The comparison of the triadological doctrine of Isidore of Pelusium with Cyril of Alexandria's teaching

Comparación de la doctrina triadológica de Isidoro de Pelusio con la enseñanza de Cirilo de Alejandría

Eirini Artemi
National and Capodistrian University of Athens
eartemi@theol.uoa.gr

Abstract: Isidore of Pelusium was an Egyptian by birth and from a prominent Alexandrian family, which included Alexandrian Patriarchs Theophilus and Cyril. He lived in the same period with Cyril of Alexandria. The latter was influenced by him on many points of his (Cyril's) triadological teaching. Their triadology was an important part of the theology of the fifth century. That time, the Christology had the most significant role in the church, because of the appearance of the Nestorian heresy. Although, the two fathers managed to reconstruct their theology of the Holy Scripture in order to suggest that their exegetical practice are inseparable from, and must be interpreted in light of, their overarching theological vision. The Triune God's revelation, in their mind, proceeds from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit, following the order of Trinitarian relations. Moreover, this pattern applies to the inspiration of Scripture as well, insofar as inspiration occurs when the Son indwells human authors by the Spirit and speaks the words of the Father. The originality of this paper is to present the teaching of Isidore of Pelusium and its effect that exercised in the Triune God teaching of Cyril of Alexandria. So far, there aren't any analytical studies for Triadology of Isidore nor any form of comparison with the triadological teaching of Cyril. This paper is part of my doctorate thesis «Isidore's of Pelusium teaching about the Triune God and its relation to the triadological teaching of Cyril of Alexandria», and it is presented for the first time worldwide. This attempt of comparison of the two saints' Triadology was very difficult, because of that the work of Isidore is primarily educational, interpretive and advisory, while that of Cyril's one is mainly theological. Another factor that should be taken into consideration is that the foundation stone of the whole theology of the two fathers is the teaching of the incarnation of the divine Logos. Of course, it is something logic and natural their theology to be based on the unique and unrepeatable event of the Word's of God incarnation, which was dominating the scene in the times in which two Fathers lived.

Keywords: Triune God, Cyril of Alexandria, Isidore of Pelusium, Triadological doctrine, Christology.

Resumen: Isidoro de Pelusio era egipcio de nacimiento y de una familia prominente de Alejandría, que incluía a los patriarcas de Alejandría Teófilo y Cirilo. Vivió en el mismo período que Cirilo de Alejandría. Este último lo influyó en muchos puntos con su enseñanza triadológica. La triadología de Cirilo era una parte importante de la teología del siglo V. En ese entonces, la cristología tenía el papel más importante en la Iglesia, debido a la aparición de la herejía nestoriana. Sin embargo, los dos Padres lograron reconstruir su teología de las Sagradas Escrituras para sugerir que su práctica exegética es inseparable de, y debe interpretarse a la luz de, su visión teológica primordial. Para ambos, la revelación de Dios Uno y Trino procede del Padre, por medio del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo, siguiendo el orden de las relaciones trinitarias.

Además, este modelo se aplica también a la inspiración de las escrituras, en la medida en que la inspiración se produce cuando el Hijo mora en autores humanos por el Espíritu Santo y habla las palabras del Padre. La originalidad de este trabajo es presentar la enseñanza de Isidoro de Pelusio y el efecto que ejerció en ella la doctrina de Cirilo de Alejandría sobre Dios Uno y Trino. Hasta el momento no hay ningún estudio analítico sobre la triadología de Isidoro ni ningún tipo de comparación con la enseñanza triadológica de Cirilo. Este documento es parte de mi tesis doctoral «La enseñanza de Isidoro de Pelusio acerca del Dios Uno y Trino y su relación con la enseñanza triadológica de Cirilo de Alejandría», y se presenta por primera vez en todo el mundo. Este intento de comparación entre las triadologías de los dos santos era muy difícil, debido a que la obra de Isidoro es principalmente educativa, interpretativa y asesora, mientras que la de Cirilo es principalmente teológica. Otro factor que debe tenerse en cuenta es que la piedra fundamental de toda la teología de ambos padres es la enseñanza sobre la encarnación del Verbo divino. Por supuesto, es algo lógico y natural que su teología se base en el evento único e irrepetible de la encarnación de la Palabra de Dios, que estaba dominando la escena en los tiempos en vivieron los dos Padres.

Palabras clave: Dios Trino, Cirilo de Alejandría, Isidoro de Pelusio, doctrina triadológica, cristología.

* * *

1. The relationship between Isidore and Cyril

Isidore and Cyril knew each other on a personal level. The relative relationship of the father of Pelusium with Theophilus and Cyril[1], patriarchs of Alexandria, was predicated on the witness of Synaxarion[2], of the Menologion of Basilius the Porphyrogenitus[3] the young and on writings of Fakoundos[4] Bishop of Hermeianis. This information doesn't refer to any other source of their time nor the letters of the sacred Isidore to Cyril. An important testimony in order to show, to exhibit the spiritual relationship between two men to be supported is Isidore's letter to Cyril of Alexandria[5]. There, Isidore reported that Cyril called him "father"[6], revealing their spiritual relationship that had developed between

---

[1] D. Ballanos, in his article with the title, "Isidore of Pelusium" in Patristic Biblical Lexicon 4 (1991) 146, accepts that Isidore originated from the same wealthy family as Cyril and his uncle Theophilus. For this reason Isidore could make sharp and strict criticism to them. Also, Isidore dared to make strict criticism and to other ecclesiastical and political lords of his time. As for him, He was only a monk and a priest in a monastery. Cf. H. Leclercq, «St. Isidore of Pelusium », OCE 8 (1910) 185-186.

