. Moreover, the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* and some witnesses to Porphyry attest that the metaphysical systems that did not insist on the hierarchical model of divinity, where the One is superior to the intellect and to the other hypostases, but which considered the One (or Father) and the intellect as two ontologically equal or "coordinated" entities, were present also in non-Christian Neoplatonism (see §2 and 3 above). Finally, as we shall see, the idea of ontological coordination of the transcendent supranoetic deity with the intellect, through which the highest deity manifests itself, appears also in Platonizing Sethian gnostic treatises. The closest parallels with Victorinus's theological work are found precisely in the writings representing this tradition of thought.

6. Metaphysical Systems in the Treatises of Platonizing Sethian Gnostics

6.1. The Apocryphon of John (NHC II 1, III 1, IV 1, BG)

Already the older texts from this gnostic circle, such as Apocryphon of John, distinguish between the highest supranoetic divinity—called the "Invisible Spirit" (ⲡⲁϩⲟⲣⲁⲧⲟⲛ ⲙ ⲡⲛⲁ, NHC II 1.2.33)—and the intelligible realm represented by female aeon Barbelo, titled the "first thought" (ⲧⲉϩⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛⲛⲉⲛⲛⲟⲓⲁ) or "the image of the Invisible Spirit" (ⲑⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲙⲡⲁⲧⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ), which glorifies and knows the Invisible Spirit (NHC II 1.4.34–5.5; III 1.7.18–23; BG 27.12–19).[79] Barbelo is the mother of the "Self-Begotten"

78. See Baltes, *Marius Victorinus*, 119.

79. Frederik Wisse and Michael Waldstein, *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of*

(αὐτογενής) son who, alongside the Invisible Spirit as his father and the Barbelo as his mother, completes the triad of highest principles, even though the Self-Begotten—unlike Barbelo—is situated on a lower ontological level than the father.[80] While the Invisible Spirit is monadic in his character, on the level of the aeon Barbelo the first plurality that manifests primarily in its triadic structure occurs. This structure is expressed in a number of typical names, such as "Thrice Male" (ⲡϣⲟⲙⲧϩⲟⲟⲩⲧ) or "Triple-Powered One" (ⲧϣⲟⲙⲛⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ, ⲧϣⲟⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧ̄ ⲛ̄ⲇⲩⲛⲁⲙⲓⲥ; NHC II 1.5.8–9; III 1.8.1–3; BG 27.21–28.2).[81] However, in Apocryphon of John this triadic structure is not yet explicated by the triad existence–life–intellect.

6.2. Platonizing Sethian Gnostic Treatises

That triad appears only in the writings representing so-called Platonizing Sethian Gnosticism such as Three Steles of Seth, Zostrianos, and Allogenes. In contrast to Apocryphon of John, they show no traces of Christian influence but were strongly inspired by philosophical sources of Platonic provenience.[82] All three treatises modify the metaphysical scheme present in Apocryphon of John in a very specific way. The Barbelo is transformed into a male—or rather, into an androgynous aeon including the Self-Begotten only as one of its three subaeons, that is to say, Kalyptos (the Hidden One), Protophanes (the First Appeared), and Autogenes (the Self-begotten). The name *Triple-Powered One* (ⲡⲓϣⲟⲙ̄ⲧ̄ ⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ = τριδύναμος), which in Apocryphon of John serves only as one of many epithets of Barbelo, becomes now the title of an intermediary between the transcendent unity of the Invisible Spirit and the intelligible plurality of the Barbelo aeon. The Triple-Powered One is regarded either as an aspect of the Barbelo aeon (as is the case in Three Steles of Seth), or as an aspect of the Invisible Spirit (as is the case in Zostrianos), or as a kind of a distinct divine entity occupying the intermediary position between the Invisible Spirit and Barbelo (as in Allogenes). The structure of the Triple-Powered One is revealed by the metaphysical triad existence–life–intellect (ϩⲩⲡⲁⲣⲝⲓⲥ–ⲱⲛ̄ϩ–ⲉⲓⲙⲉ

Nag Hammadi Codices II,1–III,1 and IV,1 with BG 8502,2, NHMS 38 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 21, 32–33.

80. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 499–500.

81. Wisse and Waldstein, *Apocryphon of John*, 34–35.

82. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 499.

= ὕπαρξις–ζωή–νοῦς), or the triad essentiality–vitality–intellectuality (ⲙⲛ̀ⲧ̀ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ–ⲙⲛ̀ⲧ̀ⲱⲛϩ–ⲙⲛ̀ⲧ̀ⲉⲓⲙⲉ = οὐσιότης–ζωότης–νοότης).[83]

6.2.1. Three Steles of Seth (NHC VII 5)

The Three Steles of Seth has the character of a doxological hymn whose objects of praise are the three members of the Sethian divine triad. They are successively, namely, (1) the Self-Begotten, (2) the first aeon Barbelo, and (3) the truly preexistent (ⲡⲓⲟⲛⲧⲱⲥ ⲉⲧ̀ⲱⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̀ⲱⲟⲣⲡ = τὸ ὄντως προόν) Invisible Father (NHC VII 5.121.26–27, 124.4–5), who is obviously the same as the Invisible Spirit in Apocryphon of John.[84] The male virginal Barbelo aeon (ⲙⲃⲁⲣⲃⲏⲗⲱ ⲛ̀ϩⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲙ̀ⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ), which is the first to know the preexistent or nonbeing Father (NHC VII 5.121.23–27), is spoken of as the "Triple-Powered One" in the formulation "Triple Powered One, a great monad from a pure monad" (NHC VII 5.121.32–34, slightly altered).[85] Furthermore, the Invisible Father is titled the "Triple-Powered One," but this title seems attributed to him due to the fact that Barbelo aeon is potentially present in him. The Triple-Powered One is therefore primarily the Barbelo aeon as actually existing, while the same name may be applied to the Invisible Father insofar as the Barbelo aeon has its potential and transcendent preexistence in the supreme divinity.[86] Accordingly, the triad existence–life–intellect is associated with both the Invisible Father and the Barbelo aeon. We are told that Barbelo empowers the "eternal ones" in essentiality, (ϯⲙⲛ̀ⲧ̀ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ), in vitality (ϯⲙⲛ̀ⲧ̀ⲱⲛϩ) and in intellectuality (ϯⲙⲛ̀ⲧ̀ⲉⲓⲙⲉ; NHC VII 5.122.19–26), while the Invisible Father is addressed thus: "you are the existence of them all, you are the life of them all, you are the intellect of them all" (NHC VII 5.125.28–32, slightly altered).[87]

83. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 515, 522, 584.

84. Paul Claude, *Les trois stèles de Seth: Hymne gnostique à la Triade (NH VII,5)*, BCNH, Textes 8 (Leuven: Peeters, 1983), 42, 48. See James E. Goehring, "Introduction to VII,5: The Three Steles of Seth," in *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*, ed. Birger A. Pearson, NHMS 30 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 376–77.

85. Claude, *Trois stèles de Seth*, 44: ⲟⲩⲱⲟⲙ̀ⲧ̀ⲟⲟⲙ ⲛ̀ⲧ[ⲉ ⲟⲩ]ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲥ ⲉⲛⲁⲁⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ [ⲟⲩ]ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲥ ⲉⲥⲧⲃ̄ⲃ[ⲏⲩ]. English translations of Three Steles of Seth follow James M. Robinson and James E. Goehring, "The Three Steles of Seth: Text and Translation," in Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*, 386–421.

86. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism,* 519–20, 578–79.

87. Claude, *Trois stèles de Seth*, 52: ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲕ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ ϯϩⲩⲡⲁⲣⲝⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲱⲛϩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛ[ⲁⲓ] ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ.

However, he is at the same time praised as the "existence which is before existences, the first being which is before beings, Father of divinity and vitality, creator of intellect" (NHC VII 5.124.26–31, slightly altered).[88] This formulation suggests that the triad existence–life–intellect is present in the Invisible Father—who is even called nonbeing—in a transcendent and potential way as preexistence, prelife, and preintelligence.[89] This prefigu - tive inclusion of the triad existence–life–intellect in the Invisible Father may be understood as the potential preexistence of the Barbelo aeon itself. In Three Steles of Seth, Barbelo is also called Protophanes and Kalyptos, but as we have seen, Autogenes—that is, the Self-Begotten—remains in the position of a lower divine entity, just as in Apocryphon of John. Consequently, the triadic structure of Barbelo is not yet explicated by the triad of subaeons Kalyptos, Protophanes, and Autogenes, as is the case in the other writings from the circle of Platonizing Sethian gnostics.[90] The metaphy - cal system included in Three Steles of Seth is represented schematically in table 5.

Table 5. The Metaphysical System in Three Steles of Seth

(1) Invisible Father = the truly preexistent = Triple-Powered One {	existence (of them all)–life (of them all)–intellect (of them all)
(2) Barbelo aeon = Triple-Powered One {	(empowers "eternal ones" in) essentiality–vitality–intellectuality
(3) Self-begotten (Autogenes)	

88. Claude, *Trois stèles de Seth*, 50: ϯϩⲩⲡⲁⲣⲝⲓⲥ ⲉⲧ̀ϩⲁⲑⲏ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛϩⲩⲡⲁⲣⲝⲓⲥ· ϯϣⲟⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲧ̀ϩⲁⲑⲏ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ· ⲡ̄ⲓⲱⲧ̀ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧ̀ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧ̀ⲱⲛ̄ϩ̄· ⲡⲓⲣⲉϥⲧⲁⲙⲓⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲥ·.

89. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 579.

90. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 579–80.

6.2.2. Zostrianos (NHC VIII 1)

This metaphysical system occurs in a modified form in Zostrianos (represented in table 6 below). In its supreme revelation, Zostrianos, treats the preexistent Invisible Spirit from the point of view of negative theology on the one hand and from the point of view of affirmative theology on the other. The passage dealing with negative theology represents almost a literal parallel to the corresponding passage in Victorinus's *Adv. Ar.* 1B (49.9–40), as also the passage concerned with the positive theology includes a number of terminological and conceptual parallels to *Adv. Ar.* 1B (50.1–21).[91] While the negative theology deprives the Invisible Spirit of all attributes on which human knowledge is based, the affirmative theology assigns to him a series of positive attributes, including the three "powers," that is, the existence (ϯϩⲩⲡⲁⲣⲝⲓⲥ), the life (ⲡⲱⲛ̅ϩ̅), and the blessedness (ϯⲙⲛ̅ⲧ̀ⲙⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲟⲥ; NHC VIII 1.66.14–18).[92] In another passage, the blessedness, the life, and the intellectuality (ϯⲙⲛ̅ⲧ̀ⲉⲓⲙⲉ) are again attributed to the Invisible Spirit, with the reservation that "all [these] dwell [in the] indivisibility of [the] Spirit" (NHC VIII 1.75.12–20).[93] In Zostrianos, the term "Triple-Powered One" as well as the triad existence–life–intellect is therefore primarily predicated of the Invisible Spirit—also called "Triple-Powered Spirit" (ⲡⲓϣ̅ⲙ̅ⲧ̅ϭⲟⲙ ⲙ̅ ⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲁ̅)—just as in *Adv. Ar.* 1B, where they are related to the first One or to God the Father. Nevertheless, the realm of plurality in a strict sense is represented by Barbelo aeon. As in Apocryphon of John, the Barbelo aeon is considered here too the "image" (ⲓⲕⲱⲛ, NHC VIII 1.80.8), "thought" (ⲉⲛⲛⲟⲓⲁ), or "comprehension" (ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲛⲟⲏⲥⲓⲥ) of the Invisible Spirit (NHC VIII 1.82.21–83.12).[94] Its function consists in knowing the Invisible Spirit as well as itself (NHC VIII 1.81.10–20; 87.14–16). Barbelo unfolds itself into the multiplicity of its subaeons, that is, Kalyptos, Protophanes, and Autogenes. These three subaeons are closely associated with the triad existence–life–intellect: Kalyptos is related to existence, Protophanes to

91. See Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 34–45.

92. "Zostrianos," in *Zostrien (NH VIII, 1)*, ed. and trans. Catherine Barry et al., BCNH, Textes 24 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 364.

93. See Barry et al., *Zostrien (NH VIII, 1)*, 374: [ⲛⲁϊ ⲧ]ⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲩϣⲟⲟⲡ [ϩ̅ⲛ̅ϯ] ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧ̀ⲁⲧ̀ⲡⲱⲣ̅ⲝ̅ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ [ⲡⲓ]ⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲁ̅. Translation follows "Zostrianos," in *Nag Hammadi Codex VIII*, ed. John H. Sieber, NHS 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 153, slightly altered.

94. Barry et al., *Zostrien (NH VIII, 1)*, 384, 388–90.

intellect or blessedness, and Autogenes to life (NHC VIII 1.15.4–17).[95] For this reason, not only the Invisible Spirit but also Barbelo is occasionally called the "Triple-Powered One."[96]

Table 6. The Metaphysical System in Zostrianos

(1) Invisible Spirit = Triple-Powered Spirit = Triple-Powered One {	existence–life–blessedness/intellectuality
(2) Barbelo aeon = Image/Thought of the Invisible Spirit = Triple-Powered One {	Kalyptos–Protophanes–Autogenes

6.2.3. Allogenes (NHC XI.3)

The metaphysical system of Allogenes is similar to that of Zostrianos, but Allogenes modifies it in its own specific manner (represented in table 7 below). Allogenes presents its message as a revelation offering instruction for a mystical ascent through Barbelo or its subaeons, through the Triple-Powered One or its powers, and up to the Invisible Spirit. Accordingly, the first revelation begins with a glorification of Barbelo, while the final revelation culminates in the negative theology in the shape of a litany of negative divine names.[97] In Allogenes, the Barbelo aeon—as in Zostrianos—is conceived of as the "first thought" (ϣⲟⲣⲡ ⲛⲉⲛⲛⲟⲓⲁ) of the Invisible Spirit or of the "Triple-Powered One" (NHC XI 3.48.13, 53.27–28, 64.35–36).[98] It is a first thought that knows both itself and the Invisible Spirit (NHC XI 3.45.26–30). According to Allogenes as well, Barbelo contains within himself the three subaeons Kalyptos, Protophanes, and Autogenes. The unfolding of Barbelo aeon into this plurality occurs as a process of mental reflection whose phases are identified with the three subaeons (NHC XI 3.45.31–46.11).[99] The three subaeons are again closely related to the triad

95. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 537.

96. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 519, 580.

97. See Wire, "Introduction: NHC XI,3," 176.

98. Wolf-Peter Funk et al., *L'Allogène (NH XI, 3)*, BCNH, Textes 30 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 196, 206, 228. See John D. Turner, "NHC XI,3: *Allogenes*: Notes to Text and Translation," in Hedrick, *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, 244, 250.

99. See Turner, "NHC XI,3: *Allogenes*," 245–46.

existence–life–intellect, although it seems—in contrast to Zostrianos—that Protophanes is associated more with life and Autogenes more with intellect.[100] However, the most striking innovation of Allogenes consists in considering the Triple-Powered One not merely as an epithet of the Invisible Spirit but as a distinctive divine entity occupying its own ontological level between the Invisible Spirit and Barbelo aeon. The triad existence–life–intellect is primarily attributed to the Triple-Powered One as its own distinctive powers in the form of abstract substantives: essentiality–vitality–intellectuality (ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧ̅ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ–ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧ̅ⲱⲛ̅ϩ̅–ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧ̅ⲉⲓⲙⲉ; NHC XI 3.49.26–36).[101] At the same time, the three members of the triad represent the three highest levels or final phases of the mystical ascent to the Invisible Spirit.

In comparison with Zostrianos, Allogenes lays stronger emphasis on the transcendence and unknowability of the supreme deity. It is precisely the distinction between the Triple-Powered One and the Invisible Spirit that enables the author of Allogenes to eliminate in the final revelation all positive propositions about the highest divinity and to confine himself to negative theology. In doing so, the anonymous Sethian author denies to the Invisible Spirit possession of the triad existence–life–intellect as well. Nevertheless, that does not prevent him from attributing to the highest deity the triad of corresponding pure acts: "he exists," "he knows," and "he lives": "he is something insofar as he exists, in that he either exists and will become or acts or knows, although he lives without intellect or life or existence or non-existence, incomprehensibly" (NHC XI 3.61.32–39).[102]

Table 7. The Metaphysical System in Allogenes

(1) Invisible Spirit {	he exists–he knows–he lives
(2) Triple Powered One {	essentiality–vitality–intellectuality

100. See Turner, "NHC XI,3: *Allogenes*," 251.

101. Funk et al., *L'Allogène (NH XI, 3)*, 198.

102. See Funk et al., *L'Allogène (NH XI, 3),* 222: ϫⲉ ϥϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲏ ⲉϥⲣ̅ⲉⲛⲉⲣⲅⲓ ⲏ ⲉϥⲉⲓⲙⲉ ⲉϥⲟⲛ̅ϩ̅ ⲉⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲁϥ ⲛ̅ⲛⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩⲥ· ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲱⲛ̅ϩ̅· ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲟⲩϩⲩⲡⲁⲣⲝⲓⲥ· ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲁⲧ`ϩⲩⲡⲁⲣⲝⲓⲥ ϩ̅ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧ̅`ⲁⲧ`ⲧⲁϩⲟⲥ. Translation follows Turner, "Allogenes: Text and Translation," in Hedrick, *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, 225, slightly altered.

(3) Barbelo aeon = First Thought of the Invisible Spirit or: First Thought of the Triple Powered One {	Kalyptos–Protophanes–Autogenes

6.3. Marius Victorinus and Platonizing Sethian Gnostics: Similarities and Differences

As we have seen, the treatises of Platonizing Sethian gnostics display traces of metaphysical systems showing striking similarity to metaphysical concepts present in Victorinus's theological work. That both Victorinus's writings and the gnostic treatises make use of three similar metaphysical concepts that modify the triad being–life–intelligence in three different ways is of the greatest interest. It is noteworthy that the variants of the cognate metaphysical system occurring in Three Steles of Seth, Zostrianos, and Allogenes correspond in some measure to the variations of the metaphysical concepts in *Letter to Candidus*, *Adv. Ar.* 1B, and *Adv. Ar.* 4 respectively. It is thanks to John Turner that attention has been drawn to these facts. In any case, my comparative analysis seems to confirm Turner's conclusion that the metaphysical system of *Adv. Ar.* 1B is close to that of Zostrianos, while the conceptuality used in *Adv. Ar.* 4 is similar to that of Allogenes.[103] These findings lead Turner to suppose that Victorinus and the gnostic treatises Zostrianos and Allogenes were dependent on common pre-Plotinian sources, namely, on certain Middle Platonic interpreters of Plato's *Parmenides* similar to the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides*, even though he does not exclude the possibility that Porphyry may have been one of Victorinus's sources or an intermediary between Middle Platonic sources and Victorinus.[104]

Nevertheless, the differences between Victorinus's theological writings and the gnostic treatises are conspicuous as well. In this respect, Turner's reconstruction of the metaphysical systems in Zostrianos and Allogenes needs to be corrected. Turner presupposes that the relationship between the highest deities in Zostrianos and Allogenes can be interpreted by means of the same principle of mutual implication and of dominance found in

103. See John D. Turner, "Introduction," in Funk et al., *L'Allogène (NH XI, 3)*, 146–49.

104. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 742–44; see also Turner, "Victorinus, *Parmenides* Commentaries," 85.

Adv. Ar. 1B, 3, and 4.[105] According to Turner, life and intelligence present two phases of progress and return in the process of the constitution of the Barbelo aeon, or in the process of self-knowledge of the Invisible Spirit through the Barbelo aeon.[106] As far as I can see, such application of the principle of mutual inclusion and predominance to the members of the triad conceived as individual phases of the unfolding of the Invisible Spirit into the Barbelo aeon, however, is not attested in the Platonizing Sethian treatises. The principle of mutual implication is explicitly expressed in one passage in Allogenes, but it is related only to the Triple-Powered One and its modalities (NHC XI 3.49.26–38), and nothing allows us to conclude that it explains the mutual relations between the Invisible Spirit, the Triple-Powered One, and Barbelo.

Moreover, Victorinus's writings clearly presuppose highly developed speculative systems of Platonic provenance, including a lot of elements typical of the later Neoplatonism, while in these gnostic treatises, the same elements are absent or present only in a very rudimentary and primitive form. This observation concerns among others the principle of mutual implication and of dominance, or the metaphysical theory of causality and participation with its typical triad remaining–procession–return, and the three-member scheme of unparticipated–participated–participant. These doctrines occur in Victorinus's work in a surprisingly developed and systematized form that closely anticipates the metaphysical systems of Proclus and Damascius (see §5 above). The main difference, of course, consists in the fact that in later Neoplatonism the principle of mutual implication and dominance of the members of the triad being–life–intellect is not applied to the highest divinity—the transcendent One—and does not serve to explain the relationship between the One and the realm of the intelligible being but is used as an explanatory model for the lower levels of reality represented—at least in Proclus—by the intelligible, intelligible-intellective, and intellective realms, which are subordinated to the One. In addition, we have to take into account the fact that there is a close similarity between the metaphysical systems of *Adv. Ar.* 4 and of the later Neoplatonists such as Theodorus of Asine (see §5 above), or of the anonymous authors mentioned in Proclus's *Commentary on the Parmenides* (see §4 above). It was, among other considerations, exactly this evidence that

105. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 580–82.
106. See Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 696–707.

led Baltes to conclude that Victorinus borrowed his philosophical concepts from a post-Plotinian or even post-Porphyrian source distinguishing between the transcendent One and the enneadically structured intellect (see §5 above).