[2] According to the Alexandrian Synaxarion, CSCO 78, p 489 the Arab Synaxarion Jacobean, Coptic Version: PO 56, p 814, Isidore of El Pharama otherwise Pelusium was relative with the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Theophilus and Cyril.

[3] Basilius the Porphyrogenitus the young, *Menologion Greek*, 2, PG 117, 296A.

[4] Facundi Hermiansis episcopi, *Pro Defensione trium capitulorum concilii Chalcedonensis. Libri XII Ad Justinianum Imperatorem*, PL 67, 573-574

[5] Isidore of Pelusium, *Epist. I, 370 – Cyril of Alexandria*, PG 78, 392CD.

[6] Ibid, PG 78, 392C.

them. Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril had stayed as a monk in Pelusium for a short time, before he succeeded his uncle Theophilus in the patriarchal throne[7]. There, probably, he met Pelusiote father, and became his disciple[8], Otherwise how can it be explained that the supreme spiritual leader in the hierarchy of Alexandria called a simple monk as "father"[9]? Later, in the same letter, Isidore emphasized that he considered himself as the "son"[10] of holy Cyril. It is clearly that Isidore didn't feel as Cyril's son because of his age, because he was born around 360 to 370 and Cyril around 380 to 390, but because of the position was held by each of the both in the priesthood hierarchy. Cyril, successor to the Evangelist Mark on the episcopal throne of Alexandria[11], was the spiritual leader of the specific Patriarchate. He had the responsibility and supervision of all clerics and monks of Egypt[12], besides Isidore.

2. The Triune God. One God in Trinity and Three Persons in one God

The Trinitarian teaching is the central doctrine of the Christian religion. The Christians believe in one God who has three persons. The truth that in the unity of the Godhead there are Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, these Three Persons being truly distinct one from another. Our faith in the Triune God is not a man-made discovery, but a revelation from God. He who is unapproachable for man, reveals Himself to man and becomes approachable.

Isidore of Pelusium strongly underlines that, the hypostases of the three Persons of God are equal, because "one being a substance of the divine Trinity"[13]. The Triune God is known "in their own hypostases"[14]. The divine nature doesn't exist outside the hypostases of the Holy Trinity, nor vice versa,

---

[7] Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *Feast Letter*, W. H. Burns, Lettres Festales, t. I, SC 372, Paris 1991, p.17-18.

[8] P. Évieux considers this conclusion as exaggerated. He argues that Cyril called Isidore as "father", not because he had stayed as a monk near Isidore, but he did so because he was stimulated by courtesy. Isidore was a venerable and wise monk. He had the reputation of one of the best interpreter of the Scriptures and for this reason he was addressed with this way by Cyril. Moreover, Cyril frequently used the word "father" in his addresses to venerable monks, because it was common to be used as a simple and common type of courtesy among clergy of that time. Cf. P. Évieux, *Isidore de Péluse*, TH 99, Paris, 1995, p. 83.

[9] Isidore of Pelusium, *Epist. I, 370 – Cyril of Alexandria*, PG 78, 392CD. The fact that Cyril called Isidore "father" and in conjunction with the word "believe (eoikas)" in the Isidore's letter II, PKZ – Cyril Episcope, PG 78, 565B, make C. Fouskas believe in conclusion that Cyril had replied to letters of Isidore. Unfortunately the reply letters of Cyril were lost throufh the ages. Cf. C. Fouskas, *Isidore's of Pelusium Theology*, Athens, 1967, p. 45, footnote 133.

[10] Isidore of Pelusium, *Epist. I, TO – Cyril of Alexandria*, PG 78, 392C.

[11] Ibid.

[12] P. Évieux, "Isidore de Péluse", TH 99, Paris 1995, p. 83.

[13] Isidore of Pelusium, *Epist. I, 59- Gorgonio,* PG 78, 220C.

[14] Isidore, *Epist. I, 67-Timotheo Lectori,* PG 78, 228A.

and they do not exist without the knowledge of their own nature. The revelation of the three divine Persons of the Triune God, each person is a perfect God, refutes the heretical beliefs of Montanus and of Sabellius. Montanus claimed that he was the organ of the Paraclete[15]. Also, Sabelius taught that there is one God in three hypostases but a "triprosopos Hypostasis", so he negated the existence of the three divine persons[16].
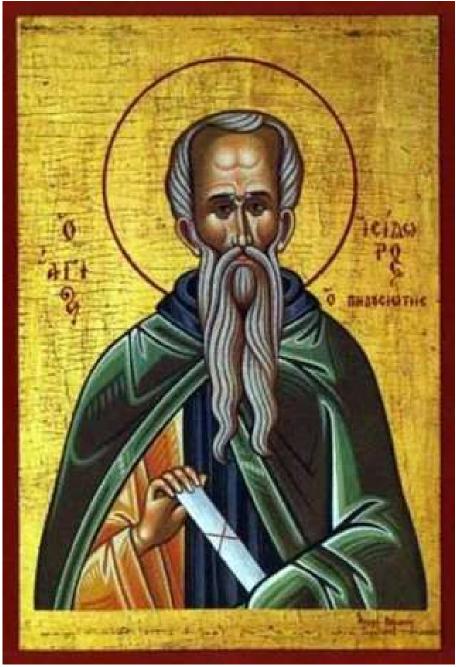

Fig. 1. St. Isidore of Pelusium. Byzantine icon.

---

[15] Isidore, *Epist. I, 243-Hermino Comiti,* PG 78, 332AB.

[16] Isidore, *Epist. I, 247 - Hermino Comiti,* PG 78, 332D.

Isidore wants to exercise controversy to the remaining of supporters of various sects, such as the Arians, Sabellians, Apollinaristes and several others. He points out that the essence of the Godhead is one and the three persons of the Holy Trinity have the same essence, but the hypostasis is something different, and every person has the divine own substance[17]. It is therefore a big mistake if someone refers to "the shrinkage of hypostasis as a compound of substance"[18]. Anyhow, Christ revealed the divine truths and He defined "in the name of the divine Trinity it is pointing out that the word substance would mean the union"[19].

The Pelusiote saint writes that God is not only the Father, as the Jews supports, but the Triune God is the three consubstantial Persons. The Triune God can be understood only if "He expands in three Persons and He «shrinks» in one God as far as the ousia - nature"[20]. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the saint Father notes, is spread out through the Old Testament[21] and it was used even by Philo. The latter attempted to do a sort of "spiritual interpretation" of the Old Testament in his works[22].

Isidore is of the opinion to distinguish nature and hypostasis to the Triune God, so he justifies the existence of the singular in the Bible when he refers to God: "and the Lord rained down burning asphalt from the skies"[23] and "the Lord, our God, is one Lord"[24]. Already in the Old Testament the Triune God appears as the Creator of man and the entire world. He is created not by the Father alone, but from the Father through the Son and is perfected "in the Holy Spirit", with one will and one energy. "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth...and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the water", the Old Testament tells us characteristically, using in Hebrew the word *Elohim* for God, which is a plural form. At the same time, he explains when in the Bible, instead of the singular plural is used, the reference is made to hypostases of Godhead[25]: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"[26]. This phrase, which comes from that passage of man's creation, reveals the existence of the three persons of God. The plural of the phrase "let us make" is not considered as

---

[17] Isidore, *Epist. I, 247 - Hermino Comiti,* PG 78, 332D. 333A. Cf. C. Fouskas, *Isidore's of Pelusium Theology*, Athens 1967, p. 12.

[18] Isidore, *Epist. I, 247 - Hermino Comiti,* PG 78, 332D.

[19] Isidore, *Epist.I, 20 – Hieraci Clarissimo,* PG 78, 196A.

[20] Isidore, *Epist. II, 142 – Paulo,* PG 78, 585A. *Epist.III, 27 – Agatho Presbytero,* PG 78, 748D, 749A.

[21] Isidore, *Epist. II, 143 – Paulo,* PG 78, 585B.

[22] Isidore, *Epist. II, 143 – Paulo,* PG 78, 585BC.

[23] Isidore, *Epist. III, 112 – Alypio,* PG 78, 817C. Gen. 19: 24.

[24] Isidore, *Epist. III, 112 – Alypio,* PG 78, 817C. Deut. 6: 4.

[25] Isidore, *Epist. III, 112 – Alypio,* PG 78, 817A.

[26] Isidore, *Epist. III, 112 – Alypio,* PG 78, 817C. Gen. 1: 26. Cf. Isidore, *Epist. II, 143 – Paulo,* PG 78, 588B.

the plural form of politeness, but it shows the identity of the will and energy of hypostases. At the same time, the phrase is filled with the singular form of the phrase "in the image" of God, states the substance identity of the persons of the Triune God. The meaning of "in our image" (imago Dei) refers to the "inner man" because God is unformed, indestructible and intangible. It involves the rationality which the Creator gave as dowry to the spiritual nature of man and its necessary complement, the independent element of the human nature, with which the human is a moral personality, susceptible of any progress and that the man may become a "partaker of the divine nature".

Any suspicion of many Gods' existence or about being a person to God in Jewish conception is rebutted because "While the identity of nature is divided into hypostases and the property (idiotis) of hypostases is united to a substance"[27]. Compelling argument on which the above view is corroborated, they are the God's word: "there is no God but me: I am the Lord, and there is no other"[28]. With these words, God reveals the common substance between the divine persons, and, at the same time, He stresses that there is no hierarchy or series between the divine existences, because God is superior in numbers and two times[29]. The Holy Father drew the conclusion that "The first and second number or the first and the second series have no place at the venerable and royal Trinity"[30]. In another letter, he returns to toggle the use between singular and plural number, thus underlining the consubstantial divine Persons, namely the identity of nature and at the same time the distinction of hypostases: "Those, which exceed the singular number in the Holy Scriptures, express the difference of hypostases but the singular number expresses the identity of nature"[31]. He notes with emphasis that we sometimes refer to God with singular or with plural number. This breaks down the various teachings of heretics, like Sabellius, of Arius, Eunomius of the oldest prevailing views about God, such as the absolute monotheism of the Jews or the crowded pantheon of the pagans, here Isidore means mainly the religious views of the ancient Greeks and Romans[32]. It is worth mentioning that Isidore specifically names those heretics who troubled the congregation of the Church with their teaching in the order that they appeared on the scene of history. Thereby indirectly he shows that he is aware of the church history as well as of the role that the heretics had played in his day.