7. Conclusion

The following conclusions may be drawn from the analysis provided above of the metaphysical systems included in Victorinus's work.

Victorinus made use of three metaphysical schemes that modify the triad being–life–intelligence in three different ways. It should be noted that in *Letter to Candidus*, the metaphysical triad existence–life–intelligence (or existentiality–vitality–intellectuality) is not posited at the highest level of the transcendent One or "to be": it remains only within the realm of (the) intelligible being, representing its three most significant genera. In the same text, the principle of mutual implication and dominance appears, but it is not applied to the triad but only to two members: "to be" and the movement (or the act), which is identical with the intelligible being. On the other hand, in *Adv. Ar.* 1B the triad being–life–intelligence is attributed to the transcendent One from the point of view of affirmative theology, to the extent that the One as the pure "to be" in its transcendent unity implies life and intelligence, while the intelligible being or the second One is characterized by the exterior life and intelligence, which are equated with two phases of the second One's movement: progression and return. This use of the triad being–life–intelligence presupposes two steps: (1) to apply the principle of mutual implication and dominance to the triad, and (2) to identify the triad's individual members with the three phases of the self-constitution of the divine substance or intellect, namely, with remaining, procession, and return. Finally, in *Adv. Ar.* 4, the triad being–life–intelligence is attributed to both the transcendent One and the intelligible realm in different modalities that are grammatically distinguished by means of the verbal infinitive or the third-person singular form, and of the corresponding substantive. In addition, Victorinus uses the corresponding participles, which may evoke a further ontological degree between the pure acts and forms but are understood as simple synonyms of the infinitives. He also mentions abstract forms such as existentiality, vitality, and intellectuality that are considered synonyms of the substantives.

The different structures of the metaphysical concepts indicate that the sources used by Victorinus solved the problem of the relationship between

the transcendent One and the level of the intellect or the intelligible being in different ways. In any case, the conspicuous differences between the three metaphysical systems behind Victorinus's writings suggest that they may have been drawn from at least three different sources.[107] The three conceptual systems reveal internal unity of thought and represent three alternatives but intrinsic, coherent approaches to solving the philosophical problem of derivation of the highest principles. However, the comparison of the metaphysical concepts present in Victorinus's theological work with the metaphysical systems included in other cognate antique texts seems still to lead to an aporia rather than to a convincing identification of its philosophical sources.

As we can see, it is no surprise that the debate on the sources of Victorinus's theological writings has led to many disparate hypotheses. That notwithstanding, let me conclude with some final remarks about the plausibility of the main hypotheses that are under consideration in the research:

1. It is highly unlikely that Victorinus used only one source, for example, the philosophical writings of Porphyry.[108] Victorinus probably used three different but related sources stemming from a common intellectual milieu. However, it is still possible that Porphyry was one of them, even though it is not provable.

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107. In this respect, I came to a similar conclusion as Volker H. Drecoll independently of him a few years ago. See Drecoll, "Is Porphyry the Source Used by Marius Victorinus?," in *Its Reception in Patristic, Gnostic, and Christian Neoplatonic Texts*, 65–80; Václav Němec, "Metafysické systémy v theologickém díle Maria Victorina," in *Miscellanea patristica*, ed. Ladislav Chvátal, Vít Hušek, and Jana Plátová (Brno: CDK, 2007), 37–71; *Anonymní komentář k Platónovu Parmenidovi*, trans. Václav Němec and Filip Karfík (Prague: OIKOYMENH, 2009), 49–60. However, unlike Drecoll, I do not maintain that the systems were fabricated or pieced together by Victorinus himself.

108. This hypothesis is the one originally held by Pierre Hadot and corroborated, e.g., by Willy Theiler, "Das Unbestimmte, Unbegrenzte bei Plotin," *RIPh* 24 (1970): 290–98; and Werner Beierwaltes, "Neoplatonica," *PhRu* 16 (1969): 130–52. Hadot's hypothesis is followed also by Luise Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius"; Majercik, "Existence–Life–Triad." They argue that the treatises Zostrianos and Allogenes preserved in Nag Hammadi Codex are not identical to the eponymous texts mentioned in *Life of Plotinus* but present new versions rewritten under the influence of criticism leveled by Plotinus and Porphyry against gnostics. According to Majercik and Abramowski, both Victorinus and the authors of gnostic treatises used Porphyry as their source. Hadot's hypothesis is also followed by Michael Chase (see his chapter in this volume).

2. It is improbable that Victorinus drew from the gnostic texts directly.[109] The highly speculative philosophical character of Victorinus's sources stands in the way of this hypothesis. As we saw, the metaphysical concepts that we can recognize behind Victorinus's writings share a lot of doctrinal elements with the later Neoplatonists.

3. It is possible that Victorinus borrowed his metaphysical systems directly from the same source as the authors of Zostrianos and Allogenes. Nevertheless, this would imply that these gnostics simplified their material extremely and intentionally omitted the crucial philosophical doctrines of their sources. Moreover, if we were to grant that the treatises Zostrianos and Allogenes from the Nag Hammadi library are the same as the eponymous texts known in Plotinus's school and, consequently, that they are older than or at least contemporary with Plotinus and Porphyry, it would imply that both Victorinus and the authors of the gnostic texts used a common source that preceded Plotinus and Porphyry, probably a Middle Platonic one (e.g., Numenius, Cronius, or Moderatus).[110] However, as we have seen, Victorinus's theological works contain doctrines or concepts considered typical of the later Neoplatonism. Thus, to accept this hypothesis would mean to radically reevaluate our view of Middle Platonism. In addition, the similarities between the extant fragments of Middle Platonists such as Numenius and Victorinus's theological writings are too few to give rise to the conclusion that a Middle Platonic author was the common source for both Victorinus and the authors of the Sethian gnostic treatises. In any case, we would need to explain how it is possible that some highly developed and systematized speculative elements appear only in Victorinus and in the later Neoplatonists such as Theodorus of Asine, Proclus, or Damascius. Under these circumstances, I would consider it more probable that the common sources of Victori-

109. This is the hypothesis held by Chiara O. Tommasi, "L'androginia di Cristo-Logos: Mario Vittorino tra platonismo e gnosi," *Cass* 4 (1998): 11–46; Tommasi, "*Tripotens in unalitate spiritus*." See also her chapter in this volume.

110. This hypothesis is held, e.g., by Michel Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 110–13; and Luc Brisson, "The Platonic Background in the *Apocalypse of Zostrianos*: Numenius and *Letter II* attributed to Plato," in *Tradition of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. John J. Cleary (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 173–88; see also Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 741–44. However, Turner admits that Porphyry may be "the most immediate, but not necessarily the originating source" for Victorinus (*Sethian Gnosticism*, 744; see also Turner, "Victorinus, *Parmenides* Commentaries," 85).

nus and gnostic treatises may also have been some other students and followers of Plotinus's teacher Ammonius Saccas, such as Aculinus.[111] This hypothesis could explain the occurrence of some gnostic or even Christian elements in Victorinus's sources, which would be by no means surprising in texts stemming from the intellectual milieu where Platonic, gnostic, and Christian traditions intermingled and the borders between them were not firmly drawn.

4. The other plausible possibility is that the sources of Victorinus's theological work were Neoplatonic writers who themselves had used some texts of their Middle Platonic predecessors (including Numenius). The parallels between Victorinus and gnostic treatises may be explained by the fact that the gnostic authors drew directly on one or more Middle Platonic sources, with Victorinus being influenced by the latter indirectly through his Neoplatonic source material.[112] It is conceivable that such massive borrowing from a Middle Platonic source may have been provoked by the Platonizing gnostic treatises and motivated

111. In his *Vita Plotini*, Porphyry characterizes the gnostics in Plotinus's school as "men belonging to the schools of Adelphius and Aculinus." See Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 16.1–8: Γεγόνασι δὲ κατ' αὐτὸν τῶν Χριστιανῶν πολλοὶ μὲν καὶ ἄλλοι, αἱρετικοὶ δὲ ἐκ τῆς παλαιᾶς φιλοσοφίας ἀνηγμένοι οἱ περὶ Ἀδέλφιον καὶ Ἀκυλῖνον οἳ τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Λίβυος καὶ Φιλοκώμου καὶ Δημοστράτου καὶ Λυδοῦ συγγράμματα πλεῖστα κεκτημένοι ἀποκαλύψεις τε προφέρονες Ζωροάστρου καὶ Ζωστριανοῦ καὶ Νικοθέου καὶ Ἀλλογενοῦς καὶ Μέσσου καὶ ἄλλων τοιούτων πολλοὺς ἐξηπάτων ("There were in his time many Christians and others, and sectarians who had abandoned the old philosophy, men of the schools of Adelphius and Aculinus, who possessed a great many treatises of Alexander the Libyan and Philocomus and Demostratus and Lydus, and produced revelations by Zoroaster and Zostrianus and Nicotheus and Allogenes and Messus and other people of the kind" [Armstrong]). If this evidence can be squared with Eunapius, as Mark J. Edwards argues, Aculinus was Plotinus's colleague from the circle of his old teacher in Alexandria. See Eunapius, *Vit. soph.* 4.2.1–2; Edwards, "The Gnostic Aculinus: A Study in Platonism," StPatr 24 (1993): 77–81; Dylan M. Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God: Platonism and the Exile of Sethian Gnosticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 45–46.

112. The hypothesis later maintained by Pierre Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus: Questions et hypothèses," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 123–25. Matthias Baltes can also be considered as a proponent of this hypothesis. Nevertheless, Baltes was not concerned with the parallels between Victorinus's theological writings and the treatises of Platonizing Sethian gnostics and the question of their common source. John D. Turner seems also to verge on the hypothesis in admitting that Porphyry may have been an intermediary between Middle Platonic sources and Victorinus. See §6.3 above.

by the need of post-Plotinian Neoplatonists to reintegrate the genuine Platonic doctrines into their philosophical framework. Under these circumstances, we can imagine that the refutations of Sethian writings by Amelius and Porphyry, whose existence is attested by Porphyry himself (*Vit. Plot.* 16.12–18), may have ranked among Victorinus's sources. The fact that, according to Porphyry, the Sethian treatises were composed very recently by heterodox Platonists partly of the school of Aculinus, probably Plotinus's fellow student in Alexandria, would also speak in favor of this hypothesis.[113]

5. Finally, we cannot completely exclude the possibility that the three metaphysical concepts present (in their rudimentary form) in the treatises of Platonizing Sethian gnostics that modify the triad being–life–intelligence in three different ways were developed within the Sethian gnostic tradition itself.[114] If that was the case, we would have to admit, however, that these Sethian gnostic elements were borrowed by some later (Neo-) Platonic authors between Porphyry and Proclus and developed into the elaborate speculative systems[115] whose influence on Victorinus's theological writings is obvious. Victorinus's use of a sort of gnosticizing Neoplatonism would also explain the presence of some gnostic elements in his sources unattested in any other extant Neoplatonic text, such as the occurrence of the term Triple-Powered One (τριδύναμος) or the application of the name *spirit* (*spiritus* or *pneuma*) to the transcendent God or the One.[116] Consequently, the last two hypotheses (4 and 5) allow for the option that Victorinus knew the elements of gnostic thought, but the highly speculative character of his sources, containing a number of elements typical of the later Neoplatonism after Porphyry, makes it more

113. As convincing as this hypothesis seems, the only disadvantage is its lack of economy. The hypothesis presupposes complicated relations between many different authors and texts, which can hardly be verified.

114. See Tuomas Rasimus, "Johannine Background of the Being–Life–Mind Triad," in *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World*: *Essays in Honour of John D. Turner*, ed. Kevin Corrigan and Tuomas Rasimus, NHMS 82 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 369–409.

115. See Wire, "Introduction: NHC XI,3," 187–88. Nevertheless, Wire focuses on the relationship between Platonizing Sethian gnostics and non-Christian Neoplatonic authors and does not mention Victorinus in this context.

116. See Tommasi, "*Tripotens in unalitate spiritus*"; Hadot, "Questions et hypothèses," 124.

probable that Victorinus's knowledge was mediated by the Neoplatonic writings modifying or criticizing the original Sethian doctrines.

Whatever the identity of Victorinus's sources might be, the following is certain: Victorinus incorporated in his theological work several different but cognate metaphysical systems stemming from the contemporaneous philosophical literature of (Neo-)Platonic provenance that contained remarkable attempts to solve the metaphysical problem of the derivation of the intelligible being or the divine intellect from the transcendent One. Victorinus's sources solved the problem of the relationship of the highest principles in a somewhat different way from the mainstream ancient Neoplatonists, such as Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus, or Damascius. The difference consisted mainly in the fact that Victorinus's sources used the triad being–life–intelligence and the principle of mutual implication and dominance to explain the relationship between the One and the realm of the intelligible being or intellect and, consequently, allowed a kind of coordination of the One with the subsequent ontological level.

Victorinus utilized the sources in his effort to express by means of philosophical concepts the Christian idea of the generation of the Son and the notion of consubstantiality. The notion was declared by the Nicene Creed as early as 325, but a satisfactory theological rationale was not yet available in Victorinus's time. It was the solution of the problem of identity and difference of the members of the triad being–life–intelligence and their modalities presented in different variants in his sources that provided Victorinus with an appropriate conceptual model for the explanation of the idea of substantial identity and hypostatic diversity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and which inspired him to develop a consistent trinitarian theology.

Although we are still unable to identify Victorinus's sources with certainty, his theological works offers a series of important pieces in an incomplete mosaic of our image of late antique philosophical thought. We still hold some of the pieces helplessly in our hands and hesitate where to place them. Perhaps some new manuscript discoveries will permit a definitive decision. However, the tesserae that Victorinus's work give us are very remarkable and allow us to catch sight of the contours of the unsuspected continents of the largely lost world of philosophical thought of the second to fourth centuries. They also present fascinating testimony to the interweaving of different intellectual and religious traditions of that time: Platonism, Gnosticism, and Christianity.

Augustine and the Writings of Marius Victorinus

Nello Cipriani

The hypothesis that Augustine had direct knowledge of the writings of Marius Victorinus has previously been taken into consideration by various scholars, but without anyone offering a truly convincing proof. The reason for this is that literal citations, explicit or implicit, are lacking in Augustine's works; and the truly numerous doctrinal agreements that can be recognized have not been considered by all to constitute secure proofs of direct acquaintance. At the end of the nineteenth century, Reinhold Schmid had already pointed out at least six passages of *De Trinitate* where he found echoes of Victorinus's anti-Arian treatises.[1] In the 1960s, however, Pierre Hadot judged this conclusion unconvincing, because—in his own words—"in reading *De Trinitate*, it is practically impossible to affirm whether Augustine knew the work of Victorinus or not." Nonetheless he adds, "I would be less reserved in the case of Victorinus's commentaries on the epistles of saint Paul."[2] As a matter of fact, some years earlier Alberto Pincherle in an examination of Augustine's *Expositio epistulae ad Galatas* concluded that "it seems one can affirm

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Editors' note: This paper was written in Italian and has been translated by Stephen Cooper, who is grateful to his colleague Dr. Marco Di Giulio for checking it. Translations of ancient sources into English have been supplied and cited ad loc., with exception of passages translated by Professor Cipriani, which have been rendered as literally as possible in English by Stephen Cooper.

1. Reinhold Schmid, *Marius Victorinus Rhetor und seine Beziehungen zu Augustin* (Kiel: Uebermuth, 1895).

2. Pierre Hadot, "L'image de la Trinité dans l'âme chez Victorinus et chez saint Augustin," StPatr 6 (1962): 432. A little later as well, in regard to the influence of Victorinus on *De Trinitate*, Hadot writes: "On this point I think that one cannot establish anything certain." See Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques sur la Trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, SC 68–69 (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 1:86.

with relative security that Augustine knew the commentary of Marius Victorinus and had it in front of him at a few points."[3] Subsequently, however, Antoon A. R. Bastiaensen gave a completely opposite judgment in regards to Augustine's exegesis of the Pauline letters: "We can conclude that in the process of composing his exegetical studies, Augustine did not utilize the works of Marius Victorinus but consulted those of Ambrosiaster and Jerome."[4] In 1934 Paul Henry had also noted the possibility that in *De quantitate animae* (*Quant. an.* 30.61), Augustine was inspired by Victorinus (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.32), but he then judged the question of literary dependence to be insoluble.[5] Other scholars have in the end limited themselves to highlighting some points of doctrinal agreements without any concern for offering proofs of direct dependence.[6]

To resolve the question, I believe one needs to begin from an absolutely certain fact. This indubitable fact we find in the second book of *De doctrina christiana*, where Augustine mentions Marius Victorinus as among the Latin writers who have known how to put pagan culture into the service of the Christian faith (*Doctr. chr.* 2.40.61).[7] This shows he had read

3. Alberto Pincherle, *La formazione teologica di Sant'Agostino* (Rome: Edizioni italiane, 1947), 118.

4. Antoon A. R. Bastiaensen, "Augustin commentateur de S. Paul et l'Ambrosiaster," *SacEr* 36 (1996): 57.

5. Paul Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident: Firmicus Maternus, Marius Victorinus, Saint Augustin et Macrobe*, SSL 15 (Leuven: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Bureaux, 1934), 74.

6. Among the authors who have no problem recognizing a doctrinal influence of Marius Victorinus on Augustine, I mention Ephraem Hendrikx, introduction to *Oeuvres de saint Augustin, La Trinité livres I–VII*, trans. Marcellin Mellet and Pierre-Thomas Camelot, BAug 2.15 (Paris: de Brouwer, 1955), 56–57; Bertrand de Margerie, "La doctrine de Saint Augustin sur l'Esprit-Saint comme communion et source de communion," *Aug* 12 (1972): 107–19; Augustine, *De fide et symbolo: Introduction, Translation, Commentary*, trans. E. P. Meijering (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1987).

7. "Nonne aspicimus quanto auro et argento et veste suffarcinatus exierit de Aegypto Cyprianus et doctor suavissimus et martyr beatissimus? quanto Lactantius? quanto Victorinus, Optatus, Hilarius, ut de vivis taceam? quanto innumerabiles Graeci?" Translation follows Roger P. H. Green, ed. and trans., *Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana*, OECT (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 127: "We can see, can we not, the amount of gold, silver, and clothing with which Cyprian, that most attractive writer and most blessed martyr, was laden when he left Egypt; is not the same true of Lactantius, and Victorinus, of Optatus, and Hilary, to say nothing of people still alive, and countless Greek scholars?"

and appreciated Victorinus's works. The certainty of this interpretation is reinforced by Augustine's report of the frequent contacts at Milan in 386 he had as a new convert with the old priest Simplician, who had enjoyed a personal friendship with Marius Victorinus and was surely in possession of his writings. It is for this reason sufficiently probable that Simplician had not restricted himself to relating the story of the aged rhetor's conversion to Augustine and to pointing out to him the similarities and differences between Neoplatonism and Christianity. Rather, he would also have urged Augustine to read the writings of Christian authors, thus imitating what Marius Victorinus himself did (*Conf*. 8.2.3–4).

Given this accordingly certain direct knowledge of Victorinus's writing on the part of Augustine beginning in autumn 386, one needs to find a method that enables a more secure identification of points of contact or contrast between the two. The best route to such a process of verification would doubtless be that of explicit literary citations (meaning those accompanied by the author's name or title of the work) or even implicit citations (meaning a cited text, short or long, but lacking any indication of authors of the work's title). This is in fact the sole criterion that Hadot regards as reliable: "There is certain literary dependence only if there is a literary citation."[8] Nonetheless, the same authoritative French scholar has in another work suggested following the path of conceptual and lexical structures in order to determine the literary dependence of one ancient author on another. Hadot notes that among late antique writers there is a group to which Augustine belongs, writers who "to compose their philosophical or theological works do not make use purely 'conceptual' material but use some *literary materials*" borrowed from previous authors. In other words, Hadot continues,

> For them the ideas are never separate from their literary substrate, from the phrase where they are expressed, from the development in which this phrase is inserted.… All these writers make use of prefabricated elements, so to speak.… The processes of reasoning among these authors from the end of Antiquity is never totally free from the analogies of formulas and verbal similarities.[9]

8. Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*: *Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres*, CEAug 44 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), 209.

9. Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, CEAug 33 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968), 1:33–34.

To reach trustworthy conclusions, Hadot ultimately specifies, it is important that "the conceptual structure not be reconstructed by appealing to some phrases or words separate from their context and culled from the most disparate passages: it is necessary that the conceptual structure is located in a text that by itself constitutes a literary unity."[10] So following this suggestion, I think it is possible to trace such conceptual and lexical structures that allow one to reach a secure conclusion about Augustine's literary dependence on Marius Victorinus already in the first dialogues and then in a few of Augustine's later works.

Having established this methodological presupposition for the research, we can examine the texts of Augustine where the echo or memory of the reading of Victorinus's writings is most apparent. We begin with the first dialogues, written in the autumn of 386 and accordingly before his baptism, and then turn to later works, and then *De Trinitate*. After discussion of the texts with the most evident conceptual and lexical dependence, to complete the picture, I will mention other texts as well, those presenting less weighty evidence.

1. The Dialogues

1.1. *De ordine*

In the second book of *De ordine* Augustine repeats twice in succession—and with the same terms used by Marius Victorinus—the conviction that Christ liberates people from the worst evils, and that he does not allow those who receive the faith in the mysteries to perish. In the first text he addresses people who for one reason or another are unwilling or unable to devote themselves to philosophy. He exhorts them to seek the protection of the faith, "so that He, who suffers no one that rightly believes in Him through the mysteries to perish, may by this bond (of faith) draw them to Himself and free them from these dreadful, entangling evils" (*Ord*. 2.5.15).[11] In the following paragraph he repeats the same idea, even

10. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:39.