---

[27] Isidore, *Epist. III, 112 – Alypio,* PG 78, 817B.

[28] Ibid. Isaiah 45:6.

[29] Isidore, *Epist. III, 63 – Theopompo*, PG 78, 772D. Cf. *Epist. III, 18 – Agatho Presbytero*, PG 78, 744D, 745A.

[30] Isidore, *Epist. III, 18 – Agatho Presbytero*, PG 78, 744D. *Epist. III, 63 – Theopompo*, PG 78, 772D.

[31] Isidore, *Epist. III, 27 – Agatho Presbytero*, PG 78, 748D.

[32] Ibid. PG 78, 748D, 749A.

God is one and at the same time Trinity because, "if the divinity divided into properties (idiotites), but He concludes in value and in ousia"[33]. Here, Isidore identifies the meaning of the word "properties" (idiotites) with the sense of the term existence (ousia). He underlines that God is One and the Persons have the same power (omodynama), consubstantial and equal among them. While, therefore, the deity is distinguished in hypostases, but he does not cease to be a God, because the hypostases are united in substance, and they have the same "value", so there is one God with three consubstantial and eternal persons[34]. God is a plurality in unity. The unity of nature, the same substance of the Persons, implies the same power of them (omodynamo). The same substance of the Persons is the base for the unitary and the simplicity (asyntheto) of God. Isidore pointed out, finally, and for once again, that the things refer to the Triune God should not be delivered in silence or be forgotten by the Christians. By this he pointed how momentous is ultimately the truth of theology.

Cyril, on the other hand, refers to the Holy Trinity, stressing: "We believe in one God the Father, the almighty, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, and in the Holy Spirit"[35] and he adds that God is one in three hypostases, "We believe in one ousia of holy Trinity, a substance in Triune idiotes is being knowed, the undivided authority, the indivisible kingdom, one deity and mastership. For this reason God is a monad because of His ousia and at the same time He is Triad and He is known as a Trinity not because of the names of Him but because of His three Hypostases. We call nor One with three names neither three different things with different essence as one … we support that there are three hypostases of God but only one the nature – ousia of the Trinity"[36]. The patriarch of Alexandria notes that in things that the have the same kind – species (homoeidi), "the basic thing for them is the word of substance, and not that every of these is different and shared from the others"[37]. So Cyril eagers to highlight the consubstantiality of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Consequently, the Holy Trinity has the one nature of divinity[38].

Patriarch's of Alexandria view about Moses was important. The latter, although he was talking about a God in His divine essence, he knew, somehow, that there were three Hypostases with common divine nature, the Father, the Son

---

[33] Isidore, *Epist. III*, 149 – *Eutonio Diacono,* PG 78, 841B.

[34] Ibid.: "The divinity is widen in hypostases and He concluded in the substance and his value follows". Cf. , *Epist. II, 143 – Paulo,* PG 78, 589B.

[35] Cyril of Alexandria, 2nd logos for the queens about the real faith, ACO, v. 1, I, 5, pp. 40, lines 9-10 (= PG 76, 1369B).

[36] Cyril, *On the Holy and Life-giving Trinity*, 28, PG 75, 1188BC. Cf. Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 7, SC 246, 633, lines 27-29 (= PG 75, 1080A): «... In one divinity and one mastership of Father and of Son and of Holy Spirit, not many gods in numbers».

[37] Cyril, *Thesaurus,* 11, PG 75, 144C.

[38].Ibid, 32, PG 75, 480C.

and the Holy Spirit, who are not confused and minted each other[39]. It was simply difficult the time of the Old Testament someone to talk about a God in three Persons, because the human mind could not grasp such a dogmatic truth. Anyhow, in a period that polytheism was the dominative motive of the religions, it was incomprehensible for Moses to be refer at one and the same time, Triune God and, much less, to support this opinion to the people of Israel, who defend the existence of one God. Of course, here Cyril doesn't make any reference to specific facts by which he could support his words about the faith and knowledge of god-bearing Moses in the Triune God.

Fig. 2. St. Cyril of Alexandria. Byzantine icon.

---

[39] Cyril, *Against Julian*, 4, PG 76, 725AB: «Moses didn't ignore that God is one, meaning one divine nature in holy and *homoousion* Trinity is worshiped, in the Father, I say, and in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. For this, each of the Persons has his own *idiotites*: Father is the Father, and Son is the Son, and Spirit is the Spirit».

In the Old Testament, the Triune God presented Himself as a dominant of all creation and its creator. He is the maker of the history of Israel. He speaks midst of the mouth of David and other prophets. He makes His anger seen for the outrageous acts of His Chosen people. He speaks of Adam's transgression, which is the cause that the face of God disgusted from human race. He promises that, although the rational beings have been moved away from Him and have become slaves of their passions, He would "refurbish" the whole face of creation. He would release it from the chains with which Satan has captured the nature into the slavery of sin and death. Only then, according to "the image of God" created beings will be able to escape from the situation in which they have fallen after Adam's and Eve's fall. They will be able to return again to the situation before the fall "proptotiki". Only then they could communicate face to face with the Creator God[40].

The New Testament helped Cyril to document his thoughts for the Holy Trinity. He made a reference to Christ's words, who advised his disciples to teach the divine word to all nations and to baptize those who would believe in Him "In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"[41] Simultaneously, the holy patriarch concluded that for this reason "we are baptized in Holy and Consubstantial Trinity, in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit"[42]. He hastened to add that we are not baptized in three Gods, but in a triune deity[43]. He noted that God is Spirit and He must be worshiped spiritually and truly[44]. Of course this, as a divine revealed truth, it is difficult to be understood. He condemned "the heretics' immune and heinous thoughts", which became obstacles and turned them away from the doctrines of truth. The heretics were easily swayed by their selfishness and their attempt to interpret divine doctrines with the logic[45].

Then he continued to stress that the divine doctrines concerning the Triune God is high cognition, because "the word for God, the word for the Holy and consubstantial Trinity is difficult to be understood and the only thing that could be understood is the word exhibits the truth"[46]. Cyril explained that Deity is one, as concern as His essence, "God is meant in three Hypostases, in the Father, in

---

[40] Cyril, *Commentary on Habakkuk*, 3, 37, Pusey, vol. II, pp. 125, lines 17-28 (=PG 71, 904A). Cf. Psalms 103:29-30.

[41] Cyril, *Christ is One*, SC 97, 773, lines 16-19 (=PG 75, 1353B). Matt. 28: 19. Cf. Cyril, *on Isaiah*, 5, 5, PG 70, 1353A. Cyril, 1st logos for the queens about the real faith, ACO, vol. 1, I, 5, pp. 80, lines 1-2 (= PG 75, 1245B).

[42] Cyril, *Christ is One*, SC 97, 773, lines 20-21 (=PG 75, 1353B).

[43] Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 3, SC 237, 465, lines 39 - 42 (= PG 75, 793C).

[44] Cyril, *On Isaiah*, 15, 1, PG 70, 912B. Cf. Jn. 4:24.

[45] Cyril, *On Isaiah*, 5, 5, PG 70, 1377C.

[46] Ibid 3, 1, PG 70, 561A.

the Son and in the Holy Spirit"[47] and He has a common will and energy. Whenever, therefore, a Person of the Trinity acts, has all the divinity power[48]. In order Cyril to avoid the danger of polytheism, highlights the consubstantial[49] and the omodynamo of the nature of the persons of the Trinity, "one and consubstantial is the queen of everything ... the divine nature"[50]. Even though he stresses the common action of the divine Persons, at the same time, he mentions the common idiomata of the divine nature, which exist in every Prosopon. Also Cyril refers to hypostatic idiomata[51] of the Holy Trinity's Persons which are unique to each person individually, "If someone says that the God is one, but he thinks the Father without His Son and without the Spirit that is derived from His ousia and the Spirit is an hypostatic action of the Father, he would make a mistake"[52]. Clearly, therefore, Cyril emphasizes here that the principle, the cause of the existence of the persons of the Holy Trinity, the root of the deity is only the Father[53]. He always coexists with His "gennima", the Son, but also with the Holy Spirit. By the term "gennima" here, he means the Son "to kata physin gennima." Sometimes the term gennima is used by Cyril with the meaning "creature", suggesting the irrational and rational created beings. Of course, we must not be underrated that the Son of God is the only begotten, eternal God, who is born achronos, prior century, while all of creatures are offspring in some specific time "en chrono" and consequently they cannot be considered as brothers of Son[54]. For this reason Cyril calls Son eternal according to the divine nature He was born.

---

[47] Cyril, *Against Julian*, 8, PG 76, 904C. Ibid. 9, PG 76, 952B: «Mastership and godhead is one of Father and of Son and of Holy Spirit· every person has the whole mastership and the divine nature."

[48] Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 6, SC 246, 618, lines 34-45, 619, lines 1-3 (=PG 75, 1053D, 1056A): «The one deity physis in Holy and consubstantial Trinity is known (by His acts) to us and to saint angels. And as far as Father's hypostasis is very perfect and similarly the Son is and the Holy Spirit is. As concern as the creative will of each Person is the whole will of the Triune God. This common will created the whole creation. It belongs to the Trinity God and at the same time to each Person. The God Father acts through the Son and in Holy Spirit. The Son acts, but the energy of the Father, not as a simple energy, but as energy with its own hypostases. The Holly Spirit acts. The Spirit is of Father and of the Son, who can everything manage".

[49] Cyril, *festal epistle*, XXIX, 1, PG 77, 961C. Cyril, *Thesaurus,* 12, PG 75, 200B. See relatively Cyril, *In John*, 3, 5, Pusey, vol. I, pp. 444, line 11 (= PG 73, 485B).

[50] Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 2, SC 231, 423, lines 9-10 (= PG 75, 724A). Prbl. Cyril, In the adoration and worship with spirituality and verity, 7, PG 68, 529C.

[51] Cyril*, Against Julian*, 9, PG 76, 952B.

[52] Ibid, 8, PG 76, 904D.

[53] Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 2, SC 231, 423, lines 11-12 (= PG 75, 721D).