11. Trans. Robert P. Russell, *The Happy Life*, *Answer to Sceptics, Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil, Soliloquies*, trans. Ludwig Schopp et al., FC 5 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 291. For the critical text, see Augustine, *Contra academicos; De beata vita; De ordine; De magistro; De libero arbitrio*, ed. William M. Green and Klaus D. Daur, CCSL 29 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), 115.37–41: "Si autem aut pigriores sunt aut aliis negotiis praeoccupati aut iam duri ad discendum, fidei sibi

if the subject that performs the act of liberation is no longer Christ but the mysteries themselves when received with faith: "veneranda mysteria, quae fide sincera et inconcussa populos liberant" (*Ord.* 2.5.16).[12] Both of these texts affirm that Christ liberates those who believe in the mysteries, but they leave unsaid what mysteries are under discussion. The same ideas, expressed in the same words but with greater clarity, are recorded in various passages of the Pauline commentaries of Marius Victorinus. I limit myself to a few of them. In a passage of the commentary on the letter to the Ephesians, one reads: "Accordingly, with the mystery that has come to completion here with the flesh, the cross, death, and resurrection, help has come to the aid of souls, and if faith in Christ is present, he receives these souls, helps, and liberates them" (*In Eph*. 1:4).[13] Once again in the same commentary it reads: "I have admonished, and I have often admonished, that the 'door' of our liberation is the faith in Christ. His mystery has in fact liberated us—if we follow him" (*In Eph*. 3:12).[14] In *De ordine* Augustine does not present an explicit citation of these and other similar passages,[15] but he repeats the same concepts with the same words—*fides*, *credere*, *mysteria*, *Christus*, *liberare* or *liberatio*—a repetition that cannot be the result of coincidence but is rather the proof of a recent reading of the Pauline commentaries of Marius Victorinus.

1.2. *Soliloquia*

It is also possible to glean from the initial prayer in the *Soliloquies* a memory of a reading of Victorinus's christological hymn when Augustine

praesidia parent, quo illo vinculo ad sese trahat atque ab his horrendis et involutissimis malis liberet ille, qui neminem sibi per mysteria bene credentem perire permittit."

12. Augustine, *Contra academicos; De beata vita*, 116.52–53. "the venerated mysteries, which liberate persons of sincere and firm faith" (Russell, *Happy Life*, 291).

13. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior: Opera exegetica*, ed. Franco Gori, CSEL 83.2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986), 9.93–96: "Ergo mysterio, quod hic implevit et carne et cruce et morte et resurrectione, subventum est animis, et, si in Christum fides sumatur, ille suscipit huiusmodi animas et adiuvat et liberat."

14. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 11–13: "Monui et saepe monui eam esse ianuam liberationis nostrae, si in Christum credamus; mysterium enim eius liberavit nos, si eum sequamur."

15. In this passage Victorinus speaks of the *mysterium* in the singular, but then he explains that it is a matter of the mysteries of the incarnation, cross, death, and resurrection. Other passages read similarly: *In Eph.* 3:12; 4:32; *In Phil.* 1:29.

invokes "Deus, per quem vincimus inimicum" ("God, by whom we conquer the enemy" [*Sol.* 1.1.3]).[16] Oliver du Roy understands the invocation as addressed to the Holy Spirit but supplies no compelling ground, nor explains what enemy Augustine alludes to.[17] In light of Victorinus's hymn, however, one understands that the God invoked by Augustine is Christ and that the enemy overcome by him is the devil. Indeed, after Marius Victorinus in his second hymn mentions in lines 48–49 "my enemy" ("inimico meo"), against whom he struggles while living in the flesh, and the reported conquest of the devil ("in qua victus diabolus") that "gave Christ a great triumph and us the protection of faith," he calls on Christ in line 56: "in me vince diabolum" ("Conquer the devil in me") (*Hymn.* 2.48–50).[18] Here also it seems undeniable that the two authors are expressing their faith in Christ with an identical conceptual and lexical structure: Christ, I, we, the enemy. Previously the Christian faith of the newly converted Augustine had been cast in doubt, or it had at least been judged not fully complete on account of his intellectualism.[19] To acknowledge in the two passages just cited from Augustine an echo of the Paul commentaries of Victorinus allows us to interpret his own words better. This also means recognizing that for Augustine already in autumn 386, Christ was not just the master teacher who saves with his teaching and his example;[20] he was also the very one who liberates us from the worst evils, by faith in his

16. Augustine, *Soliloquiorum libri II*, ed. Wolfgang Hörmann, CSEL 89 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986), 6.6.

17. Otto du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin: Génèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966), 196 n. 2.

18. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 292: "Diu repugno, diu resisto inimico meo, sed adhuc mihi caro est, in qua victus diabolus, tibi triumphum magnum, nobis murum dedit" ("Long do I fight back, long do I resist my enemy / But I still have the flesh, in which the devil was conquered / Which gave you [Christ] great triumph and us the bulwark of faith" [slightly altered]). Unless otherwise noted, translations follow Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatises on the Trinity*, trans. Mary T. Clark, FC 69 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981).

19. Particularly prominent is Prosper Alfaric, who at the beginning of the twentieth century maintained that Augustine converted more to Neoplatonism than to Christianity. See Alfaric, *L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin*: *Du Manichéisme au Néoplatonisme* (Paris: Nourry, 1918).

20. This was the conclusion expounded by Georges Folliet based on Augustine's letter to Nebridius. See Folliet, "*Deificari in otio*, Augustin, Epistula 10,2," *RechAug* 2 (1962): 225–36.

mysteries, because by means of him we succeed in conquering the enemy, the devil.

1.3. Trinitarian Thought in Augustine's Dialogues

The Trinitarian thought expressed by Augustine in his first dialogues becomes more comprehensible when read in light of Victorinus's Trinitarian doctrine. The thesis maintained by du Roy and accepted by other scholars is well known: the reading of the books of the Platonists in spring 386 brought Augustine to confuse the Christian Trinity with the Plotinian triad, and particularly to confuse the Holy Spirit with the world-governing Logos.[21] In fact, a careful reading of the first dialogues in light of Victorinus's anti-Arian treatises brings a rather different conclusion. A decisive passage in this regard occurs in the second book of *De ordine*:

> The philosophy that is true—the genuine philosophy, so to speak—has no other function than to teach what is the First Principle of all things, Itself without beginning, and how great a mind [*intellectus*] dwells therein, and what has proceeded therefrom for our salvation but without degeneration of any kind. These mysteries teach that this First Principle is one God omnipotent, and that he is tripotent, Father and Son and Holy Spirit. (*Ord.* 2.5.16)[22]

To express the faith in the unity and Trinity of God, Augustine here does not use the term *trinitas*, by then a well-established ecclesiastical usage, but the term *tripotens*, used in Trinitarian a context only by Marius Victorinus (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.50).[23] Likewise, the expression "principium sine principio"

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21. Du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi*, 147–48.

22. Russell, *Happy Life*, 291 (slightly altered). See Augustine, *Contra academicos; De beata vita*, 116.46–52: "Nullumque aliud habet negotium, quae vera, ut ita dicam, germana philosophia est, quam ut doceat, quod sit omnium rerum principium sine principio quantusque in eo maneat intellectus, quidve inde in nostram salutem sine ulla degeneratione manaverit, quem unum Deum omnipotentem, eumque tripotentem patrem et fillium et spiritum sanctum, docent veneranda mysteria."

23. Victorinus writes: "Hic est Deus … tripotens in unalitate spiritus … tres potentias couniens" ("This is God … Spirit having in unity a triple power.… it unites these three powers"). For the critical text, see Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), 144.1–145.4–10. The same author also made use of the corresponding Greek term τριδύναμος, instead of the Latin *tripotens*, which he brings out in

to indicate the Father is recorded only in Marius Victorinus.[24] The same holds for the term νοῦς, which Augustine prefers to translate here into Latin with *intellectus*.[25]

Immediately after this unique Trinitarian terminology ("principium sine principio"), there follow two expressions that can be fully understood only in light of Victorinus's Trinitarian doctrine: "how great a mind [*quantusque intellectus*] dwells therein, and what has proceeded therefrom for our salvation but without degeneration of any kind [*sine ulla degeneratione manaverit*]."[26] Indeed, as Manlio Simonetti explains, Victorinus configured the divinity as a double dyad: "the first is composed of the Father and the Son, and the Son then separates into the dyad Christ/Holy Spirit;" and "the Son (= *motus*) unfolds himself as the Holy Spirit only after Christ has terminated his work with the Ascension. Therefore, while Christ derives from the Father, the Holy Spirit derives from Christ by an analogous relationship."[27] As regards the first dyad, Victorinus states that the Logos (= *nous* or *intellectus*) "in his own self-sameness remains in the Father" ("est in patre manens idem ipse," *Adv. Ar.* 1A.44).[28] This means, as Augustine

his explication: "id est tres potentias habens" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.21; *Opera pars prior*, 257.26). According to Roland Kany, the term *tripotens* will have been used by Victorinus "with a different nuance of meaning than in Augustine," and, according to other lines of research, could have been suggested to Augustine by the priest Simplician. See Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken: Bilanz, Kritik und Weiterführung der modernen Forschung zu "De Trinitate"* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 300. The two observations do not exclude the possibility that Augustine read the term in Victorinus's treatises.

24. One encounters the expression *principium sine principio* in the letter of Candidus (*Cand.* 1.) and in the response of Marius Victorinus (*Ad Cand.* 16).

25. See Marius Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 1B.56; *Adv. Ar.* 4.21. Hadot also highlights the identification of the Christian Logos with the Neoplatonic νοῦς on the part of Marius Victorinus (*Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:295).

26. According to du Roy the phrase "quidve inde in nostram salutem manaverit sine ulla degeneratione" refers only to the Holy Spirit, understood as an emanation (*L'intelligence de la foi*, 125–26). But the verb *manare* does not mean "emanation" in the Neoplatonic sense; and the expression *in nostram salutem* does not permit excluding Christ, who according the Nicene Creed came down from heaven "for us and for our salvation"! For a fuller explication of this passage, see Nello Cipriani, "Le fonti cristiane della dottrina trinitaria nei primi Dialoghi di S. Agostino," *Aug* 34 (1994): 263–68.

27. Manlio Simonetti, "Mario Vittorino," in *Dal concilio di Nicea (325) al concilio di Calcedonia (451)*: *I Padri latini*, vol. 3 of *Patrologia*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1978), 73.

28. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 134.17–20.

says, that the divine Intellect remains in his greatness (*quantusque intellectus*). The second dyad is in turn expressed by Augustine with the words "quidve inde in nostram salutem manaverit sine ulla degeneratione" ("and what has proceeded therefrom for our salvation but without any degeneration") (*Ord*. 2.5.16). For our salvation, and without any deterioration, there descended from heaven not only the Son—as Aimé Solignac interprets it—but the Holy Spirit too, who is himself also "perfect God, because no degeneration impacts him" (*Beat.* 4.35); and, as Victorinus says, the Holy Spirit "was generated from the Father with Christ and in Christ" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.33).[29] Hence, Augustine shows with these words written before receiving baptism that he drew on ideas from Marius Victorinus, whether the idea that the Holy Spirit is generated from the Father with the Son, or that they—the Son and the Holy Spirit—came into the world for our salvation with losing anything of their divinity.[30]

According to Pierre Hadot, "in Augustine there is no trace of an expansion of the monad into a triad, of a movement of procession and retroversion."[31] Actually a trace of such a conceptual structure, exactly that of Victorinus but of Porphyrian inspiration, is found in *De beata vita*, where one reads that the Truth (= the Son) receives his being from the *summus modus* (= the Father), "from whom he proceeds [*procedit*] and to whom he returns when perfected [*se perfecta convertit*]" (*Beat*. 4.34).[32] The same ideas expressed with the same words are recorded in two of Vic-

29. Aimé Solignac, introduction to *Oeuvres de saint Augustin, Les Confessions I–VII*, trans. Eugène Tréhorel and André Bouissou, ed. Martin Skutella, BAug 2.13 (Paris: de Brouwer, 1962), 81. Augustine, *Contra academicos; De beata vita*, 84.274–75: "nihilque aliud etiam hoc iubar (= the Holy Spirit) apparet esse quam deum nulla degeneratione inpediente perfectum." Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 276.20–23: "Iam vero spiritum sanctum … a patre per Christum genitum et in Christo." Also in *Hymn.* 3.61, Victorinus designates the Holy Spirit as "begotten with the begotten" (*genito genitus*).

30. This is better grasped if one has keeps in mind that for Marius Victorinus, "Jesus is the Spirit revealed, since he is in the flesh, while the Holy Spirit is the hidden Jesus that is instilling knowledge" (*Adv. Ar.* 3.14). The former idea is confirmed in the opening prayer of the *Soliloquies*, when he calls on God as *Pater pignoris*, "Father of the Pledge" (*Sol.* 1.1.2); the "Pledge" is doubtless the Holy Spirit, as the correction made in *De Trinitate* 5 demonstrates. See Nello Cipriani, "La *retractatio* Agostiniana sulla processione-generazione dello Spirito Santo (*Trin*. 5.12.13)," *Aug* 37 (1997): 431–39.

31. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:477.

32. Augustine, *Contra academicos; De beata vita*, 84.255–257: "Veritas autem ut sit, fit per aliquem summum modum, a quo procedit et in quem se perfecta convertit."

torinus's texts. In the first it is said that the Son has received his being from the Father, from whom he proceeds in order to attain his perfection: "The Son has received [sc. of the Father] that he would exist, and he has also received in regard to that which is 'to act': proceeding [*procedens*] by action toward act and coming into perfection, he achieves fullness by movement" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.13, modified).[33] In the second text it is specified that the Son, having been turned to himself, returns perfected to the Father: "When Life [= the Son] once again returned within itself [*in semet ipsam conversa*], it returned to its own paternal existence … having become perfect in its omnipotent power" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.51).[34] As one can see, not only does the newly converted Augustine speak "of a movement of procession and retroversion," but it is also expressed in the same terms used by Marius Victorinus: *procedit*, *perfecta*, *se convertit*. In any case, it is well to observe that some of these concepts, picked up immediately after a reading of Victorinus's writings, will subsequently be criticized and abandoned by Augustine.

It is at least probable that the author of *De beata vita* is still inspired by Marius Victorinus at the point where, without using the term *persona*, he says in regard to the Trinity: "These three are one God and one substance" ("quae tria unum deum … unamque substantiam," *Beat.* 4.35).[35] The same ideas and the same lexical choice occur in Victorinus's writing. He was opposed to the use of the term *persona*, and for that reason he preferred to repeat the expression *tria unum* ("the three are one") in regard to the three Persons and to the single substance: "Quod omnia tria unum, pater … filius … paraclitus" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.13); "substantia unum, subsistentia tria sunt ista.… necessario et sunt tria et tamen unum" (*Adv. Ar.* 3.4); "iure tria unum, vi et substantia" (*Adv. Ar.* 3.18); "deum esse unum et solum, quod illa tria … necessario unum sunt" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.22); "tria enim ista spiritus sunt: deus, Iesus, spiritus sanctus" (*Adv. Ar*. 4.4).[36]

33. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 72.14–16: "Filius autem, ut esset, accepit et in id quod est agere ab actione procedens in perfectionem veniens, motu efficitur plenitudo."

34. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 147.35–47: "rursus in semet ipsam conversa, venit in patricam exsistentiam … et perfecta in omnipotentem virtutem."

35. Augustine, *Contra academicos; De beata vita*, 84.284.

36. "Indeed, these three are Spirit: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit." On Victorinus's opposition to the term *persona*, see *Adv. Ar.* 1A.11: "Therefore one ought not say that 'there are two persons, one substance [*duae personae, una substantia*],' but that the Father and the Son are two [*duo*] from one substance, with the Father giving substance to

1.4. Epistemological Priority of Authority and Faith

To the conceptual and lexical structures examined up to this point one can add to them another structure having to do with epistemology, even if in the case of Augustine one does not find it in the same context. In *De ordine*, the convert from Thagaste affirms that faith in authority is temporally prior to reason: "tempore auctoritas … prior est" (*Ord*. 2.9.26). He repeats the same idea in practically the same terms in *De vera religione* (*Ver. rel.* 24.45), where he discusses *auctoritas* as "a kind of temporary remedy [*quaedam temporalis medicina*] which … is prior in the order of time [*ipsius temporis ordine prior est*]."[37] The temporal priority of faith eventually receives confirmation with a biblical witness in the first book of *De libero arbitrio* (*Lib*. 1.2.4), written in the year 388: "nisi credideritis non intellegetis" (Isa 7:9 LXX, VL).[38] Indeed, in his commentary on the Pauline letter to the Ephesians, Marius Victorinus says "ordo est, ut prior fides sit"; and then he confirms the idea with the same biblical witness of Isaiah: "Sic enim dictum est: si credideritis, tunc intelligetis" (*In Eph.* 3:18).[39] Here too I maintain that the coincidence of the ideas and terms used in the two authors cannot be attributed to chance but would find its logical explanation in a recent reading of Victorinus's texts on the part of Augustine.

2. *De fide et symbolo*

The oration delivered by the presbyter Augustine in Hippo at the synod of the African bishops in October 393 was published after revision under the title *De fide et symbolo*. The work has been examined by various scholars in regard to the sources inspiring it. Bertrand de Margerie hypothesized

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the Son from his own substance, to this effect: that in his having begotten the Son, they are both on that basis *homoousioi*" (trans. Cooper; Clark's translation omits this sentence).

37. For the critical text, see *Augustinus, De doctrina christiana; De vera religione*, ed. Joseph Martin, CCSL 32 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 215.10–12.

38. Augustine, *Contra academicos; De beata vita*, 213.10–13. "Unless you have come to believe, you will not understand."

39. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 54.24–26 ("In order, faith is prior. For the one who believes arrives at knowledge, as it is written: *if you have believed, then will you understand*"). Translation follows Stephen A. Cooper, *Metaphysics and Morals in Marius Victorinus' Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians: A Contribution to the History of Neoplatonism and Christianity*, AUS 5.155 (Lang: New York, 1995), 83.

dependence of Augustine on Victorinus, on account of the fact that both consider the Holy Spirit to be the *communio* of the Father and the Son.[40] The term *communio*, however, does not occur in Victorinus's writings. To indicate the link that binds Father and Son, he uses other words: *copula*, *conexio*, or *complexio*.

Other points of literary dependence have been signaled by E. P. Meijering in a publication of 1987, foremost in regard to the etymological derivation of the term *sanctus* from the verb *sancire*.[41] Marius Victorinus simply writes: "In fact, the Holy Spirit is himself called holy because he sanctifies [sanciat] the saints, that is, he makes them holy" (*Adv. Ar*. 3.15); Augustine presents the same etymology but gives a different explanation of it, which suggests a difference source.[42] Indeed, he says: "Moreover he is called *Holy* Spirit, since whatever is made holy is made holy [*sanciuntur*] in order to abide for ever. And there is no doubt that the word sanctity is derived from *sancire*, to make holy" (*Fid. symb*. 9.19).[43] The same scholar signals other passages of the same discourse in which Augustine seems inspired by Victorinus. One detail concerns Trinitarian analogies drawn from the physical world. None of the analogies present in Augustine's

40. De Margerie, "Doctrine de St. Augustin," 108–11.

41. Meijering, *Augustine: De fide et symbolo*, 128–30.

42. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 218.43–44: "ipse vero spiritus sanctus dictus, quod sanciat sanctos, id est sanctos faciat" ("In fact, the Holy Spirit is himself called holy because he sanctifies the saints, that is, he makes them holy"). One could find such an etymology recorded in the books of the jurists and the grammarians. See the scholium of Servius on the phrase *sanctum mihi numen* of *Aen*. 8.382: "si 'sanctum' simpliciter accipiatur, leve est. 'numen' ergo 'sanctum' ut 'leges sanctas' dicimus, id est firmas, a sanciendo" ("If we take 'sacred' in its simple meaning, the phrase is easy to understand. We say 'sacred divinity,' then, as we say 'sacred laws'—that is, established laws—from the establishing of something as sacred" [translation by Cooper]). For the critical text, see Servius, *In Vergilii carmina commentarii: Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, ed. Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884), 257.16–18.

43. Unless otherwise noted, translations of *De fide et symbolo* follow John H. S. Burleigh, *Augustine, Earlier Writings* (London: SCM, 1953). For the critical text, see Augustine, *De fide et symbolo, De fide et operibus, De agone christiano, De continentia, De bono coniugali, De virginitate, De bono viduitatis, De adulterinis coniugiis, De mendacio, Contra mendacium, De opere monachorum, De divinatione daemonum, De cura pro mortuis gerenda, De patientia*, ed. Joseph Zycha, CSEL 41 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1900), 24.16–18: "et ideo Spiritus sanctus dicitur, quoniam ad permanendum sanciuntur quaecumque sanciuntur, nec dubium est a sanciendo sanctitatem vocari."

discourse—neither *fons*, *fluvius*, *potio*, nor *radix*, *robur*, *rami*—correspond exactly to the analogies given by Victorinus in *Hymn.* 3.30–33: *fons*, *flumen*, *inrigatio*; and in lines 87–89 of the same: *semen*, *arbor*, *fructus*.[44] Nor indeed in the exegesis of John 3:6 do the two authors coincide so as to suppose a direct dependence of Augustine on Victorinus.[45]

The Trinitarian exegesis of Rom 11:36 is a different case, one where the literary dependence appears sufficiently evident. After citation of the Pauline text—"quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso"—Marius Victorinus explains it concisely: "*From him*, as is said of the Father; *through him*, as is said of Christ; *in him*, as is said of the Holy Spirit" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.18, slightly altered).[46] Augustine at first pass maintains that the "the same Trinity is signified when the apostle says 'All things are therefore from him, in him, and through him' [Rom 11:36]" (*Fid. symb*. 9.16). At second mention of the passage he repeats the same exegesis, though without indicating the individual divine persons by their proper names—*Pater*, *Christus*, *Spiritus Sanctus*—but with a circumlocution: "'Of him' points to him who owes existence to none; 'through him' points to the Mediator; and 'in him' points to the one who contains all things and binds them together" (*Fid. symb*. 9.19).[47] Further such points of contact in this text, in my view, can be inferred from an allusion to Victorinus also where Augustine rejects the idea that the Holy Spirit is generated and affirms the perfect equality of the Son with the Father: "He is the image of the Father, though in no way dissimilar but altogether and indistinguishably equal" (*Fid. symb*. 9.18).[48] With the final words "omnino indifferenter aequalis," Augustine corrects Victorinus, who, as we will see more clearly in the following, says that Christ is simultaneously equal and unequal to the Father for various reasons (see Marius Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 1A.13).