[54] Cyril, *Thesaurus*, 18, PG 75, 308BC. Cf. the view of Athanasius of Alexandria, *Against Arians*, 1, 9, 2.1, M. Tetz, Athanasius Werke, vol. 1, 1, p. 117, lines 2-8 (= PG 26, 28D, 29A),

Several times, the Patriarch of Alexandria mentiones in the eternity -aidiotita and in synanarcho of the three divine persons through his writings. He emphasized that in the Trinity, no person takes precedence over others nor does He follow, simply they reveal themselves successively in humans, depending on the spiritual maturity of the latter in every season. He characteristically notes: "... On the other hand, for a different reason it would be wrong also to unedrstand the Father as being betwwen both, since He is the one who is named first in the sequence of the confession of the holy and consubstantial Trinity. We do not in any way claim that by taking precedence to the Son and the Spirit in the listing he is superior to them, which would be an idle and rash statement; rather, our position and belief is that from eternity He has the Son originating from Him, and what exists did not have existence without his Spirit; instead, as soon as the Father is understood to be God, immediately the existence of the one whose Father he is came into play, as likewise his divine and holy Spirit. Since, however, he is like a fountainhead of the one begotten by Him, He is appropriately named first. I cannot understand how he is between Son and Spirit. Perhaps they will reply in all likelihood, however, that between should be understood locally"[55]. Cyril concluded, therefore, that the Father is said *kata oikonomian* first, since He is the source of eternal existence of the two others. God, after all, is above and beyond time, place, quantity and everything material and bodily[56]. Moreover, the Holy Father himself used biblical passages[57], in which the Persons of the Trinity are referred by different order, pointing to the documents that the classification in the divine Persons is irrelevant, without no meaning "For this, and one worship in the Father, the Son and with Holy Spirit and in to God , is confessed by everyone"[58]

---

trans. In english by Cardinal Newman: "Very Son of the Father, natural and genuine, proper to His essence, Wisdom Only-begotten, and Very and Only Word of God is He; not a creature or work, but an offspring proper to the Father's essence." *Against Arians*, 2, 34, 2.3, M. Tetz, Athanasius Werke, vol. 1, 1, p. 211, lines 6-9, 12-15 (= PG 26, 220AB), trans. in english by Cardinal Newman: "For who hears of a son but conceives of that which is proper to the father's essence? Who heard, in his first catechizing , that God has a Son and has made all things by His proper Word, but understood it in that sense in which we now mean it? Who on the rise of this odious heresy of the Arians, was not at once startled at what he heard, as strange, and a second sowing, besides that Word which had been sown from the beginning? For what is sown in every soul from the beginning is that God has a Son, the Word, the Wisdom, the Power, that is, His Image and Radiance; from which it at once follows that He is always; that He is from the Father; that He is like; that He is the eternal offspring of His essence; and there is no idea involved in these of creature or work".

[55] Cyril, *Commentary on Habakkuk*, Pusey, vol. II, p. 120, lines 11-22 (= PG 71, 897AB).

[56] Ibid, p. 120, lines 22-26 (= PG 71, 897B). cf. Basilius of Caesarius, *In Holy Spirit to Amphilochius episcope Ikoniou,* R., B. Pruche, Sur le Saint-Esprit, SC 17, Paris 1968, 451-5, (= PG 32, 148C).

[57] Cyril, *Thesaurus*, 34, PG 75, 608D. Cf. 2 Cor. 13, 13. Cyril, *on the Holy and Life-giving Trinity*, 20, PG 75, 1176D, 1177A. Cyril, *on Isaiah*, 4, 4, PG 70, 1052D.

[58] Cyril, *Thesaurus*, 12, PG 75, 185D, 188A.

Cyril reminds that both the birth of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit have nothing to do with "sharing" (merismo), "runoff" (aporroi) and "the Beheading" (apotomi), because the divine nature is totally unenforceable in them as intangible[59]. It simply becomes clear that the Son and the Holy Spirit is the cause of undue authority of the Father (aitiata tis anaitiou archis)[60]. We must, therefore, bear in mind that God, "He is undivided in Essence"[61], without depriving the genital and the proceeding power to God from the Father.

Therefore, one is God the Father, one Jesus Christ and one the Holy Spirit, «One deity nature, but it is worshiped in three hypostases"[62]. There is one God[63] with three persons[64]. Father distributes goods to people midst of the Son, by the grace of the Holy Spirit[65]. Cyril, indeed, insists on emphasizing the equality of the three divine Persons, observing that when Christ said "If you ask something in my name, I will do this"[66] and "what if you ask from the Father in my name, He will give you"[67], He did not mean that Son is superior to the other two persons, nor that there are two Gods, the Father and the Son. Simply, the demands of prayers were addressed to the name of the Son, because the Word of

---

[59] Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 4, SC 237, 506, lines 5-8 (= PG 75, 864A).

[60] Cyril does not always adopt the distinguish between cause and effect, which refers to the space of divinity. Cf. Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 2, SC 231, 446, lines 22-24 (= PG 75, 761B).

[61] Cyril, *Thesaurus,* 10, PG 75, 133C.

[62] Cyril, *2nd logos for the queens about the real faith,* ACO, v. 1, I, 5, pp. 55, lines 24-25 (= PG 76, 1405C). Cyril, *against Nestorius detraction*, IV, A, ACO, v. 1, I, 6, p 77, lines 2-3 (= PG 76, 172A): "One deity nature, the Father has and also the Son has and similarly the Spirit" Ibid, 2, 2, ACO, v. 1, I, 6, p 32, lines 30-31 (= PG 76, 60B): "in almighty Father, the maker of everything visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ. and in the Holy Spirit".