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44. "Source / River / Overflow"; "Seed / Tree / Fruit."

45. Meijering, *Augustine: De fide et symbolo*, 129–30.

46. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 80.1–3: "Ex ipso, ut dicitur de patre; per ipsum, ut de Christo, in ipso, ut de sancto spiritu."

47. *Augustinus, De fide et symbolo*, 25.19–22: "ex ipso, tamquam ex eo qui nulli debet quod est; per ipsum, tamquam per mediatorem; in ipso, tamquam in eo qui continet, id est, copulatione coniungit."

48. *Augustinus, De fide et symbolo*, 21.7–8: "hic [sc. filius] vero illius imago, quamvis nulla ex parte dissimilis et omnino indifferenter aequalis."

3. *Expositio epistolae ad Galatas*

As I stated in opening, there is a matter of controversy about the literary dependence of Augustine on Marius Victorinus in the commentaries both men wrote on the letter of Paul to the Galatians. In the introduction I mentioned the positive conclusion reached by Pincherle, who was certain that Augustine "knew the commentary of Marius Victorinus and had it in front of him at a few points,"[49] but I also recalled the opposed conclusion of Bastiaensen, for whom Augustine in composing his exegetical works made no use of those of Victorinus.[50] More recently I examined the question, reaching the conclusion that in at least seven passages there appears to be a literary dependence of Augustine's commentary on that of Marius Victorinus.[51] Of the seven exegetical coincidences I note, Eric Plumer affirms the coincidence that had previously been observed by Alexander Souter on Gal 3:1 and has adopted my suggestion of another on Gal 2:19.[52] Shortly after Plumer's work was published, Stephen Cooper in a study and translation of Victorinus's commentary on Galatians largely confirmed my claims of literary dependence regarding the exegesis of Paul.[53]

Plumer's negative judgment notwithstanding, I persist in maintaining that there are at least two other indubitable passages where Augustine's exegesis corresponds exactly to that of Victorinus.

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49. Pincherle, *Formazione teologica di Sant'Agostino*, 118. Four points are alleged by Pincherle: (1) the vindicated reliability of the apostle Paul at the beginning of his epistle (Victorinus, *In Gal.* 1:1; Augustine, *Exp. Gal.* 2); (2) the contrast between the two exegetes regarding the *simulatio* of Peter (*In Gal.* 2:11–16; *Exp. Gal.* 16); (3) the distinction between ritual works of the law and moral works of the law (*In Gal.* 3:10; *Exp. Gal.* 19); and (4) the distinction between the natural sonship of Christ and the adoptive status of believers (*In Gal.* 4:5; *Exp. Gal.* 30).

50. Bastiaensen, "Augustin commentateur," 57.

51. Nello Cipriani, "Agostino lettore dei Commentari paolini di Mario Vittorino," *Aug* 38 (1998): 414–16.

52. Eric Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 28–29 n. 149.

53. Stephen A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 182–85, 198–241.

3.1. Galatians 2:21

On Gal.2:21, the apostle writes: "If there is justice through the law, then Christ has died in vain" (VL: "Nam si per legem iustitia est, ergo Christus gratis mortuus est"). Victorinus explains it thus: "'gratis mortuus est,' id est sine causa mortuus est" ("'has died in vain'—that is, has died for no reason," *In Gal.* 2:21).[54] Augustine repeats the same explanation with the same words: "ergo Christus 'gratis mortuus est,' id est sine causa mortuus est" ("'For if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died in vain'—that is, died for no reason," *Exp. Gal.* 17.13).[55]

3.2. Galatians 4:17

On Gal 4:17 the apostle writes: "Aemulantur vos non bene et excludere vos volunt, ut illos aemulemini" ("They are badly emulous of you and want to exclude you, in order that you would be emulous of them"). Victorinus explains the first part: "'Aemulantur,' inquit, 'vos,' id est invident vobis" ("they are emulous of you, he says, meaning they are jealous of you"); and the second part: "'Ut illos aemulemini,' ut vos sequamini" ("'in order that you would be emulous of them,' so that you would follow them"), "because emulation means imitation" (*In Gal.* 4:17).[56] Augustine explains the two affirmations in the same manner: "'Aemulantur vos non bene,' id est invident vobis"; the second part: "'Ut illos aemulemini,' hoc est imitemeni" (*Exp. Gal.* 37).[57] I find myself in accord with Plumer in recognizing another exegetical coincidence that I had not paid attention to: the expression *spes salutis*, "hope of salvation," recorded only in 1 Thess 5:8, occurs a good seven times in Victorinus's commentary and five times in Augustine's.[58] In conclusion, as far as concerns Augustine's commentary on the letter to the Galatians, it does not seem that one can

54. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 125.14–15; trans. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians*, 285.

55. Augustine, *Expositio quarumdam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos, Epistulae ad Galatas expositio, Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*, ed. Johannes Divjak, CSEL 84 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971), 75.3–5.

56. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 150.4–5, 12–14.

57. Augustine, *Expositio quarumdam propositionum*, 106.3–6.

58. Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 28–29.

deny its literary dependence in at least several points on the commentary Victorinus composed on the same letter.

4. *De Trinitate*

4.1. First Part of *De Trinitate* (Books 1–4)

The inquiry, conducted to this point in regards to the first dialogues and some writings composed prior to his ordination as bishop, has put a spotlight on the fact that Augustine doubtless read the writings of Marius Victorinus and that he rather more frequently culled some ideas from them (e.g., the begetting of the Holy Spirit). In *De Trinitate*, a work of his maturity, Augustine adopts a few of Victorinus's affirmations about the Holy Spirit, but more often he criticizes him. At times this is for particular biblical exegeses, on other occasions for some bit of Trinitarian terminology, or for an idea—more philosophical than scriptural—about the begetting of the Word. Last, he criticizes him for a particular mode of taking *similitudo mentis*—the analogy of the mind—to understand the begetting of the Word. In sum, Victorinus's Trinitarian theology continues to be kept close in mind by Augustine in *De Trinitate*, but almost always to be criticized and rejected, except in the case of the idea of the Holy Spirit as *connexio* or *complexus* of the Father and the Son. Let us then examine the passages of *De Trinitate* where one can note, more or less clearly at times, the echo of the reading its author made of Marius Victorinus's anti-Arian writings.

In the introduction to the work, Augustine denounces among ideas of God to be rejected that of self-begetting: "those who suppose that God is of such power that he actually begets himself are … even more wrong" ("Qui autem putant eius esse potentiae deum ut seipsum ipse genuerit, eo plus errant," *Trin*. 1.1.1).[59] In *Adv. Ar.* 1B.55, Victorinus explains that God the Father is "suae ipsius substantiae generator" ("the begetter of his own substance"); and he uses a similar expression in *Adv. Ar.* 1.40, saying of the Father that he is "sui generator est exsistentis" ("the begetter of his

59. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, ed. William J. Mountain and Francois Glorie, CCSL 50–50A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968), 28.32–33. Translation follows Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City, 1991), 66. [Editors' note: For passages of *De Trinitate* where Hill's translation is too loose for the purposes of Cipriani's demonstrations, we have supplied the translation of *NPNF*[1], vol. 3).]

own existence").[60] We cannot exclude the possibility, however, that in this denunciation Augustine has Neoplatonist philosophers in view, since the auto-creation of the One is discussed by Plotinus as well (6.8.20; 5.3.17).

It is a different matter in the case of the exegesis of John 16:13–15 recorded at *Trin.* 2.3.5. Here, after having recalled Christ's words—"Ille me clarificabit quia de meo accipiet et annuntiabit vobis"—Augustine continues: "Now except that he had gone on immediately to say 'All that the Father has is mine; that is why I said, he will receive of mine and will tell it to you' [John 16:14], it might be supposed that the Holy Spirit is begotten of Christ as he himself is begotten of the Father" (*Trin.* 2.3.5 [Hill, altered]).[61] According to Augustine, the author of this exegesis did not take account of the fact that after the words "he will receive of mine" ("de meo accipiet"), Christ added, "All that whatsoever the Father has is mine, that is why I said he shall receive of mine and will tell it to you." That author, if he had taken account of these words, would have understood the previous ones with the meaning that "the Holy Spirit receives of the Father, just as the Son has" (*Trin.* 2.3.5 [Hill, altered]).[62] I believe that the exegesis here criticized corresponds exactly to the exegesis of the same gospel passage made by Marius Victorinus in *Adv. Ar.* 1A. This is precisely his exegesis of Christ's words "he will receive of mine" (John 16:14) as entailing the belief that "the Holy Spirit is begotten of Christ as he himself is begotten of the Father." From the same Johannine passage and almost the same words, Victorinus indeed reached the same conclusion rejected by Augustine: "the Holy Spirit is from the Son just the Son comes from God" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.13).[63]

I believe one can recognize another allusion to Marius Victorinus's teaching in *Trin.* 2.10.18, where Augustine excludes the possibility that from the words of the gospel "This is my beloved Son" (Matt 3:17; 17:5) one could believe or understand that "Jesus is the son of the Holy Spirit

60. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 152–153; 127.22–23.

61. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 85.6–10: "Post haec verba nisi continuo secutus dixisset: Omnia quaecumque habet pater mea sunt; propterea dixi: Quia de meo accipiet et annuntiabit vobis, crederetur fortasse ita natus de Christo spiritus sanctus quemadmodum ille de patre."

62. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 86.16–17: "restat ut intellegatur etiam spiritus sanctus de patris habere sicut et filius."

63. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 72.28–29: "ex filio spiritus sanctus, sicuti ex deo filius."

or of himself" (*Trin*. 2.10.18).[64] Although in none of Victorinus's surviving works—several commentaries on the Pauline epistles have indeed been lost—does one read that this twofold conclusion could be reached based on those words of the gospel, the author of the anti-Arian treatises nonetheless has no hesitation in speaking of Jesus as the son of the Holy Spirit (be it in regard to his temporal begetting or the eternal begetting), and he also writes that the Son begets himself: "the Son begetting himself by himself, but by the power of the Father the Son begetting himself by himself" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.32).[65] Therefore, the hypothesis that here too the criticism of Augustine was aimed at Victorinus's exegesis is not at all without basis.

4.2. Second Part of *De Trinitate* (Books 5–7)

If in the first section of the work (books 1–4), dedicated to correcting erroneous exegeses of Scripture, we find a few allusions to Marius Victorinus, we find much more of it in the second section (books 5–7), dedicated to the speculative deepening of the Trinitarian faith. In the first part of book 5, Augustine does a couple of things. He rebuts the arguments of the Arians, who from the attributes of "unbegotten" (*ingenitus*) and "begotten" (*genitus*)—respectively predicated of the Father and the Son—had concluded by affirming their substantial difference; and he explains how the divine persons are distinguished one from another by their relationships of origin. In the second part, Augustine is concerned to achieve precision, first about the correct use of the absolute terms and then about the correct use of the relative terms such as *Father*, *Son*, *beginning*, *word*, and *image*. On the correct use of the relative terms he starts by observing: "We speak of the Holy Spirit of the Father, but we do not reverse it and speak of the Father of the Holy Spirit, or then we should take the Holy Spirit to

64. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 104.80–82: "Ibi enim cogimur non nisi patris accipere ubi dictum est: Hic est filius meus dilectus; neque enim Iesus etiam spiritus sancti filius aut etiam suus filius credi aut intellegi potest" ("For we are compelled to understand of the Father only, that which is said, 'This is my beloved Son.' For Jesus can neither be believed nor understood to be the Son of the Holy Spirit, or even His own Son" [*NPNF*[1] 3:46]).

65. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 112.3–4: "a se se generans filius, sed potentia patris se se generans filius."

be his son" (*Trin*. 5.12.13 [Hill, slightly altered]).[66] We therefore cannot say "Father of the Holy Spirit," because one ought not imply that the Holy Spirit is the Father's son. With this observation Augustine could have been alluding to Marius Victorinus, the very one who says that the Holy Spirit "has been begotten by the Father through Christ and in Christ" (*Adv. Ar.* 4.33, slightly altered).[67] He even more simply defines the Spirit as *genito genitus*, "begotten with the begotten" (*Hymn.* 3.61).

In the following paragraph (*Trin.* 5.13.14), Augustine observes that the term *Father* is used in the relative sense, as is also the term *beginning*, but *Father* is said only in relation to the Son, while *beginning* is said in regard to all that comes from him.[68] Here too Augustine could have had Victorinus in mind, who calls the Son or the Logos also "Father," in the sense of being the beginning of all creatures. Indeed, he writes: "The *Logos* is therefore father and producer of all things, he 'through whom all things have been made, and without whom nothing has been made' [John 1:3]" (*Ad Cand*. 18).[69] In the commentary on the letter to the Ephesians he writes that Christ is "pater omnium quae creata sunt" ("father of all things that have been created") (*In Eph.* 3:15).

Continuing in the same paragraph, Augustine pursues the point, writing: "the Son is relatively [*relative*] so called; he is called also relatively the Word and the Image; and in all these appellations he is referred to the Father, but the Father is called by none of them" (*Trin.* 5.13.14 [*NPNF*[1] 3:94, slightly altered]).[70] In making these precise points, Augustine certainly had in mind Marius Victorinus, who incorrectly employs these

66. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 220.6–8: "Dicimus enim spiritum sanctum patris, sed non vicissim dicimus patrem spiritus sancti ne filius eius intellegatur spiritus sanctus."

67. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 276.22–24: "Spiritum sanctum … a patre per Christum genitum et in Christo."

68. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 220–221.1–3: "Dicitur ergo relative Pater idemque relative dicitur principium … sed Pater ad Filium dicitur, principium vero ad omnia quae ab ipso sunt" ("The Father is called so, therefore, relatively, and He is also relatively said to be the Beginning … but He is called the Father in relation to the Son, the Beginning in relation to all things, which are from Him" [*NPNF*[1] 3:94]).

69. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 36.5–6: "Pater ergo omnium et generator λόγος, per quem omnia effecta sunt et sine quo factum est nihil."

70. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 221.3–6: "Item dicitur relative filius; relative dicitur et verbum et imago, et in omnibus his vocabulis ad patrem refertur; nihil horum pater dicitur."

appellations, attributing even to the Father the terms *word* and *image*, and to the Holy Spirit the term *Son*—terms that belong instead to the Son alone. Indeed, in his third anti-Arian treatise, Victorinus writes that the Father too, like the Son, is "word," even if he is *verbum tacens*, "word in silence" (*Adv. Ar.* 3.8). Likewise the term *image*, which in Scripture is attributed only to the Son in regard to the Father, is used by Marius Victorinus in a completely different sense. For him the Father is also an image: "Therefore both Father and Son are one image. If the image of the Father is the Son and if the image itself is the Father, they are therefore *homoousioi* [consubstantial] in respect to image. For the image itself is substance" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.20).[71] Victorinus indeed in his letter to Candidus explicitly attributes the name of "Son," properly belonging to the Only Begotten, to the Holy Spirit as well: "The Holy Spirit by his own action differs from the Son, although he is himself Son" (*Ad Cand*. 31).[72]

Last, in the first paragraphs of the sixth book we have a confirmation that the criticisms made in the fifth book about the use of relative terms are aimed precisely at Marius Victorinus. Indeed, in book 6 Augustine takes up the discussion about the use of the terms *verbum* and *imago* not only to reiterate that "the Father and Son are not both together the Image, but the Son alone is the Image of the Father, just as he—not both—is Son." He also indicates that at the origin of the attribution of the term *imago* to the Father are the first words of the prologue of the Fourth Gospel (John 1:1): "In principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud Deum" (*Trin*. 6.2.3).[73]

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71. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 86.8–10: "Ergo et pater et Filius, imago una. Si imago patris filius est et ipsa imago pater, imagine ergo ὁμοούσιοι. Ipsa enim imago substantia est."

72. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 47.7–8: "Qui quidem Spiritus Sanctus propria sua actione differt a Filio, filius cum ipse sit."

73. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 230.23–29: "Sic enim verbum quomodo imago; non autem pater et filius simul ambo imago, sed filius solus imago patris quemadmodum et filius; non enim ambo simul filius. Quod vero adiungitur: Et verbum erat apud deum, multum est ut sic intellegatur: verbum, quod solus est filius, erat apud deum, quod non solus est pater sed pater et filius simul deus" ("for he is the Word in the same way as he is the Image, but the Father and Son are not both together the Image, but the Son alone is the Image of the Father: just as he is also the Son of the Father, for both together are not the Son. But in that which is added, 'And the Word was with God,' there is much reason to understand thus: 'The Word,' which is the Son alone, 'was with God,' which is not the Father alone, but God the Father and the Son together" [*NPNF*[1] 3:98, slightly altered]).

It just so happens that an exegesis such as this corresponds exactly to what one reads in Victorinus's letter to Candidus (*Ad Cand.* 16–17).[74]

4.3. The Begetting of the Son (*De Trinitate* 6)

In book 6 of *De Trinitate* we find other clear confirmations that the author of the work has direct knowledge of the theology of Marius Victorinus and criticizes it at various points. At the opening of the book, Augustine mentions that according to some people, Paul's words "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24) "hinder them from admitting the equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because it is written, 'Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God'; in that, on this ground, there does not appear to be equality, because the Father is not Himself power and wisdom, but the begetter of power and wisdom" (*Trin.* 6.1.1 [*NPNF*[1] 3:97, slightly altered]).[75] It is unclear whether a similar exegesis was proposed by the Arians, as has been written;[76] I think that the exegesis is attributable to Marius Victorinus. Although he was a defender of the Nicene *homoousion* and accordingly a proponent of the substantial equality of the divine persons, he ended up admitting a definite inequality between the Father and the Son, precisely by interpreting 1 Cor 1:24 in light of certain Neoplatonic ideas. In fact, as Hadot observes, Victorinus on the one hand accepted the idea that "God is power and wisdom in potentiality, and the Son is power and wisdom in act,"[77] whereby God effects his own beginning in passing from potentiality to act (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.40); and on the other hand he defended the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father—as defined in the council of Nicaea—by affirming that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of the same divine substance. He

74. [Editors' note: Victorinus's discussion in *Ad Cand.* 16–17 uses the Greek term λόγος rather than what he takes to be its Latin (verbal and conceptual) equivalents, *verbum* and *imago.* Thus the penultimate sentence of ch. 17: "That is why the *Logos* is also God because he was 'with God' and 'in the principle,' just as God also is the unbegotten *Logos* since God himself is *Logos*, but *Logos* silent and in repose."]

75. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 228.1–7: "Aequalitatem patris et filii et spiritus sancti putant nonnulli ex hoc impediri quominus intellegatur, quia scriptum est: Christum dei virtutem et dei sapientiam, ut ideo non videatur aequalitas quia non est pater ipse virtus et sapientia sed genitor virtutis et sapientiae."

76. See Michel R. Barnes, "*De Trinitate* VI and VII: Augustine and the Limits of Nicene Orthodoxy," *AugStud* 38 (2007): 189–202.

77. Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 2:821.

makes this affirmation on the grounds that each of them is "to be," "to live," and "to understand" (*esse*, *vivere*, *intelligere*), and that they are distinguished one from another by the criterion of predominance. Thus the Father is *magis esse* ("more to be"), the Son *magis vivere* ("more to live", also *vita*, "life"), and the Holy Spirit is *magis intelligere* ("more to understand") and *intellegentia* ("understanding"). That explains why Marius Victorinus affirms that the Son is both "equal" (*aequalis*) and "unequal" (*inaequalis*) to the Father (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.13), resting his claim on John 14:28 ("the Father is greater than I") and on Phil 2:6 ("he did not think it robbery to be equal with God"). This whole mode of thinking is criticized and rejected by Augustine. After having cited the Scripture "he did not think it robbery to be equal with God" (Phil 2:6), Augustine concludes: "Therefore any adversary of the truth whatever, provided he feels bound by apostolic authority, must needs confess that the Son is equal with God in each one thing whatsoever" (*Trin.* 6.3.5 [*NPNF*[1] 3:99]).[78]

The criticism aimed at Marius Victorinus continues further in the book 6 in regard to the term *triplex*. Victorinus makes use of *triplex* many times in treating the subject of the Trinity. In the letter to Candidus he speaks of *de triplici unitate*, a "triple unity" (*Ad Cand*. 31); and in the fourth anti-Arian treatise he says, "in the individual Persons there is a triple individuality" (*triplex igitur in singulis singularitas*, *Adv. Ar.* 4.21). In his first hymn as well he writes: "But … by the procession of acts there is thrice a triple singularity" ("sed quo progressu actuum sit ter triplex alterum," *Hymn.* 1.55).[79] Augustine repeatedly objects to the use of this term: "Neither, since He is a Trinity, is He therefore to be thought triple [*triplex*].… In no manner is He to be called threefold.… And therefore He is a Trinity rather than triple" (*Trin.* 6.7–8.9 [*NPNF*[1] 3:101, slightly altered]).[80] No other Latin author besides Marius Victorinus uses the term *triplex* instead of *trinitas*.

78. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 233.46–48: "Cogitur ergo quivis adversarius veritatis qui modo tenetur auctoritate apostolica in qualibet vel una re aequalem deo filium confiteri."

79. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 287.

80. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 237.8, 238.3–19: "Nec quoniam trinitas est, ideo triplex putendus est…. nullo modo triplex dicendus est … et ideo trinitas potius quam triplex."

4.4. On a Passage from Hilary (*De Trinitate* 6.10.11)

In *Trin.* 6.10.11 Augustine takes up a passage from Hilary's *De Trinitate* (*Trin.* 2.1) for examination, where the Gallic bishop has recourse to proper terms to indicate and distinguish the divine persons: "Eternity in the Father, he says, form in the Image, enjoyment in the Gift" ("aeternitas in Patre, inquit, species in imagine, usus in munere").[81] Augustine is not content with explaining the sense in which he interprets Hilary's affirmations but takes advantage of them to make the point about his position regarding Victorinus's theology. The latter, as I have mentioned, makes use of the triad *esse–vivere–intelligere* to uphold the consubstantiality of the Trinity, but then in order to distinguish the persons, Victorinus has recourse to the criterion on predominance, claiming that the Father is *more* "to be," the Son is *more* "to live," and the Spirit is *more* "to understand." Augustine repeats here the same triad used by Victorinus (*esse–vivere–intelligere*) to affirm on the contrary the absolute equality and likeness of the Son with the Father whose image he is. Whereas Victorinus says that the Son is "equal and unequal to the Father," on the grounds that the Father is more "to be" than the Son, Augustine in the first place forcibly asserts that the Son is "prima aequalitas et prima similitudo nulla in re dissidens et nullo modo inaequalis et nulla ex parte dissimilis" (*Trin.* 6.10.11).[82] He then follows this up by affirming that *esse*, *vivere*, and *intelligere* in the Son are

81. In fact, in the text cited by Augustine, Hilary did not say *aeternitas in Patre*, but *infinitas in aeterno*: "infinity in the Eternal, His Likeness in His express Image, our enjoyment of Him in the Gift" (*NPNF*^{2} 9:52). Nonetheless, at the beginning of book three (*Trin.* 3.2), the Gallic bishop had spoken explicitly of the *aeternitas patris*.

82. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 241.13–15. [Editors' note: The full passage from Augustine, *Trin.* 6.10.11, quoted in this and the following paragraph reads as follows in *NPNF*^{1} 3:103: "And in respect to this Image, he [Hilary] has named form, I believe in account of the quality of beauty, where there is at once such great fitness, and prime equality, and prime likeness, differing in nothing, and unequal in no respect, and in no part unlike, but answering exactly to Him whose image it is: where there is prime and absolute life, in whom it is not one thing to live and another to be, but the same thing to be and to live; and prime and absolute intellect, in whom it is not one thing to live, another to understand, but to understand is to live, and is to be; and all these are one. The Image is like a perfect Word, to which nothing is wanting, and a certain skill of the omnipotent and wise God, full of all living, unchangeable sciences [*rationum*], and all one in it, as itself is one from one, with whom it is one" (slightly altered).]

not diverse realities. The Son is the first and the highest life, and Augustine states precisely why: because he is that image "where there is primal and absolute life, to whom it is not one thing to live and another to be, but the same thing to be and to live" ("ubi est prima et summa vita, cui non est aliud vivere et aliud esse, sed idem et esse et vivere"). The Son is the first and the highest intellect, because he is "prime and absolute intellect, in whom it is not one thing to live, another to understand, but to understand is to live, and is to be, and all things are one, like the perfect Word he is" ("et primus ac summus intellectus, cui non est aliud vivere et aliud intelligere sed id quod est intelligere, hoc vivere, hoc esse est unum omnia tamquam verbum perfectum"). It seems to me sufficiently evident that behind the insistence on the absolute simplicity of God there is tucked away the intention to push back on the idea belonging to Victorinus that in the Trinity the persons are distinguished one from another on the grounds that one person surpasses another in a certain absolute perfection.

In any case, after having established a position in opposition to that of Marius Victorinus in regard to the relationship of the Son with the Father, Augustine concludes with two utterances of a strong philosophical flavor that one also encounters in the author under criticism: "and all [are] one in it, as itself is one from one, with whom it is one" ("et omnes unum in ea [imagine] sicut ipsa unum de uno cum quo unum," *Trin.* 6.10.11).[83] The expression "one-all" (*unum omnia*) is also used by Victorinus (*Adv. Ar.* 4.22), and before him by Plotinus (*Enn.* 5.2.1.19).[84] Also the slightly enigmatic expression "ipsa unum de uno cum quo unum" recalls Victorinus, who in his first hymn speaks of the three as one: the Father is One; the Son begotten by the Father is One ("Unum autem et tu pater es, unum quem genuis, filius," *Hymn.* 1.12); and the Holy Spirit, who unites all things, is One ("in unum qui cuncta nectis, tu es sanctus spiritus"); and more simply in another Trinitarian hymn: "Ab uno omnia / Per unum omnia / In uno omnia" (*Hymn.* 3.91–93).[85] It is nonetheless good to note how already in Augustine's *De musica*, the Father and the Son are referenced with the

83. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 241.23–24.

84. Victorinus's unacknowledged quotation of Plotinus in this passage was first discerned by Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident*, 49.

85. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 286; 285.6; 297.91–93. "You yourself, O Father, are One, and One is the Son whom you have begotten" (slightly altered); "And binding all things in One, you are the Holy Spirit"; "All from one / All through one / All in one."

same terms: "Unum et Unum de Uno" ("One, and One from One"), united by the love that is the Holy Spirit (*Mus*. 6.17.56).[86]

Augustine finds himself in accord with Marius Victorinus also in recognizing the unifying role of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, and he expresses himself with the same terms. Still in the sixth book, in fact, Augustine first defines the Holy Spirit as "inseparabilis et aeterna conexio" ("an inseparable and eternal bond") (*Trin.* 6.4.6); and a few paragraphs later he calls him "complexus patris et imaginis" ("the loving embrace of the Father and the Image" (*Trin.* 6.10.11). Marius Victorinus calls the Holy Spirit first *conexio* and then *complexio* of the Father and the Son in his third hymn: "Tu, spiritus sancte, conexio es; conexio autem est quidquid conectit duo"; and a little later: "Esque ipsa tertia complexio duorum" (*Hymn.* 3.242–46).[87] This is certainly the most important doctrinal point on which Augustine is fully in accord with Victorinus, a point that more than any other doctrine proves his direct dependence on him.

4.5. Begetting in God Again (*De Trinitate* 7)

In book 7 Augustine resumes his criticism of the exegesis of 1 Cor 1:24 made by "some people," according to which the Father is not power and wisdom in himself but only through his having begotten the Son, who is power and wisdom in act. That the author of such an exegesis was Marius Victorinus is demonstrated by the fact that he indeed is the one who on the basis of 1 Cor 1:24 writes that the Father is "the begetter of his own existence" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.40).[88] For while the Son is power and wisdom in act, "God is therefore the potentiality of these two things, and for that reason he is Father because they come from him. Indeed he begets

86. One needs to observe, however, that for Victorinus "the third One is the multiple unity of all beings, the universe" (Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 2:1062), while for Augustine the third One is the Holy Spirit.

87. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 303. The whole stanza is translated thus by Clark: "You, Holy Spirit, are a bond [*conexio*]; but a bond is whatever unites two; / In order to unite all, you first unite the two; / You, the third, are the embrace [*complexio*] of the two: embrace identified with the one, since you make the two one." Augustine prefers to say *complexus* instead of *complexio*, but he changes only the declension; the word is the same.

88. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 127. 22–23: "patre, qui sui generator est exsistentis."

them to be his own action" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.40, slightly altered).[89] Augustine observes the absurd consequences of such an exegesis that would follow. "If the Father is not powerful through his power nor wise through his own wisdom," but only because he begot the Son, who is power and wisdom in act, it follows that everything one says about the Father—that he is great, that he is God, or just that he exists—one asserts always and only to the extent that he has begotten the Son, through whom "the Father would not only not be Father but would not exist at all apart from the condition of having a Son" (*Trin.* 7.1.1).[90] That the criticism is aimed against Marius Victorinus can be concluded as well from another argument by which Augustine demonstrates how that exegesis would lead one to deduce that the Son is only a quality of the Father. He writes: "But if the Father who begot wisdom becomes wise on account of it, and if for him to be is not the same as to be wise, then the Son will become a quality of his, not his offspring, and at that point there will be no longer be absolute simplicity" (*Trin.* 7.1.2 [Hill, slightly altered]).[91] Victorinus says something of this sort in *Adv. Ar.* 1A.6.[92] Hadot summarizes thus: "to the Homoeousians who say that the life of the Father and the life of the Son are two substances, Victorinus wants to points out that the living God is substance and life is his own quality."[93]

Another allusion to Marius Victorinus can also be inferred in the seventh book, apropos of the exegesis of Gen 1:26. Augustine writes: "There are some for whom the Son is the image, while man is not the image, but according to the image" (*Trin.* 7.6.12).[94] Marius Victorinus writes exactly

89. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 127.25–26.

90. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 245.44–45: "Ac per hoc etiam excepto eo quod pater est non sit aliquid pater nisi quia est ei filius."

91. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 248.144–46: "Quod si et pater qui genuit sapientiam ex ea fit sapiens neque hoc est illi esse quod sapere, qualitas eius est filius, non proles eius, et non ibi erit iam summa simplicitas."

92. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 62–63.14–17: "Si vita filius, vivens pater, filius in patre. Sicuti enim quale prius est, deinde qualitas, sic vivens primus deus, sic vita. Qui enim genuit vitam, vivens est" ("If the Son is life, the Father living, the Son is in the Father. For just as there is first something qualified, then the quality, so there is first the living God, and thus life. For he who is living has begotten life").

93. Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques*, 1:74.

94. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 267.152–54: "Sunt enim qui ita distinguunt ut imaginem velint esse filium, hominem vero non imaginem sed ad imaginem." It is notable that in *Div. quaest. LXXXIII*, 51.4 Augustine shares the same idea.

the same thing: "For man is not the image of God, but he is 'according to the image.' For Jesus alone is image of God" (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.20).[95]

4.6. The Analogy of the Mind

The presence of Marius Victorinus in the Trinitarian reflection of Augustine, which clearly surfaces in the first part of *De Trinitate*, does not fail to make itself felt in the second part as well. There the author applies himself to illustrating the church's Trinitarian faith not only to "those who believe on the basis of the authority of divine Scripture, but also to such as understand, by some kind of reason, if we can" (*Trin.* 15.1.1 [*NPNF*[1] 3:199, slightly altered]),[96] that is, by means of psychological analogies. Major scholars have in the past undertaken to research the philosophical sources that can have had various kinds of influence on this conception, orienting themselves at first with a preference for Plotinus's *Enneads* and then for Porphyry and Stoicism.[97] The first to compare Augustine's psychological conception with that of Marius Victorinus was Hadot. He had no difficulty recognizing that in both authors, "the intellectual and voluntary activity of the soul was considered as an image of the eternal begetting of the Son."[98]

Despite this recognition, however, the French scholar maintained that he had to exclude a direct dependence of the bishop of Hippo on Victorinus, because the two men had different and opposed ideas in their modes of understanding the procession of the will from the mind. Indeed, Marius Victorinus in his commentary on the letter of Paul to the Ephesians proposes taking recourse to the analogy of the mind to illustrate the begetting of the Son from the Father, attributing to the mind a "begetting" of thought or will. For Augustine the mind begets only thought, or better, knowledge,

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95. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 85.4-6: "Ergo homo non imago dei, sed secundum imaginem. Solus enim Iesus imago Dei."

96. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 460.11–14: "Quae utrum sit trinitas non solum credentibus divinae scripturae auctoritate, verum etiam intellegentibus aliqua si possumus ratione iam demonstrare debemus."

97. In the direction of Plotinus went especially Michael Schmaus, *Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des heiligen Augustinus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1927). Porphyry and Stoicism was the direction of the research of Willy Theiler, *Porphyrios und Augustin* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1933); Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*; Jean Pèpin, "Une nouvelle source de Saint Augustin: Le zètema de Porphyre 'Sur l'union de l'ame et du corps,'" *REA* 66 (1964): 53–107.

98. Hadot, "L'image de la Trinité," 432.

but not will. For reason of this notable contrast, Hadot excluded a direct dependence of the latter on the former, preferring to propose a hypothesis of a common Neoplatonic source, likely Porphyrian.[99] Now, it is not hard to grasp the reason that pushed Augustine to take a position against the idea that the will is begotten from the mind like thought. He maintained that "love [*caritas*] is nothing other than the will" (*Trin*. 15.20.38),[100] and that the Holy Spirit is properly speaking the love of the Father and the Son (*Trin*. 6.5.7; 15.19.37). For that reason Augustine was altogether unable to accept the idea that will or love would be begotten or be the offspring of the mind: "the Holy Spirit is not to be believed or thought to be begotten by the Father in a way that he too would be called a son" (*Trin*. 9.12.17).[101] Thus notwithstanding the differing ideas on the origin of the will, we cannot rule out the possibility that Augustine picked up the suggestion from Victorinus of the analogy of the mind. Augustine undertook to demonstrate through his analyses of the mind that the will proceeds from the mind in a different way than thought or knowledge does, really in order to show that the procession of the Holy Spirit that is actually love is different from the begetting of the Son.

A proof of direct dependence, moreover, can be extracted from a comparison of texts as well. Marius Victorinus writes:

> One must examine very attentively how the Son exists and how the Father exists. Indeed, it is not through a known begetting, but one must have recourse to an analogy: as if by a birth of the mind, the will that has been conceived breaks forth and is poured out with its thought. The thoughts of the soul, surely, are in a manner of speaking its children. Furthermore, because God by his all-encompassing thought has one will, there is one and only one Son. (*In Eph*. 1:1)[102]

99. Hadot, "L'image de la Trinité," 433–35.

100. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 516.38–39: "Nam quid est aliud caritas quam voluntas?"

101. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 308.6–11: "non spiritus quoque sanctus a patre deo genitus vel creditur vel intellegitur, ut filius etiam ipse dicatur."

102. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars posterior*, 3.22–26: "Simul et hoc adtentius videndum, quomodo filius sit et quomodo pater. Non enim generatione nota, sed similitudo capienda est, quasi quodam partu mentis cogitatione prorumpit velle conceptum et effunditur. Etenim cogitationes animae quasi filii sunt animae. Porro cum deus universali cogitatione unam voluntatem habeat, unus et filius et unicus." Translation follows Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Ephesians*, 44 (slightly altered).

In another passage as well he defines the matter thus: "all will is an offspring" ("omnis voluntas progenies est," *Adv. Ar.* 1A.31). Augustine not only picks up the suggestion from Victorinus to make use of the analogy of the mind to illustrate in some measure the Son's begetting by the Father, but he also repeats the expression *partus mentis* and other terms (*concipio*, *voluntas*, *proles*). Offering some precision, however, Augustine states: "The birth of the mind is preceded by a longing … thanks to which the offspring is born, which is the very knowledge itself. Consequently, this longing with which the knowledge was conceived and was born cannot rightly be called a birth or an offspring" (*Trin.* 9.12.18).[103] Leading up to this statement he maintains that "this longing can be called a will, since all who are seeking something want to find it" (*Trin.* 9.12.18).[104] Not content with these clarifications, since Marius Victorinus on the one hand calls the Son *excogitatio Dei*, "God's thinking" (*Ad Cand.* 24), and the Holy Spirit *excogitatio patrica*, "the paternal thinking" (*Adv. Ar.* 1B.57); and on the other hand he says *filius autem voluntas est* ("the Son is will") and the Son is *voluntas patris* ("the will of the Father," *Adv. Ar.* 1A.31), Augustine takes care in the final book to state the matter with precision: "This is why the Word of God is not be to spoken of as the thought of God, to prevent us from believing that there is anything unstable in God" (*Trin.* 15.16.25).[105] Further, "if any person in the Trinity is also to be specially called the will of God, this name, like love, is better suited to the Holy Spirit" (*Trin.* 15.20.38).[106]

5. Conclusion

Augustine's Trinitarian reflections are from beginning to end strongly marked by the Trinitarian thought of Marius Victorinus. The doctrine

103. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 310.69–73: "Partum ergo mentis antecedit appetitus quidam quo id quod nosse volumus quaerendo et inveniendo nascitur proles ipsa notitia, ac per hoc appetitus ille quo concipitur pariturque notitia partus et proles recte dici non potest."

104. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 310.61–65: "Qui appetitus, id est inquisitio, quamvis amor esse non videatur quo id quod notum est amatur (hoc enim adhuc ut cognoscatur agitur), tamen ex eodem genere quiddam est. Nam voluntas iam dici potest quia omnis qui quaerit invenire vult."

105. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 500.1–2: "Quapropter ita dicitur illud dei verbum ut dei cogitatio non dicatur ne aliquid esse quasi volubile credatur in deo."

106. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, 516.36–38: "Sed voluntas dei si et proprie dicenda est aliqua in trinitate persona, magis hoc nomen spiritui sancto competit sicut caritas."

concerning the Holy Spirit is doubtless the most important issue on which the two encountered each other and clashed with each other. The bishop of Hippo received from Victorinus the idea that the Holy Spirit is the Person who unites the Father and the Son, but he forcibly rejected the idea—after he had accepted it in his earliest writings—that the Holy Spirit was begotten by the Father along with the Son. In addition, Augustine picked up from Victorinus the suggestion of having recourse to the analogy of the mind to illustrate the Trinitarian mystery not only in the arena of Scripture, as had been done in the western part of the empire by Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose of Milan, but in the arena of the intellect. Yet Augustine found himself only halfway in agreement with Victorinus in resorting to the analogy of the mind. He agrees in illustrating the begetting of the Son with the generation of the mind's knowledge of itself, but he does not agree about the procession of the Holy Spirit, because the will is not begotten from the mind but proceeds from the mind and from knowledge. Besides the case of the interpretation of the analogy of the mind, however, the contrasts between the two men are numerous and deep, also in their way of understanding Trinitarian faith generally. Victorinus conceived the unity of the Trinity only on the level of substance, understood metaphysically; conversely, for Augustine, the Trinity, besides being a substantial unity, is also a unity and communion of love. The former distinguished the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by resorting to the Neoplatonic criterion of predominance; the latter distinguished them according to reciprocal relations and personal love. The former understood begetting in God in a Neoplatonic manner as self-determination; the latter understood it as an act of love in which the Father gives himself totally to the Son, replete with the power that proceeds from the Son as well as the Holy Spirit. In brief, Victorinus, although not totally neglecting Scripture, speculated on the Holy Trinity by following the schemata of Neoplatonic philosophy to an excessive extent. Augustine, without really renouncing the attempt to see with the mind's eye that which he had grasped by faith, meditated on the mystery by getting guidance above all from Scripture and the faith of the church.