[63] Cyril, *About veneration and worship in spirit and in verity*, 6, 7, PG 68, 413A, 521B. Cf. Ex. 20:3. Cf. Cyril, *on Isaiah*, 4, 1, PG 70, 873A. Cyril, Against Nestorius *detraction*, 4, 4, ACO, v. 1, I, 6, p 77, lines 2-3 (= PG 76, 172A). cf. Cyril, on the Psalms, 62, PG 69, 1124D.

[64] Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 2, SC 231, 422, lines 28-37 (= PG 75, 721CD): «««καὶ τὴν θείαν μέν τις εἰ κατονομάσαι φύσιν, ὁλόκληρον ἡμῖν ὡς ἐν ἑνὶ τῷ σημαινομένῳ παρέδειξεν εὐθὺς τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα, τὴν ἐν μιᾷ θεότητι νοουμένην, πλὴν οὔπω διεσταλμένως τὸ ἑνὸς πρόσωπον ἰδικῶς. Πατέρα δὲ καὶ Υἱὸν καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον λέγων, οὐκ ἀφ᾽ ὧν ἐστιν ἀδιακρίτως ἡ πᾶσα τῆς θεότητος φύσις ποιεῖται τὴν δήλωσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ὧν τὸ τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος διαγινώσκεται ταὐτὸν εἰς οὐσίαν ἐν ὑποστάσεσιν ἰδικαῖς, ἑκάστῳ τῶν νοουμένων ἀποκρίνοντος τοῦ λόγου τὸ αὐτῷ προσῆκον ὄνομα, καὶ ἐν ἰδικαῖς τιθέντος ὑποστάσεσι τὰ οὐσιωδῶς ἡνωμένα». Ibid, 5, SC 237, 574₂₂-25 (= PG 75, 980B). cf. Cyril, *2nd logos for the queens about the real faith*, ACO, v. 1, I, 5, pp. 275-6 (= PG 76, 1340A). Cf. Cor 1, 8: 5.

[65] Cyril, *1st logos for the queens about the real faith*, ACO, v. 1, I, 5, pp. 90, lines 34-35 (= PG 76, 1272A)

[66] Ibid, ACO, vol. 1, I, 5, pp. 90, lines 27-28 (= PG 76, 1269D). Cf. Jn. 14:13.

[67] Cyril, *1st logos for the queens about the real faith*, ACO, v. 1, I, 5, pp. 90, lines 30-31 (= PG 76, 1269D). Cf. Cor 1, 8:6.

God incarnated and is the bridge for reattachment of God with man. The Triune God was revealed to man midst of the Incarnate Word[68].

Cyril notes that the creation of the world was caused by all three Persons of the Triune God: " God the Father through the Son, in the Spirit actives, ... about the laying of creation, and moves to existence things that don't exist"[69]. After they created the world from zero, they put laws that would keep the world constant, so in all creations, an excellent class and operation will be prevailed. The three prosopons of God, which must take the glory for ever[70], consists of the *omodoxi* and consubstantial Trinity[71]. If anything, then, is said that it is created only by the Son and the Spirit, this is definitely become by the father, it comes through from the whole Holy and consubstantial Trinity. There are, therefore, common actions and will of the Trinity for everything[72]. At this point, the Patriarch of Alexandria followes the steps of the theology of Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers, who insisted on highlighting the unity of the essence of the Three hypostases, which is reflected in common actions and common wishes of the three persons. Cyril clarifies that the "Nativity" of the Son distinguishes, which is idion in the nature of the Father, since the creation of the world. The latter is the result of the will and energy of the divine Persons of the Trinity, stating that: "the creation is the fact of the energy, but the giving of birth belongs on nature. The nature and the energy isn't the same"[73]. At this point, the Patriarch of Alexandria repeats the theological teaching of his predecessor Athanasius, who talked about the distinction between "Birth" and "Creation"[74]. Also, Cyril

---

[68] Cyril, *1st logos for the queens about the real faith*, ACO, v. 1, I, 5, pp. 90, lines 30-36 (= PG 76, 1269D, 1272A).

[69] Cyril, *Against Julian*, 8, PG 76, 921C.

[70] Cyril, *against Nestorius detraction*, III, 6, ACO, v. 1, I, 6, p 75, lines 32-33 (= PG 76, 168B).

[71] Cyril, *1st logos for the queens about the real faith*, ACO, v. 1, I, 5, pp. 63, lines 16 (= PG 76, 1205).

[72] Cyril, *Against Nestorius detraction*, IV, 1, ACO, v. 1, I, 6, p 77, line 7 (= PG 76, 172A).

[73] Cyril, *Thesaurus*, 18, PG 75, 312C. Ibid, 15, PG 75, 277A. Cf. John Damascene, *To Orthodox Faith* 1, 8, PG 94, 821D-823A. See in J. Liebaert, *La doctrine de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne*, Lille 1951 and N. Charlier, «Le Thesaurus de Trinitate de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie. Questions de critique littéraire », RHE 45 (1950) 25-81.