Essence and Existence in Marius Victorinus and in Avicenna

Michael Chase

It is well known that in general Marius Victorinus uses the Latin term *ex*(*s*)*istentia* to translate the Greek *hyparxis* (existence), *substantia* to translate *ousia* (substance), and *subsistentia* to translate *hypostasis* (subsistence).[1] As far as the meaning of these terms is concerned, Victorinus declares that *existentia* is opposed to *substantia* in the way that pure Being (Greek, τὸ εἶναι; Latin, *esse*), considered without its accidents, is opposed to a concrete existent (Greek τὸ ὄν; Latin *ens* or, in Boethius, *id quod est*) once the latter has been determined by its substantial and accidental qualities

1. But not always. In some passages, Victorinus exhibits the confusion between *hyparxis* and *hypostasis* that was typical of several fourth-century church fathers. See Thomas Leinkauf, "Die Bestimmung des höchsten Prinzips als reines Sein—(Porphyrios), Victorinus, Boethius," in *Metaphysik und Religion: Zur Signatur des spätantiken Denkens*, ed. Theo Kobusch and Michael Erler, BzAK 160 (Munich: Saur, 2002), 72. In such passages (e.g., *Adv. Ar*. 4.33; *Adv. Ar*. 3.8), it is *ousia*/*substantia* that designates being in its indeterminate form, while *hyparxis* refers to its determinate form. See Pierre Hadot, "Existentia," in *Plotin, Porphyre: Etudes néoplatoniciennes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1999), 59. Finally, Victorinus sometimes uses *existentia* as a mere synonym of *substantia* (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.30; *Adv. Ar.* 1B.55). This is one of many signs that indicate Victorinus was working from several quite different sources, which he integrated and reconciled with varying success. See Václav Němec, "Die Theorie des göttlichen Selbstbewusstseins im anonymen *Parmenides*-Kommentar," *RhM* 154 (2011): 205 n. 37. See also Kristell Trego, "Substance, sujet, acte: La première réception latine d'Aristote: Marius Victorinus et Boèce," *EPh* 101 (2012): 235 and n. 2; Claudio Moreschini, "*Subsistentia* according to Boethius," in *Boethius as a Paradigm of Late Ancient Thought*, ed. Thomas Böhm, Thomas Jürgasch, and Andreas Kirchner (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 92. Moreschini emphasizes the influence of Victorinus on Boethius in this regard.

or predicates.[2] Perhaps Victorinus's clearest statement on the subject is the following:

> What do we say substance is? As the wise and the ancients have defined it: that which is a substrate, that which is something, that which is not in anything else. And they differentiate between existence and substance: indeed, they define existence and existentiality as preexisting subsistence without accidents because they subsist purely and only in that which is only "to be": but they define substance as a subject with all its accidents inseparably existing within it. (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.30)[3]

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2. *Adv. Ar.* 1A.30: "substantiam autem subiectum cum his omnibus quae sunt accidentia in ipsa inseparabiliter exsistentibus" (*Opera pars prior*, 108.24–26; "but they define substance as a subject with all its accidents inseparably existing within it"); *Cand*. 1.2: "substantia autem non esse solum habet, sed et quale aliquid esse" (*Opera pars prior*, 3.21–22; "whereas substance has not only 'to be' but also has a 'to be' something qualified"); *Adv. Ar*. 2.4: "Omne enim quod est ὄν, esse est cum forma" (*Opera pars prior*, 177.30–31; "Indeed, all that which is on [existent] is to be with form"); *Adv. Ar*. 1A.30: "exsistentiam quidem et exsistentialitatem praeexsistentem subsistentiam sine accidentibus" (*Opera pars prior*, 108.21–23; "indeed they define existence and existentiality as preexisting subsistence without accidents"); *Cand*. 1.2: "exsistentia ipsum esse est et solum esse et non in alio esse aut subiectum alterius, sed unum et solum ipsum esse" (*Opera pars prior*, 3.19–21; "existence is 'to be' itself, 'to be' which is neither in another nor subject of another but solely 'to be' itself "). See Pierre Hadot, "La distinction de l'être et de l'étant dans le De Hebdomadibus de Boèce," in *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter: Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung*, ed. Paul Wilpert, MM 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), 149, 152. Here, as often, there is a remarkably close parallel between Victorinus and the sixth-century CE Neoplatonist Damascius. See *Dub. et sol*. 120: Ταύτῃ ἄρα διοίσει τῆς οὐσίας ἡ ὕπαρξις, ᾗ τὸ εἶναι μόνον καθ' αὑτὸ τοῦ ἅμα τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁρωμένου ("It is in this respect, then, that existence will differ from substance: as being alone by itself [will differ] from what is seen together with the other things [viz., qualities or predicates]"). For the critical text, see Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis*, in *Platonis Parmenidem*, ed. Charles Émile Ruelle (repr., Brussels: Culture et civilisation, 1964), 1:312; Damascius, *Traité des Premiers Principes*, ed. and trans. Leendert G. Westerink and Joseph Combès, Budé 309, 323, 341 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986–1991), 3:152.13–15. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Victorinus's theological treatises are from Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatises on Trinity*, trans. Mary T. Clark, FC 69 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001). For the critical text, see Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior: Opera theologica*, ed. Paul Henry and Pierre Hadot, CSEL 83.1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1971).

3. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 107.20–26: "Quid dicimus esse substantiam? Sicuti sapientes et antiqui definierunt: quod subiectum, quod est aliquid, quod

Thus, Victorinus postulates a contrast between two kinds or rather states or stages of being: an initial state, represented by the simple, pure, indeterminate act of being, prior to any composition, and a subsequent stage in which being is compounded with qualities. At this (ontologically) posterior stage, we no longer have to do with pure Being as an indeterminate act that produces form: instead, being is henceforth *being-something* (*aliquid esse*): a concrete substance[4] endowed with qualitative form. Whereas in its original, indeterminate state, Being or Existence is unknowable, being, or rather the existent *qua* substance, is henceforth determinate and knowable.[5]

1. The Source of Victorinus's Doctrine

According to Pierre Hadot, this doctrine presupposes a very specific metaphysical doctrine, according to which Being (*existentia*), as a pure act or subjectless verbal infinitive, starts out in a state of absolute universality and indeterminacy, then gradually determines itself by the addition of increasingly particular determinations or qualities. This doctrine, which has many parallels with that of such late Greek Neoplatonists as Damascius, has its origin in the metaphysical speculation of the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry of Tyre.[6] Building on, but adapting and reversing,

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est in alio non esse. Et dant differentiam exsistentiae et substantiae; exsistentiam quidem et exsistentialitatem praeexsistentem subsistentiam sine accidentibus, puris et solis ipsis quae sunt in eo quod est solum esse, quod subsistent; substantiam autem subiectum cum his omnibus quae sunt accidentia in ipsa inseparabiliter exsistentibus."

4. Here too, Victorinus's usage fluctuates. He can also refer to God as substance, and even "primary substance, universal substance." See *Adv. Ar.* 2.1, quoted in Stephen Cooper, "Marius Victorinus," in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1:541. For the formula *aliquid esse*, see Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 4.10; 19 (*Opera pars prior*, 240.50; 254.19). Similarly, for Avicenna the First Principle is only Being, not being-something. See Olga Lizzini, "Ibn Sina's Metaphysics," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2016 ed., ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://tinyurl.com/SBL4214d. See also <Porphyry>, *In Parm.* 10.23–24: οὐκ ἔστιν δὲ τοιόνδε ὁ θεός ("God is not something qualified"). For the critical text, see Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, CEAug 33 (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1968), 2:96.

5. Hadot, "Distinction de l'être," 148.

6. This is a highly controversial point, of course: Michael Tardieu influentially argued that a Coptic parallel to a passage in Marius Victorinus implies the existence of a source common to both Victorinus and certain Gnostic writings read in the circle of

Plotinus in 263CE; this source was Middle Platonic, perhaps Numenius. See Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus," *ResOr* 9 (1996): 110. Other scholars have maintained in reply that this and other similar gnostic texts were influenced by Porphyry, rather than the other way around, a possibility cautiously endorsed by Riccardo Chiaradonna. See Chiaradonna, "Nota su partecipazione et atto d'essere nel neoplatonismo: l'anonimo Commento al Parmenide," *StGA* 2 (2012): 87–88 n. 2. For an excellent summary of this controversy, see Lenka Karfíková, "Victorinus (Marius—)," in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques, VII, d'Ulpien à Zoticus*, ed. Richard Goulet (Paris: CNRS, 2018), 164–66. This is not the place to rehash this debate, but I continue to find Hadot's erudite demonstration in *Porphyre et Victorinus* convincing, despite the skepticism expressed by many scholars. See Michael Chase, "Porphyre de Tyr: Commentaires à Platon et à Aristote," in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques: De Paccius à Rutilius Rufus*, ed. Richard Goulet (Paris: CNRS, 2012), 5.2:1349–76. I will merely assume, for the purposes of this paper, that the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* is indeed by Porphyry, and that the latter was at least one main source of Victorinus's metaphysical views. For recent arguments against the attribution of the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* to Porphyry, see Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen"; for arguments in favor, see Chiaradonna, "Nota su partecipazione"; Chiaradonna, "Causalité et hiérarchie métaphysique dans le Néoplatonisme: Plotin, Porphyre, Jamblique," *Chora* 12 (2014): 67–85; Chiaradonna, "Logica e teologia nel primo neoplatonismo: A proposito di Anon., *In Parm*., XI, 5–19 e Iambl., *Risposta a Porfirio* [*De Mysteriis*], I, 4," *StGA* 5 (2015): 1–11. See the conclusion of the last cited paper: "l'anonimo commentatore del Parmenide altri non è se non Porfirio" ("the anonymous commentator on the *Parmenides* is none other than Porphyry" [Chiaradonna, "Logica e teologia," 11]). In all these important contributions, Chiaradonna's *pars destruens*, that is, his refutations of the criticisms by scholars such as Kevin Corrigan and Gerald Bechtle of Hadot's attribution of the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* to Porphyry seem to me decisive. However, his *pars construens*, which amounts to a deflationary, Stoicizing interpretation of the metaphysical scheme espoused in this work, strikes me as much less persuasive. Nevertheless, Chiaradonna quotes a remark by Alain Segonds that sums up my view: if the anonymous commentar*y* was not by Porphyry, it would have to be by "un clone de Porphyre"; why, then, should one multiply hypotheses unnecessarily? ("Nota su partecipazione," 97). In contrast, Němec is reduced to postulating "the existence of an entire line of tradition of late antique Neoplatonism"—unattested elsewhere in Greek—"that deviates from the main current known to us, and in context of which various versions of a similar metaphysical conception were thought through" ("Theorie des göttlichen," 204–5). For a further development of Němec's views, see his contribution to this volume. On Numenius and the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*, see the forthcoming series of articles by Fabienne Jourdan, who concludes that the commentary cannot go back to Numenius. For the first installment, see Jourdan, "Numénius a-t-il commenté le *Parménide*? Première partie: L'oeuvre parvenue de Numénius et le *Parménide* de Platon," *RPhA* 37 (2019): 101–51. On *hyp-*

Aristotelian and Stoic ideas,[7] Porphyry transformed the notion of *hyparxis* from one that referred to predicates presently attributable to their subject into a notion of Being or Existence as a kind of Platonic idea in which substances can participate. Existence thus becomes the transcendent principle of preexistence—τὸ εἶναι μόνον, or rather τὸ προόν (Victorinus, *Ad Cand.* 14–15)—out of which substance is constituted.[8] Reduced to its absolute universality, simplicity, and universality, Porphyry henceforth views Being

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arxis as indicating the fact of pure being or existence, Pierre Hadot cites Dexippus, *In Aristotelis Categoria Commentarium*, a text that probably derives from Porphyry's lost commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* addressed to Gedalius (*Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:252 n. 1). This doctrine of the equivalence between being and existence in the anonymous commentary on *Parmenides* is denied by Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen," 198–210; Andrew Smith, "Ὑπόστασις and ὕπαρξις in Porphyry," in *Hyparxis e hypostasis nel neoplatonismo*, ed. Francesco Romano and Daniela P. Taormina (Florence: Olschki, 1994), 41.

7. Relevant in this context are such Aristotelian notions as the distinction between τὸ εἶναι ἑκάστῳ and ἕκαστον. See Aristotle, *Metaph.* 8.3 1043b; Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:359, 490; Pierre Hadot, "L'être et l'étant dans le Néoplatonisme," in *Plotin, Porphyre: Études néoplatoniciennes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1999), 82; Cooper, "Marius Victorinus," 549. Hadot emphasizes the importance for Porphyry's thought of what he called the Neoplatonization of Stoicism, which entailed adopting and adapting several Stoic doctrines (of the *pneuma*, vital tension, doctrine of types of mixture, etc.) while rejecting their materialism (*Porphyre et Victorinus*). Recently, Chiaradonna has endorsed Hadot's findings with regard to the adaptation of Stoicism by the author of the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* (with some divergences), but in my opinion this eminent expert on Neoplatonism goes too far when he interprets the teachings of anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* as *nothing but* a Porphyrian adaptation of the Stoic doctrine of the *lekton*, perhaps inspired by Porphyry's teacher Longinus, combined with Aristotelian doctrines of essential predication ("Nota su partecipazione," "Causalité et hiérarchie métaphysique," "Logica e teologia"). For Chiaradonna, the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* would thus lack anything like the distinction between essence and existence, which, he asserts, does not appear in Western thought until much later. I hope to provide an in-depth analysis of Chiaradonna's important publications in forthcoming work.

8. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:489. On *Ad Cand.* 14–15, see *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:208–9. It must be conceded that the term *proon* is also attested in gnostic and Hermetic writings. See <Porphyry>, *In Parm.* 10.25–26: ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τοῦ ἔστιν ἐξήλλακται αὐτοῦ τὸ προούσιον (Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:96). The rare term προούσιον is unattested prior to Porphyry, but its occurrence in Synesius (*Hymn.* 1.222) and Didymus (*Trin.* 4.8.2) probably implies a Porphyrian source. On Bechtle's view of the occurrence of the term προούσιον in the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* as "preparing Plotinus's way of expressing himself"—even though the

as a pure act that generates form.[9] The result of this process of assimilation and adaptation is thus the appearance, for the first time in the West, of the fundamental opposition between the articular infinitive "Being" (Greek τὸ εἶναι), as an act without a subject, creative of form, and the neuter participle "existent" (τὸ ὄν), as the first substance that results from the process by which Being externalizes itself in the process designated as life, only to be limited, determined, and returned *to its origin* under the aegis of thought.

Pierre Hadot found distinct similarities between the metaphysical scheme that he found in the anonymous commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* and attributed to Porphyry and in the thought of Victorinus. Like the One for Porphyry in the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*, for Victorinus, God the Father is pure being (*esse purum*), indeterminate, unparticipated, and consequently unknowable by means of normal rational human thought:

> Before the existent [ὄν] and before the λόγος [*logos*], it is that power of existing which is signified by that verb "being" [*esse*], in Greek τὸ εἶναι.… The true first being is to such an extent unparticipated that it cannot even be called "one" or "alone," but by preeminence, prior to "one" and before "alone," beyond simplicity, pre-existence rather than existence, the universal or all universals, infinite, indefinite—but to itself, not to others—and hence without form; it is heard by a kind of intellection and is apprehended, known and believed more by a pre-intelligence than by intelligence. (*Adv Ar.* 4.19)[10]

As pure Being, God is bereft of form and must be described by a radically negative theology. Unintelligible, infinite, invisible, inconceivable, and unsubstantial, God is the nonexistent above the existent:[11]

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term does not occur in Plotinus—see Leinkauf, "Bestimmung des höchsten Prinzips," 75 n. 48.

9. On form as engendered by act, see Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:345–52.

10. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 253–254.4–20: "Ante ὂν et ante λόγον vis et potentia exsistendi illa est quae significatur hoc verbo quod est esse, graece quod est τὸ εἶναι.… Verum esse primum ita inparticipatum est, ut nec unum dici possit, nec solum, sed per praelationem, ante unum et ante solum, ultra simplicitatem, praeexsistentiam potius quam exsistentiam, universalium omnium universale, infinitum, interminatum, sed aliis omnibus, non sibi, et idcirco sine forma; intellectu quodam auditur et praeintellegentia potius quam intellegentia accipitur, cognoscitur, creditur" (trans. mine). See Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen," 198.

11. For God as "Das nichtseiende über allem Seiendem," see Matthias Baltes,

> Necessarily we say that through superiority and preeminence over the existents God is above all existence, above all life, above all knowledge, above all existent [ὄν] and truly existents [ὄντως ὄντα]; in fact, He is unintelligible, infinite, invisible, without intellect, unsubstantial, unknowable, and that which is above all things; He is none of the things that are, and because He is above the things that are, He is nothing among things that are. God is therefore non-existent [μὴ ὄν] … that non-existent is above the existent [istud μὴ ὄν super τὸ ὄν est]. (*Ad Cand*. 13.5–14.1)[12]

God is, therefore, understandable only in ignorance ("sed ut in ignoratione intellegibile," *Ad Cand.* 14). The parallels to this doctrinal formulation, in the works by Porphyry universally recognized as authentic, in doctrines attributed to him, and in the commentary on the *Parmenides* (<Porphyry>, *In Parm*. 2.16–17; 9.24–26; 10.25–29), are striking indeed.[13] In

Marius Victorinus: Zur Philosophie in seinen theologischen Schriften, BzAK 174 (Munich: Saur, 2002), 28–29, with further references.

12. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 30–31: "Necessario per praelationem et per eminentiam τῶν ὄντων deum dicemus supra omnem exsistentiam, supra omnem vitam, supra omnem cognoscentiam, supra omne ὂν et ὄντως ὄντα, quippe inintellegibile, infinitum, invisibile, sine intellectu, insubstantiale, incognoscibile, et quod super omnia, nihil de his quae sunt, et quoniam supra quae sunt, nihil ex his quae sunt. Μὴ ὄν ergo deus est.… istud τὸ μὴ ὂν super τὸ ὂν est." When one considers that the only occurrence in all of Greek literature of the locution τὸ ὑπὲρ τὸ ὂν μὴ ὄν ("the non-existent that is above the existent") occurs in Porphyry (*Sent.* 26, cited by Pierre Hadot), it becomes hard to deny that the thought of Porphyry is at least one of the sources drawn on by Marius Victorinus. See Marius Victorinus, *Traités théologiques sur la Trinité*, trans. Pierre Hadot, ed. Paul Henry, SC 68–69 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1960), 715. On these texts, see Claudio Moreschini, *A Christian in Toga: Boethius, Interpreter of Antiquity and Christian Theologian*, BERg 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 45–47. Moreschini emphasizes that Boethius's use of the same Platonically inspired negative theology as Victorinus shows that "Boethius employs Marius Victorinus more often than commonly thought" (47). See Moreschini, *Varia Boethiana* (Naples: D'Auria, 2003), 47–76.

13. The parallels are cited by Jean Pépin in Porphyry, *Sentences: Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française, commentaire par l'Unité Propre de Recherche n° 76 du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*, trans. John Dillon, ed. Luc Brisson, HDAC (Paris: Vrin, 2005), 2:566–67. See Porphyry, *Sent.* 25.2: θεωρεῖται δὲ ἀνοησίᾳ κρείττονι νοήσεως (Brisson, *Sentences*, 324; "He/It is contemplated by an ignorance that is mightier than intellection"). Porphyry, frag. 427f: Ὅτι Πορφύριος ὁ Φοῖνιξ, ὁ Ἀμελίου μὲν συμοιτητής, μαθητὴς δὲ Πλωτίνου, φησὶν οὕτως· 'περὶ τοῦ πρώτου αἰτίου οὐδὲν ἴσμεν· οὔτε γὰρ ἁπτὸν οὔτε γνωστόν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν αὐτοῦ γνῶσις ἡ ἀγνωσία' ("Porphyry the Phoenician, classmate of Amelius and student of Plotinus,

the latter work, the mode of suprarational cognition by which alone the First Principle can be known corresponds to the mode by which the First itself "knows" all things: it is a "knowledge outside of knowledge and ignorance," from which knowledge derives.[14]

In contrast, for Victorinus Christ the Son, like the second One of the *Parmenides* according to Porphyry, is the existent or the first substance, who receives his being from the preexistent Father.[15] The Son can thus be said to be "forma Dei existens" (*Adv. Ar.* 1.1; compare Phil 2:6), "esse cum forma" (*Adv. Ar.* 2.4), "τὸ ὄν primum" (*Ad Cand.* 16), or "ipsum hoc totum ὄν," "the totality of the existent" (*Ad Cand.* 2).[16]

It was thus, Hadot claims, in Porphyry and his Latin adaptation by Marius Victorinus that, for the first time in Western history, "Being" as an infinitive was distinguished from "being" as a participle: in other words, that a distinction was made between essence, or what a thing is, and existence, or the fact that it is.[17] The distinction was known to Boethius, in whom it appears

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says as follows: 'About the First, we know nothing—for He is neither tangible nor knowable—but knowledge of Him is ignorance'"). For the critical text, see Porphyry, *Fragmenta*, ed. Andrew Smith and David Wasserstein, BSGRT (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993).

14. <Porphyry>, *In Parm.* 5.10–11: Ὅτι φημὶ εἶναι γνῶσιν ἔξω γνώσεω<ς> καὶ ἀγνοίας, ἀφ' ἧς ἡ γνῶσις (Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:78; "For I say that He is a knowledge outside of knowledge, from which knowledge derives"). See Leinkauf, "Bestimmung des höchsten Prinzips," 80.

15. Victorinus, *Ad Cand.* 15: "Filius ergo Iesus Christus et solus natus filius, quoniam illud προὸν nihil aliud genuit quam ὂν ante omnia et omnimodis perfectum ὄν" (*Opera pars prior*, 32.1–3; "Therefore Jesus Christ is Son and only begotten Son, since that *proon* [preexistent] has begotten nothing other than the *on* [existent] before all things and the absolutely perfect *on* [existent]").

16. See Trego, "Substance, sujet, acte," 240 n. 5, 243 n. 5, 246. My thanks to John Cooper for the reference to Phil 2:6.

17. Pierre Hadot, "L'Être et l'Étant"; see Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen," 187. Cooper speaks of this opposition as having its roots in Plotinus, but he quotes no Plotinian examples ("Marius Victorinus," 548). To be sure, several contemporary scholars (Gerson, Corrigan) have interpreted Plotinus as maintaining a distinction between essence and existence, but this interpretation, based inter alia on the dubious translation of *hypostasis* as "existence," has been persuasively refuted by Riccardo Chiaradonna, "Neoplatonismo e atto d'essere: a margine dell'interpretazione di Cornelio Fabro," in *Crisi e destino della filosofia: Studi su Cornelio Fabro*, ed. Aribert Acerbi (Rome: EDUSC, 2012), 123–38. For her part, Karfíková rightly includes this doctrine of the difference between the existent (*on*) and being (*einai*) among those which are absent in Plotinus but present in Victorinus ("Victorinus (Marius—)," 162). Taken together, the

as the contrast between *esse* and *quod est*.[18] It was Boethius, in turn, who transmitted to medieval Western thought this distinction between Being (*esse*), conceived as pure action transcending all form, and the existent (*ens*/*quod est*) as the concrete substance or subject endowed with a determinate form.[19] Finally, it was probably from Boethius and the centuries-long his-

ensemble of such doctrines (on which see Němec, "Theorie des göttlichen," 187)—Plotinus, unlike Victorinus, establishes a subordination between the One and Intellect; he never identifies the One with the first member of the triad of being–life–thought; he does not use the technical term *hyparxis* to designate the first member of this triad; he does not teach the preexistence of intelligible forms within the One; and, perhaps most crucially for our present purposes, he does not identify the One with being—seems to me to rule out Plotinus as an important direct source for Victorinus, *pace* Cooper. It is worth noting that all these non-Plotinian themes, typical of the thought of Victorinus, also characterize the metaphysics of Porphyry as reconstructed by Hadot.

18. Boethius, *Hebd.* 2–4; see 28–30: "diversum est esse et id quod est. ipsum enim *esse nondum est*, et vero quod accepta essendi forma est atque consistit." See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:491 n. 4. See also Damascius, *Dub. et sol.* 121: τὸ πάντων ἐπέκεινα προϋποκείμενον ἕν … οὔπω δὲ οὐσία ("The One that subsists before and is beyond all things … is not yet substance"). To be sure, many scholars contradict Hadot's interpretation of Boethius. See Étienne Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen âge: Des origines patristiques à la fin du XIVe siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Paypt 1952), 148–49; Gilson and Philotheus Böhner, *Die Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1937), 236–37; Pierre Duhem, *Le système du monde: Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic* (Paris: Hermann, 1958), 5:288–89; Lambertus M. de Rijk, "Boèce logicien et philosophe," in *Atti congresso internazionale di studi boeziani*, ed. Luca Obertello (Rome: Herder, 1981), 141–56; de Rijk, "On Boethius's Notion of Being: A Chapter of Boethian Semantics," in *Meaning and Inference in Medieval Philosophy: Studies in Memory of Jan Pinborg*, ed. Norman Kretzmann (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), 1–29; Scott MacDonald, "Boethius's Claim That All Substances Are Good," *AGPh* 70 (1988): 247–48. I owe these references to Václav Němec, who also argues that in Boethius *esse* signifies the substantial form, while *id quod est* signifies the concrete substance composed of matter and form. Nevertheless, I continue to find Hadot's interpretation more persuasive. See Moreschini, for whom Boethius's doctrine that "God is the *primum esse*, that is the being of the highest degree" "is thus Porphyrian (via Marius Victorinus) and Augustinian" (*Christian in Toga*, 48–49). Stephen Gersh states: "It is the interpretation [sc. of Boethius's doctrine of *esse*] proposed in Hadot's three works which will form the basis of the present author's development." See Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: The Latin Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 2:670 n. 91. "It is extremely likely that Boethius expounds doctrines derived from Porphyry's treatises in his *De hebdomadibus*" (700–701).

19. Hadot, "Distinction de l'être," 153.

tory of the adaptations of his doctrine in medieval scholasticism that Martin Heidegger derived his doctrine of the ontological difference.[20]

Hadot's own views on this subject underwent a certain evolution. In 1963, he thought that this distinction between Being as pure act and being as concrete determinate substance, originating in Porphyry's interpretation of the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and adapted to Christianity by Marius Victorinus and by Boethius, laid the foundations for the distinction in Western thought between Existence and the existent. By the time of the publication of his magnum opus *Porphyre et Victorinus* in 1968, however, Hadot affirmed that Porphyry's doctrine does not imply a difference between essence and existence.[21] Instead, the difference between Being (τὸ εἶναι) and the existent (τὸ ὄν) amounts to that between the indeterminate and the determinate: whereas Being (τὸ εἶναι) is pure activity, absolute, unlimited, unrelated to and incommensurable with anything else, the existent (τὸ ὄν) is merely Being that has been rendered concrete, particular, and determinate by its assumption of qualitative attributes. This is what allows the author of the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* to speak of Being (τὸ εἶναι) as "like the idea of the existent" (ἰδέα τοῦ ὄντος, 12.31–33).[22] As we have seen, Being

20. In the context of a rich study of Heidegger's interpretation of medieval philosophy, Pasquale Porro describes Thomas Aquinas's goal in emphasizing the distinction between essence and existence as that of marking the difference between, on the one hand, what possesses a formal determination (sc. all entities other than God) and God, i.e., that which is pure being without form, a being that cannot be objectified and therefore cannot be thought on the basis of an essence distinct from it, whether such an essence be conceived as formal or objective content, quiddity, or "coseità." See Porro, "Heidegger, la filosofia medievale, la medievistica contemporanea," *Quaestio* 1 (2001): 435. On the ontological difference in Avicenna as between God as the uncaused principle and the world as caused, see Lizzini, "Ibn Sina's Metaphysics."

21. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 1:490; Hadot, "L'Être et l'Étant," 80.

22. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:106: τὸ δὲ ὃ ἐπάγεται ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος τοῦ ἐπέκεινα ἑνὸς τοῦ εἶναι ὄντος τὸ ἀπόλυτον καὶ ὥσπερ ἰδέα τοῦ ὄντος ("[the Second One] is produced by the One who is beyond the existent, and who is absolute being, and like the idea of the existent"). On the importance of this qualifying ὥσπερ as neutralizing Kevin Corrigan's contention that the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* contradicts Porphyry's elsewhere attested view that the intelligible cannot participate in anything, see Chiaradonna, "Nota su partecipazione," 87–88 n. 2; Chiaradonna, "Causalité et hiérarchie métaphysique," 78–79. See Corrigan, "Platonism and Gnosticism: The Anonymous Commentary on the *Parmenides*: Middle or Neoplatonic?," in *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures and Texts*, ed.

(τὸ εἶναι) is a pure, subject-less action that generates form, while the existent (τὸ ὄν) is the first substance, a subject henceforth endowed with form.[23] We have also seen, moreover, that Being, bereft of form or attributes, is unknowable, at least by any kind of rational human cognition. Thus, we have here the origin of what Hadot has termed the "negative theology of Being."[24]

Yet to what extent might it be legitimate to pursue Hadot's earlier intuition, that is, that the distinction found in Porphyry, Victorinus, and Boethius between Being (τὸ εἶναι, *esse*) and the existent (τὸ ὄν, *ens, id quod est*) might be analogous to the Avicennian distinction between essence and existence, which was so influential on Western scholastic thought? As we shall see, it seems hard to deny that there is some analogy between certain key ideas of Marius Victorinus, on the one hand, and of Avicenna on the other, a fact that may help to explain why the young Thomas Aquinas made such abundant use of the Latin version of Avicenna's *Metaphysics of the Healing* in his commentaries on Boethius's *Theological Tractates*.[25]

2. Essence and Existence in Avicenna

The doctrine of the distinction between essence and existence in Avicenna is notoriously complex and controversial, so much so that leading modern commentators have proposed a variety of mutually exclusive interpretations of it.[26] The following sketch will therefore be necessarily inadequate,

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John D. Turner and Ruth Majercik, SymS 12 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 141–77.

23. Hadot, "L'Être et l'Étant." In the words of Gerhard Huber, for Victorinus "das formlose Sein erzeugt erst das formhaft Seiende." See Huber, *Das Sein und das Absolute: Studien zur Geschichte der ontologischen Problematik in der spätantiken Philosophie* (Basel: Verlag für Recht und Gesellschaft, 1955), 114.

24. Hadot "L'Être et l'Étant," 80.

25. See Rollen E. Houser, "Avicenna and Aquinas: Essence, Existence and the *esse* of Christ," *SAJ* 9 (2013): 1–21.

26. See Olga Lizzini, "Wuǧūd-Mawǧūd/Existence-Existent in Avicenna: A Key Ontological Notion of Arabic Philosophy," *Quaestio* 3 (2003): 122, with further literature. Lizzini discusses current interpretations that range from a "logical-conceptual" to a "real" interpretation of the essence-existence distinction (see Bertolacci, "Distinction of Essence," 258–60). I will argue that at least in some passages, such as the one cited below from the *Notes on the Theology of Aristotle*, Avicenna seems clearly to propound a realist doctrine of the ontological priority of essence to existence. Not unlike

but I hope will not be misleading. I will base my exposition on Avicenna's own account in section 8.4 of the *Metaphysics* (*Ilāhiyāt*) of the Šifāʾ.[27]

For Avicenna, God or the First (*al-awwal*) has no quiddity or essence (*māhiyya*) other than Being (*al-anniya*).[28] Avicenna adds that he has explained how essence differs from *anniyya* "at the beginning of our present exposition," although modern interpreters do not all agree on what he means.[29] At any rate, God as the Necessarily Existent (*al-wājib*

Victorinus, Avicenna's terminology sometimes fluctuates and may have undergone some evolution throughout his intellectual career. In general, the Avicennan terms designating being or existence are *anniyya* and *wujūd*, but one sometimes also finds *huwiyya* or *aysa*. Essence or quiddity, for their part, are referred to as *ḏāt*, *māhiyya*, *šayʾiyya*, *ṭabīʿa*, or *haqīqa* (see Lizzini, "Ibn Sina's Metaphysics"). Each of these terms possesses its own nuances. Confusingly, Avicenna can also refer to a thing's essence as its "proper existence" (*al-wujūd al-ḫāṣṣ*). See Amos Bertolacci, "The Distinction of Essence and Existence in Avicenna's *Metaphysics*: The Text and Its Context," in *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas*, ed. Felicitas Opwis and David Reisman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 257–88.

27. For a full exposition of this doctrine in all its subtleties, the reader is referred to the masterful expositions of Olga Lizzini and Amos Bertolacci. See Lizzini, "Wuǧūd-Mawǧūd"; "Ibn Sina's Metaphysics"; Bertolacci, "Distinction of Essence"; Bertolacci, "A Hidden Hapax Legomenon in Avicenna's Metaphysics: Considerations on the Use of Anniyya and Ayyiyya in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifāʾ*," in *The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*, ed. Aafke M. I. van Oppenraay and Resianne Smidt van Gelder-Fontaine (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 289–309, with extensive references to previous literature. For the text from *Ilāh*. 8.4, see Bertolacci, "Hidden Hapax Legomenon," 296.

28. Avicenna, *al-Šifāʾ, al-ilāhiyyāt*, ed. M. Y. Mūsā, S. Sunyā, and S. Zāyid (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-ʿāmma li-šuʾūn al-maṭābiʿ al-amīriyya, 1960), 8.4, p. 344.10–11: *wa-naʿūd fa-naqūl: inna al-awwal lā māhiyya lahū ġayr al-anniya*. Some translations: "Il primo non ha una quiddità che sia diversa dal suo proprio essere" (Olga Lizzini). See Avicenna, *Metafisica: La scienza delle cose divine (al-ilāhiyyāt) dal Libro della Guarigione (Kitāb al-Šifāʾ)*, ed. Olga Lizzini and Pasquale Porro (Milan: Bompiani, 2002). Lizzini notes that the meaning of this term oscillates between "existence" and "particular essence" (*Metafisica*, 1214 n. 110). "Le premier n'a pas de quiddité autre que *al-anniyya*" (Georges C. Anawati). See Avicenna, *La métaphysique du Shifāʾ: Livres de VI à X. Traduction, notes et commentaires par G. C. Anawati* (Paris: Vrin, 1985), 86. "The First has no quiddity other than his individual existence" (Michael A. Marmura). See Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of "The Healing": A Parallel English-Arabic Text*, ed. and trans. Michael A. Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 274. "The First has no quiddity other than existence" (Bertolacci, "Hidden Hapax Legomenon," 296).

29. For Anawati and Lizzini, the reference is *Ilāh*. 1.5; but Marmura thinks the

al-wujūd) cannot be compound, as he would be if made up of a quiddity or essence (*māhiyya*) and existence (*wujūd*). The Necessarily Existent has no other essence than the fact that he is necessarily existent, and this is Being (*al-anniya*).[30]

Avicenna goes on to assert that everything that has an essence other than being (*anniyya*) is caused, because being (*anniyya*) and existence (*wujūd*) are not like necessary concomitants to the essence. All that has an essence is caused, and this includes everything other than the Necessarily Existent. In other words, only contingent beings have an essence. The First Principle has no essence, but existence flows from him on beings that do have an essence.[31] The First can be designated as absolute existence, on the condition that nonexistence and other attributes are denied of him.[32] Immediately afterward, Avicenna clarifies that he does not mean that the

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reference is to Avicenna's paraphrase of the *Isagoge* of the Šifāʾ. Bertolacci argues that both interpretations are possible, pointing out that in his paraphrase of the *Isagoge* (*Madḫal* 1.5), Avicenna opposes quiddity to "individual thatness" (*anniyya šaḫsiyyya*) as the concrete existence of the individual (Bertolacci, "Distinction of Essence," 283 and n. 43).

30. Avicenna, *Ilāh*. 4.8, p. 346.11–12: *fa-lā māhiyya al-wājib al-wujūd ġayr annahū wājib al-wujūd, wa-hāḏihī hiya al-inniya*. Translations: "Dunque per il Necessariamente Esistente non c'è una quiddità diversa dal fatto che è necessariamente esistente, e questa è il suo stesso essere" (Lizzini, *Metafisica*); "Il n'y a donc pas d'autre quiddité pour le nécessairement existant que le fait qu'il est nécessairement existant. Et c'est cela l'être" (Anawati, *Métaphysique du Shifāʾ*).

31. Note that at least in this passage, there is the clear implication that sheer essences exist (presumably in the mind of God), independent of and prior to existence. It therefore provides grist for the mill of those who interpret Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence from a realist or ontological perspective (Pessin), rather than one that is primarily logical or conceptual (Bertolacci, Lizzini). See Sarah Pessin, "Proclean 'Remaining' and Avicenna on Existence as Accident: Neoplatonic Methodology and a Defense of Pre-existing Essences," in *Medieval Philosophy and the Classical Tradition in Islam, Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John Inglis (London: Routledge, 2002), 128–42. On passages in Avicenna implying that the First has no essence at all, see Bertolacci, "Distinction of Essence," 276 and n. 26.

32. Avicenna, *Ilāh*. 8.4, p. 347.10: *Fa-huwa mujarrad al-wujūd bi-šarṭ salb al-ʿadam wa-sāʾir al-awṣāf ʿanhū*. Translations: "Esso è, infatti, puramente esistente a condizione che se ne neghino l'inesistenza e tutte le alte descrizioni" (Lizzini, *Metafisica*); "Il est l'existence pure avec condition de nier de lui le non-existant et les autres qualifications" (Anawati, *Métaphysique du Shifāʾ*); "He is pure existence with the condition of negating privation and all other description of Him" (Marmura, *Metaphysics of "The Healing"*).

First is participable absolute existence;[33] instead, what he means is that the First is an existent on the condition that no composition is added to him. In other words, the First is not a universal, for a universal is shared by everything, whereas the First is not attributed to what is susceptible of addition, that is, everything other than he. Furthermore, the First's lack of an essence entails that he has no genus: if he did, the genus would be a part of him, and he would be composite. He also has no specific difference, and his lack of genus and specific difference entails, of course, that he has no definition. There can therefore be no demonstration of him, nor does he have a cause or a "why." Finally, the First, is not a substance (*jawhar*).[34]

It certainly seems hard to deny that in this section of the *Metaphysics* of the *Šifāʾ*, there are many themes that are highly analogous to several of those found in Marius Victorinus. These include the ideas that God or the First Principle is One and alone, that he is simple, that he is identical with his essence,[35] that he has no essence, genus, difference, or definition and is therefore unknowable, and that he is not a substance.

Perhaps the most striking common feature Avicenna shares with Marius Victorinus is the designation of the First Principle as being (*anni-*

33. Compare Marius Victorinus's insistence that the Father is *inparticipatum* (one of Victorinus's many uses of a Latin *hapax*, cited at n. 10 above).

34. Avicenna, *Ilāh*. 8.4, p. 348.7–348.16. See Bertolacci, "Distinction of Essence," 279 n. 29.

35. For Avicenna, only in the case of God does existence coincide with essence (Lizzini, "Wuǧūd-Mawǧūd, 115). For Victorinus, in sensible realities the *quod est esse* (pertaining to substance) differs from the *quod est ita esse* (pertaining to qualities, which is characteristic of the perceptual world); but the two are united in the case of divine, eternal realities (*Adv. Ar.* 3.1; see Cooper, "Marius Victorinus," 548). As Pierre Hadot points out, we find an analogous doctrine in Boethius, for whom Being (*esse*) and the existent (*id quod est*) coincide in the First Principle: see *Hebd*. 45–48: "omne simplex esse suum et id quod est unum habet" (Hadot, "Distinction de l'être," 152–53). See also, as Václav Němec points out, the passages in *Adv. Ar.* 4 in which act and form coincide in God the Father. Hadot cites a parallel passage from Simplicius (*In Phys*., CAG 9:773.19–25), perhaps reproducing the doctrine of Simplicius's teacher Damascius, which speaks of the state in which the One begins to emanate the Unified or One-Many. Prior to this emergence of the first trace of difference, Being is not yet distinguished from the existent (καὶ οὐδὲ τὸ εἶναι τοῦ ὄντος ἐκεῖ διακέκριται). Once difference (and multiplicity) makes its appearance, Being becomes distinct from the existent (καὶ τὸ εἶναι ἄλλο γέγονε παρὰ τὸ ὄν). It is at this point that time makes its appearance. On God as *unum et solum*, see Victorinus, *Cand.* 1.3. On the One as purely one, without existence, substance or knowledge, see *Adv. Ar.* 1B.49; see Cooper, "Marius Victorinus," 546.

yya). This term, which goes back to al-Kindī and the Neoplatonica Arabica that arose under his supervision in the second quarter of the ninth century CE, is of disputed etymology, but it is generally translated as "being," "proper being," or "existence."[36] Scholars have already drawn attention to

36. Lizzini "Wuǧūd-Mawǧūd," 112 n. 5. According to Bertolacci, in Avicenna's *Metaphysics*, *anniyya* means "existence" as an opposite term to "quiddity" (*māhiyya*) and as a synonym of *wujūd* ("Hidden Hapax Legomenon," 295, 298). For a full survey of the translations of *anniyya*, see Bertolacci, who lists "quoddité," "haeccéité," "être," "entitas," "essence individuelle," and "existence" ("Hidden Hapax Legomenon," 292–93). As Bertolacci notes, Cristina d'Ancona usually translates *anniyya* by *essere* in her edition and translation of chapters 1 and 7 of the Theology of Aristotle. See Plotinus, *La dicesa dell'anima nei corpi (Enn. IV 8[6]): Plotiniana arabica (Pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, capitoli 1 e 7; "Detti del sapiente greco")*, ed. Cristina d'Ancona, SubMPat 4 (Padova: Il Poligrapho 2003); Bertolacci, "Hidden Hapax Legomenon," 293 n. 8. *Neoplatonica Arabica* is a catch-all term designating a group of apocrypha, ascribed primarily to Aristotle but in fact consisting mainly of Arabic paraphrases, originating in the second quarter of the ninth century CE, of Greek Neoplatonic texts by Plotinus, Proclus, and (in my view, at least) Porphyry. Their titles include the Theology of Aristotle, the Book of the Pure Good (translated into Latin as the *Liber de Causis*), and the Sayings of the Greek Sage. Theology of Aristotle is cited throughout by page number of the standard edition: *Aflūṭīn ʿinda l-ʿarab/Plotinus apud Arabes: Theologia Aristotelis et fragmenta quae supersunt*, ed. ʿAbdurraḥmān Badawī (Cairo: al-maktaba al-naḥḍa al-miṣriyya, 1955). For the Book of the Pure Good, see *Die pseudo-aristotelische Schrift Ueber das reine Gute, bekannt unter dem Namen Liber de Causis*, ed. Otto Bardenhewer (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1882). For the Sayings of the Greek Sage, see Franz Rosenthal, "Aš-Šayḫ al-Yūnānī and the Arabic Plotinus Source," *Or* 21 (1952): 461–492; 22 (1953): 370–400; 24 (1955): 42–65; Elvira Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader from the Circle of Miskawayh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Several passages in works by Miskawayh, Sijistānī and al-Tawḥīdī (tenth century), as yet insufficiently explored, contain doctrines, often anonymous, that bear strong affinities to these Neoplatonica Arabica. See Gerhard Endress, "Die Integration philosophischer Traditionen in der islamischen Gesellschaft des 4/10. Jahrhunderts: at-Tauḥidi und as-Siǧistānī," in *8.–10. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1 of *Philosophie in der Islamischen Welt*, ed. Ulrich Rudolph, GGPh (Basel: Schwabe, 2012), 198–209; Elvira Wakelnig, "Die Philosophen in der Tradition al-Kindīs: Al-ʿĀmirī, al-Isfizārī, Miskawayh, as-Siǧistānī und at-Tawḥīdī," in *Islamische Philosophie im Mittelalter: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Heidrun Eichner, Matthias Perkams, and Christian Schäfer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2013), 233–52. I believe these works may contain many a Porphyrian doctrine: Miskawayh, for instance, claims that his entire exposition on the meanings of "One" in his *Minor Triumph* (*Al-Fawz al-aṣġar*, section 1.5) is derived from Porphyry. See Miskawayh, *Le petit livre du salut*, trans. Roger Arnaldez, ed. Ṣalah ʿUḍayma (Tunis: Maison Arabe du Livre, 1987).

the similarity between the use of the term *anniyya* to designate God or the First Principle in the Neoplatonica Arabica and use of the Greek articular infinitive εἶναι to designate the One in the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*, attributed to Porphyry:[37] indeed, this resemblance constitutes one of the main grounds for supposing that, as the incipit of the Theology of Aristotle indicates, Porphyry may have played a role in the elaboration of the Greek original of this pseudepigraphic work.

3. The Problem of Avenues of Transmission

How then are we to explain these apparent similarities between, on the one hand, the metaphysics of Avicenna and certain metaphysical themes attested in the Neoplatonica Arabica, and, on the other, some doctrines of the theological writings of Marius Victorinus and Boethius? Clearly, there can be no question of direct influence: Avicenna certainly knew no Latin, and it is highly unlikely that either Boethius or Marius Victorinus was ever translated into Arabic.

One could envisage several hypotheses. First, as far as the distinction between essence and existence is concerned, we might have to do with completely independent developments of philosophical themes already present in Aristotle. Aristotle's famous enumeration of four methodological questions in book 2 of the *Posterior Analytics*[38] presupposes a distinction between whether a thing exists (τὸ ὅτι) and what a thing is (τί ἐστιν): perhaps both the Latin and the Arabic tradition independently developed this distinction into one between existence and essence respectively. Plausible as such an explanation may be, however, it fails to account for the other analogous features present both in Arabic-language philosophical thought and in the theological speculations of Boethius and Marius Victorinus. There are many of these: to limit ourselves to features

37. See Richard Taylor, "Aquinas, the Plotiniana Arabica, and the Metaphysics of Being and Actuality," *JHI* 59 (1998): 217–39; Michael Chase, "Porphyry and the Theology of Aristotle," in *Translations and Acculturations*, vol. 2 of *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, ed. Dragos Calma (Leiden: Brill 2021), 157–81.

38. Aristotle, *An. post.* 2.1, 89b23–25: Τὰ ζητούμενά ἐστιν ἴσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὅσαπερ ἐπιστάμεθα. ζητοῦμεν δὲ τέτταρα, τὸ ὅτι, τὸ διότι, εἰ ἔστι, τί ἐστιν. Translation follows Jonathan Barnes, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 184: "The things we seek are equal in number to those we understand. We seek four things: the fact, the reason why, if something is, what something is."

shared by the Theology of Aristotle and the theological works of Marius Victorinus, one might mention:

1. The idea that time is only introduced, in the description of supra-sensible realities, to facilitate human understanding. For Victorinus, see *Adv. Ar.* 4.5:

> Certainly God, to whom for his omnipotence and original transcendence the name of God belongs, God, God, first—if in the works of God one can speak of a first; but the understanding proper to the human mind must, in order to exercise itself, to grasp things, things which exist simultaneously or which are produced simultaneously, attribute origin to the one and a going forth from the origin to the other and, as it were, a kind of time; God, I say, begot the existences and universal substances of the universals.[39]

Compare the Theology of Aristotle:

> The ancients were obliged to mention time at the beginning of creation since they wanted a description of the generation of things, and were obliged to introduce time into their description of generation and into their description of creation, which did not take place in time at all. (27.10–13)

> You must reject from your imagination all temporal generation, if you only wish to know how the true, permanent, noble beings were originated by the First Originator, for they were generated from him without time. (114.14–16)

Compare, finally, Porphyry, according to Persian theologian and heresiographer al-Šahrastānī (ca. 1086–1153):

> And he [sc. Porphyry] claimed that the statement attributed to Plato concerning the world's coming into being is not correct. He said in his *Letter*

39. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 230.26–31: "Certe deus, cui ad omnipotentiam principalem que summitatem hoc nomen convenit, deus, deus, inquam, primum—si in dei operibus dicendum aliquid primum; sed intellegentia humani ingenii, ut se exerat, ut res capiat, rebus vel simul exsistentibus vel simul fusis et ortus et diversos ortus et quasi tempus adtribuit—deus, inquam, primo universalium universales exsistentias substantias que progenuit." See Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 4.21; *Ad Cand.* 21.

> *to Anebo*: what separates Plato from you, namely that he gives the world a temporal beginning, is a mendacious assertion. This is because Plato did not think that the world has a temporal origination, but an origination with regard to a cause. (Porphyry, frag. 459 *apud* al-Šahrastānī, *Book of Religions and Sects*)[40]

2. The First One remains immobile and exerts no activity in order to engender the second Principle. We find this idea in Victorinus (*Adv. Ar.* 1A.33): "But this One the saints believe to be in repose, absolutely and in all respects."[41]

3. The need for divine ignorance as higher cognitive faculty in order to know God, attested for instance in Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 4.19: "It is understood by a certain intuition and is perceived, known and believed by preunderstanding rather than understanding."[42]

4. The First Principle has no attributes: see Victorinus, *Adversus Ar.* 4.19: "But the first 'Being' [*esse primum*] is so unparticipated that it cannot even be called one or alone."[43]

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40. See Porphyry, *Fragmenta*, 529–31. For a French translation, see al-Šahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, trans. Daniel Gimaret, Guy Monnot, and Jean Jolivet, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1986–1993), 2:357–58.

41. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 115.10: "Sed istud beati in quiete esse aestimant omnimodo omnimodis." See Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 1B.51–52. We find similar notions in early Arabic philosophical literature: "The first agent must be at rest and unmoved" (Rosenthal, *Sayings of the Greek Sage*, 184.10–11; *wa-yanbaġī li-l-fāʿil al-awwal an yakūna sākinun ġayr mutaḥarrakun*); "we say that He is unmoved" (Miskawayh, *al-Fawz al-aṣġar*, 1.8, in *Le petit livre du salut*, 54.3: *naqūlū annahū lā bi-mutaḥarrakin*).

42. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pars prior*, 115.9–10: "intellectu quodam auditur et praeintellegentia potius quam intellegentia accipitur, cognoscitur, creditur." See Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 4.33: "Et dicunt istud praenoscentia concipi quae ipsa per semet nihil est, sed conceptione quod praeexsistit suscipitur" (*Opera pars prior*, 115.12–14; "And they say that he is conceived by preknowledge which through itself is nothing, but is formed from the conception that he preexists"). On the hapax *praenoscentia*, probably equivalent to the Greek hapax προέννοια, found only in the anonymous Anon. in Parm. 2.20 (Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2:70), see Ruth Majercik, "Porphyry and Gnosticism," *ClQ* 55 (2005): 279. See ThA 37.2–4, which speaks of "an ignorance more noble than knowledge" (*bi-jahlin ašraf min al-ʿilm*). The author declares that God can only be known by a kind of "intellectual imagination"; see below.

43. Marius Victorinus, *Opera pera pars prior*, 254.10–11: "Verum esse primum ita inparticipatum est ut nec unum dici potest, nec solum." See ThA 62.3–6: "As for the first maker, He makes a thing without any attribute, for there is no attribute within

5. There is no distinction between essence and existence in the higher world. We saw above that for Marius Victorinus, Boethius, and Avicenna, essence coincides with existence in the case of divine realities. Similarly, the author of the Theology of Aristotle explains that the separation between the "what-it-is" and the "that-it-is" applies only to natural things (69.2–71.3); but when it comes to things whose goal is originated simultaneously with their existence, as is the case for things originated outside time, such as the Intellect and intelligible things, there can be no separation between the "that-it-is" and the "what-it-is" (69.4–6). When a thing's origination is simultaneous with its achievement of its goal, one knows "why it is" by knowing "what it is": "If here in the lower world 'what a thing is' and 'why it is' are found to be identical, all the more so is this necessary in intellectual things, I mean 'what it is' and 'why it is' are identical" (69.15–17). Human beings, the author goes on to affirm, can perceive this state of affairs, in which the world is seen not as a conglomerate of parts but as a whole, and causes are seen as simultaneous with their effects, by an act of intellectual imagination (72.3–10; *tawahhum ʿaqlī*).[44]

6. As we have seen, however, the most striking common feature shared by Avicenna, the Neoplatonica Arabica, Marius Victorinus, and Boethius is no doubt the description of the First Principle as Being (Greek τὸ εἶναι, Latin *esse*, Arabic *anniyya*). Like Porphyry's *Commentary on the Parmenides*, but unlike Plotinus, the Theology of Aristotle describes this principle as "the first, true Being" (*al-anniyya al-ūlā al-ḥaqq*, 26.6), or "the first Being."[45] In

Him at all, but he makes [things] by his essence." See Rosenthal, *Sayings of the Greek Sage*, 184: "there is no attribute at all in Him" (*laysa fīhī šay'un min al-ṣifāt*).

44. It is true that in this passage, the author of the Theology of Aristotle builds on the doctrine of Plotinus, *Enn.* 6.7 (on which see Chiaradonna, "Causalité et hiérarchie métaphysique"). But the author expands on Plotinus by adding elements extraneous to him, such as the doctrine of intelligible imagination. I have discussed parallels between Porphyry and the Theology of Aristotle in Chase, "Porphyry and the *Theology of Aristotle*." On the idea that the Highest principle is absolute knowledge, e.g.: with <Porphyry>, *In Parm.* 5.34; 6.4–12, see *Sayings of the Greek Sage*, frag. A.6: "(He) is the pure, ultimate knowledge that contains every knowledge [*li-annahū huwa al-ʿilm al-maḥḍ al-aqsā al-muḥīṭ bi-kull ʿilm*], and the cause of [all] sciences [*wa-ʿilla al-ʿulūm*]" (Rosenthal, *Sayings of the Greek Sage*, 484). On the appearance of this theme in <Porphyry>, *In Parm.*, and the fact that, contrary to what some critics have maintained, it does not contradict the doctrine of Plotinus, see Chiaradonna, "Causalité et hiérarchie métaphysique," 78–79.

45. *Al-anniya al-ūlā* (ThA 51.8; 87.10; 113.14). The First is also designated as

his *Muqābasāt*, which reports on philosophical discussions current at the Būyid court at Baghdād in the tenth century CE, where the philosophical *koine* of the Neoplatonica Arabica formed the basis for theological speculation, both Christian and Islamic,[46] al-Tawḥidī reports a series of definitions he had read in books and heard from the mouths of sages. One of these reads as follows: "It was asked, What is the first cause [*yuqāl mā al-ʿilla al-ūlā*]? The answer [is] that it is the Originator of the all [*al-jawāb mubdiʿ al-kull*], the Perfector of all [*mutammim al-kull*], unmoved [*ġayr mutaḥarrik*], and again, pure Being [*wa-ayḍan anniyya faqaṭ*], and again, pure Good [*wa-ayḍan ḫayr maḥḍ*]" (Al-Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt*, 91 [Ḥusain]). So striking and numerous are these resemblances, I would argue, that one could almost speak of a philosophical *koine*, or complex of shared ideas, common to Marius Victorinus, Boethius, the Neoplatonica Arabica, and Avicenna. Yet how can we explain the origin of this *koine*, which presupposes the circulation of ideas among Greek, Latin, and Arabic sources?

4. A Possible Solution: The Role of Porphyry

In a nutshell, the answer may be Porphyry. We have seen that Pierre Hadot has maintained that Porphyry, the probable author of the anony-

"simple Being" (*anniyya faqaṭ*) in the Book of the Pure Good (Bardenhewer, *Pseudo-aristotelische Schrift*, 79.1) as well as in the Sayings of the Greek Sage (Rosenthal, *Sayings of the Greek Sage*, 185.5). The author of the Theology of Aristotle also has no hesitation in referring to God as the First Cause (*al-ʿilla al-ūlā*, ThA 6.7; 37.7;18; 51.7;8; 87.4; 89.10;11), or even the "cause of causes" (*al-ʿilla al-ʿilal*, ThA 6.8; 156.20; 157.1; 161.9; 172.12; 177.16). The Greek sage refers to it as "pure cause" (*ʿilla maḥḍ*) or "simple cause" (*ʿilla faqaṭ*, §41; Wakelnig *Philosophy Reader*, 106.20–21). In contrast, Plotinus is extremely reticent to ascribe causality to the First (see Chiaradonna "Causalité et hiérarchie métaphysique," 68–69).

46. Christian, as in the thought of Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (ca. 893–974), the learned theologian of the Trinity and commentator on Aristotle; Islamic, as in the bold speculations of al-Sijistānī (ca. 912–ca. 985) and Miskawayh (ca. 936–1030). See Joel Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam: Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani and His Circle* (Leiden: Brill, 1986); Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1992). Al-Tawḥīdī's *Muqābasāt* also contains one of two known versions of the *Treatise on the Soul* attributed to Porphyry, which exhibits very close parallels in doctrine and terminology to the ThA. See Al-Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt*, ed. Muḥammad Tawfīq Ḥusain (Baghdad: Maṭba'at al-iršād, 1970); Charles Genequand, "La mémoire de l'âme: Porphyre et la *Théologie d'Aristote,*" *BEO* 48 (1996): 103–13.

mous commentary on the *Parmenides*, is likely to be at least one main source of the complex of ideas concerning the distinction between essence and existence in Marius Victorinus and in Boethius. But as I have argued elsewhere,[47] Porphyry is also likely to be one of the sources of the Neoplatonic Arabica, or at least of Theology of Aristotle. Indeed, the incipit of this work presents it as a "commentary by Porphyry," and Porphyry himself tells us (*Vit. Plot.* 26) that he added commentaries on some of the *Enneads* to his edition of his teacher's masterwork. I have suggested that the Theology of Aristotle's considerable divergences from Plotinus may be due to the fact that the Arabic translator of the *Enneads* was working from a manuscript that contained the text of Plotinus in the middle, surrounded, as was customary in late antiquity, by scholia, in this case originating from Porphyry. The translator thus reproduced both Plotinus's text and Porphyry's scholia, without being particularly concerned to distinguish them.

This hypothesis may at least partially explain the presence of Porphyrian themes in the Neoplatonica Arabica. But what of Avicenna?

The influence of the Neoplatonica Arabica on Avicenna is a subject that is still in its infancy.[48] What is certain, however, is that at some point, probably rather late, in his intellectual career Avicenna produced an important work known as the *Notes on the Theology of Aristotle*.[49] This understudied work shows Avicenna struggling with distinctly Neoplatonic ideas that the text ascribes to Aristotle: he rejects some but adopts many others; and one of these notions he takes over from the Theology of Aristotle may well be the famous distinction between essence and existence.[50]

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47. Chase, "Porphyry and the *Theology of Aristotle*."

48. See Cristina d'Ancona, "Avicenna and the *Liber de Causis*: A Contribution to the Dossier," *REFM* 7 (2000): 95–114; d'Ancona, "The Timaeus Model for Creation and Providence: An Example of Continuity and Adaptation in Early Arabic Philosophical Literature," in *Plato's Timaeus as a Cultural Icon*, ed. Gretchen J. Reydams-Schils (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 206–37.

49. Avicenna, *Notes on the Theology of Aristotle*, in *Arisṭū ʿinda-l-ʾArab*, ed. ʿAbdurraḥmān Badawī (Al-Kuwayt: Wikālat al-maṭbūʾāt, 1978); French translation, Georges Vajda, "Notes d'Avicenne sur la Théologie d'Aristote," *RThom* 51 (1951): 346–406. A team at the CNRS Centre Jean Pépin, consisting of Marc Geoffroy†, Meryem Sebti, Jules Janssens, and myself, is currently working on a badly needed new critical edition with French translation of this work.

50. Avicenna, *Notes on the Theology of Aristotle*, 61.7–10. For a discussion of this passage, see Lizzini, "Wuǧūd-Mawǧūd," 121–22. Bertolacci makes no mention of Avicenna's *Notes on the Theology* in his two recent articles dedicated to Avicenna's

In one of Avicenna's *Notes*, there is the following passage, which discusses the duality that arises when the Intellect emanates forth (*yaṣduru ʿanhā*) from the First Principle:

> We say: if there is no composition in essence from the viewpoint of the two relations,[51] then it is not originated insofar as it is an essence [*fa-naqūl inna al-māhiyya lā tarkīb fīhī min jihati al-nisbatīna fa-innahā laysat mubdaʿa min ḥayṯu hiya māhiyya*], but insofar as existence is combined with it [*bal min ḥayṯu maqrūn bi-hā al-wujūd*]. Therefore, when the essence is considered insofar as it is essence, it is not a combination of essence and existence deriving from the First and made necessary by him [*fa-laysat al-māhiyya iḏā iltafat ilayhā min ḥayṯu hiya māhiyya majmūʿ māhiyyatin wa-wujūdin min al-awwal bi-hī wajabat*], but existence is added to it like something extraneous to it [*bal al-wujūd muḍāf ilayhā ka-šayʾ ṭāriʾ ʿalayhā*].

We have here, in the context of a commentary on the Neoplatonically inspired Theology of Aristotle, a statement of Avicenna's doctrine, not only of the distinction between essence and existence,[52] but of the accidentality of existence, which is described as something that accrues or occurs later to essence. This doctrinal element, which seems to envisage a set of pre-existent essences on which existence is subsequently conferred, is highly embarrassing for those who wish to interpret Avicenna as a dyed-in-the-wool Aristotelian averse to all that smacks of mysticism. To make matters

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distinction between essence and existence ("Distinction of Essence," "Hidden Hapax Legomenon"). My translation of the passage is extremely tentative, based as it is on Badawī's inadequate edition. Among the ideas Avicenna rejects is the preexistence of the soul. Here, Avicenna suspects the text of the Theology of Aristotle has been tampered with.

51. I.e., between essence and existence.

52. It is important to note that whereas, according to Badawī's edition, this passage occurs in that part of Avicenna's treatise that comments on Maymar 5 of the Theology of Aristotle, it is in fact far from clear which passage from the Theology of Aristotle Avicenna is actually referring to and/or inspired by. Did he have access to a version of the Theology of Aristotle containing passages that are absent from the standard edition as edited by Badawī? See Amos Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifāʾ* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 49. Further work on the critical edition of Avicenna's *Notes*, in conjunction with the new critical edition of the Theology of Aristotle announced by Cristina D'Ancona, will be required to shed light on this subject.

worse, at the end of this crucial passage Avicenna informs the reader that he has already explained the relation between essence and existence in detail in his "Oriental Wisdom,"[53] a work that has been and continues to be the subject of fierce debate between those who understand Avicenna as, to some extent and in contexts, a mystic and a Sufi, and those who understand him as a hard-headed Aristotelian who would feel quite at home in any modern analytically oriented philosophy department.[54]

Let me be clear about precisely what it is I am proposing. It is emphatically not my suggestion that Avicenna merely took over his doctrine of the distinction between existence and essence lock, stock, and barrel from works belonging to the complex of works known as the Neoplatonica Arabica, works that, I believe, can be shown to contain a high degree of Porphyrian influence. There is no trace in Avicenna of the scheme I have identified, following Hadot, in the metaphysical theology of Porphyry's commentary on the *Parmenides* and Marius Victorinus's theological treatises, according to which an initially indeterminate Being or Existence externalizes itself in a stage corresponding to Life, only to return to itself, henceforth endowed with self-consciousness, in a stage identified with the Intellect, resulting the determination of Being into substance or the existent, henceforth delimited, endowed with qualities that can be predicated of it, and thus knowable. Nor is this surprising: Avicenna was much too great a philosopher to slavishly copy any philosophical doctrine from the various sources he encountered in the course of his vast reading. Instead, my claim is much more modest. I suggest that it may be that Avicenna encountered materials in the Neoplatonic Arabica, some of which may have been of Porphyrian origin, which contained some form of the existence-essence distinction. These materials served as the starting point for Avicenna's developments of his own complex doctrine of the distinction between essence and existence, which mobilizes elements, such as the relationship between necessity and contingency, of which there is, so far as we know, no trace in the philosophical doctrines attributable to Porphyry. It is in fact quite conceivable that Avicenna developed his own doctrine

53. *fa-qad šuriha fī al-Ḥikma al-Mašriqiyya* (p. 61.24 Badawi).

54. For a fair-minded survey of the issues, see Jules Janssens, "Ibn Sīnā: A Philosophical Mysticism or a Philosophy of Mysticism?," *Med* 1 (2016): 37–55. The extreme terms of the interpretations of Avicenna range from Henry Corbin's characterization of his thought as fundamentally mystical to Dmitri Gutas's portrayal of him as a rationalist.

of essence and existence, at least in part, *in reaction* to, rather than in imitation of, Porphyrian material that he may have found circulating in the school of Ibn ʿAdī, a Christian of Neoplatonic tendencies whose indebtedness to Porphyrian philosophical doctrines is only now beginning to become apparent.[55]

The advantage of this hypothesis set forth here is that it may help to explain how an apparently similar doctrine—that of the differentiation between essence and existence—appears in such widely different linguistic, historical, and cultural contexts as late third-century Greek Neoplatonism (Porphyry), fourth- and sixth-century Latin church fathers (Marius Victorinus, Boethius), ninth-century Arabic apocrypha (the Neoplatonica Arabica), and the early eleventh-century Islamic philosopher Avicenna. The defect of my hypothesis is, of course, that it is deeply speculative and probably unprovable, not unlike Pierre Hadot's attribution of the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides* to Porphyry and his concomitant claim of wide-ranging Porphyrian influence on the theological thought of Marius Victorinus. But to classify a hypothesis as speculative is not equivalent to proving it to be wrong: in the study of ancient philosophy and theology, where such a huge percentage of original works have disappeared without a trace, there is, in my view, no place for dogmatic positivism; and it remains true, even more so that in the other fields of the humanities, that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Certainty in such matters is forever unattainable: the best we can ever hope for is plausibility and the cumulatively increasing confirmation or disconfirmation of a given hypothesis. In the present instance, this goal can, I believe, be achieved, or at least approximated, by continued work on the edition, translation, and commentary of Arabic works that contained echoes of Neoplatonic doctrines, first and foremost among which are the Neoplatonica Arabica and Avicenna's *Notes on the Theology of Aristotle*.

55. See Marwan Rashed, "Ibn ʿAdī et Avicenne: Sur les types d'existants," in *Aristotele e i suoi esegeti neoplatonici*, ed. Vincenza Celluprica and Cristina D'Ancona (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2004), 107–71; Fedor Benevich, "Fire and Heat: Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī and Avicenna on the Essentiality of Being Substance or Accident," *ArabSP* 27 (2017): 237–67.

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