[74] Athanasius of Alexandria, *Against Arians*, I, 56, PG 26, 129AB: "For it matters not even if we speak of what is generate, as 'become' or 'made;' but on the contrary, things originate cannot be called generate, God's handiwork as they are, except so far as after their making they partake of the generate Son, and are therefore said to have been generated also, not at all in their own nature, but because of their participation of the Son in the Spirit" This highlighting of the difference between *birth* and *creation* was needed because the Arians equated the term "birth" and "creation", "offspring" and "poem".

treats more the word "energy"[75] instead of the word "will (thelima)" which Athanasius used in his works[76].

The patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril returns to the issue of one and at the same time, the Triune God[77], citing the end of the glorification of the Seraphim. They, at the end of praise to God, say three times the adjective "Holy", complementing it with the phrase "Lord of Sabaoth." The adjective "saint" is synonymous with the divine nature, as the sole and true Holy is only the one God. In any other other cases that this adjective is used, this is abusive. However, the triple repetition of the adjective shows the three persons of God. The circumlocution, periphrasis "Lord Sabaoth" which complements the adjective "Saint" reveals the omnipotence of God and the irrefutable sovereignty over the whole creation. Shortly, Cyril concludes that the word of Seraphim states that "they say the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," adding that "no world intercepts that the three persons are different, but the divinity is one in three hypostases"[78].

On the whole works of sacred Cyril, there is a reference to Trinitarian God without questioning for a moment the simplicity of the divine nature, " For we are not simple by nature, whereas the divinity, which is perfectly simple and not composite possesses in itself every perfection and nothing is lacking to it"[79]. Christ himself urged his disciples to follow the path to all nations teaching his word and baptizing those who believed in Him in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Cyril emphasizes that the symbol of Nicaea - Constantinople constituted the irrefutable testimony of the Holy Trinity. In the works of the patriarch of Alexandria, it was perceived the inability of man to conceive the mystery of one and at the same time, the Triune God. Man must accept the mystery of God with the help of faith, which brings the grace of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit enlightens the mind of man to be able to understand the divine truth without falling into the trap of heresy, which works as another Procrustean bed. Herey tries to keep only what suits into prearranged framework, which has set as a measure.

In conclusion, we observe that both the Church Fathers teach us for one and at the same time, the Triune God, "Monas in Trinity and Trinity in One". Isidore and Cyril based their teaching on the teachings of the Old and New Testament

---

[75] Cyril, *in John*, II, F, Pusey, vol. I, pp. 317, lines 2-4 (= PG 73, 349AB): «Therefore as Very God of Very God the Father, He says that He can do these things equally with Him; but that He may appear not only Equal in Power to the Father, but likeminded in all things, and having in all things the Will One with Him, He saith that He *can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do*" See also ibid, Pusey, vol. I, pp. 320, line 1, 321, line 17, (= PG 73, 352D, 353CD). Cyril, on the Holy Trinity in chapters 28, PG 77, 1157B.

[76] Athanasius of Alexandria, *Explanation in the Psalms*, PG 27, 101B. Athanasius, *Against Arians*, III, PG 26, 452A.

[77] Cyril, *About veneration and worship in spirit and in verity,* 14, PG 68, 896D.

[78] Cyril, *On Isaiah,* 1, 4, PG 70, 176A.

[79] Cyril, *On the Holy and consubstantial Trinity*, 1, SC 231, 393, lines 42-43 (= PG 75, 673C). Ibid 7, SC 246, 651, lines 22 (= PG 75, 1109C). Cyril, *Thesaurus*, 18, PG 75, 312C.

and the Holy Tradition, which unequivocally testimony the existence and appearance of the Triune God in the world. God is the dominant to the whole creation and historical reality. They more specifics, refer to a God, who is also Trinitarian, that community of persons. They make word for one a God because of one divine essence, but also they argue that there are three divine hypostases, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father is the only authority and the source of the Trinity, which transmits the divine existence to the Son -With the eternal and timeless birth- and the Holy Spirit-With the eternal procession of the Holy. The revelations of the persons of the Holy Trinity constitute the condescension of God in the state of fallen man. This was sealed and by the command of Christ to his disciples: "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit "[80].

In the works of both Fathers, we can find verses of the Holy Scriptures, which focus on the unity of the substance in the Trinity and distinction of Hypostases; one God, three persons. These phrases underline the existence of a personal God, Triune in prosopa, condemning both older heresies, such as those of Sabellius, in which there has been confusion of persons that of Arianism espoused the separation of the natures of the divine Persons. The heresies reveal that the two fathers were known of what had taken place into the Church during the past centuries.

Through their work emphasizes that each person of the Holy Trinity is a vector of absolute fullness of the divine being. It is given the interpretation of the eternal existential causal relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Divine persons live within a community of love. Each outward movement of God is a manifestation of the joint actions of the staff of the Triune Godhead and has the character of selfless offer or emptying "kenoseos". The Triune God created the whole creation. The creation was recreated by Christ and was maintained by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The restoration of fallen environment is become only through the donation of the Trinitarian God, which was introduced to the world by God incarnate Logos.

3. Conclusions

Through the systematic comparison of the two Triadological teachings of these Fathers, we had the formulation particular of the following conclusions: a) These two Fathers nurtured a theology which is characterized by biblical simplicity, conscious of the human limits of knowledge of the divine and the experience of illumination of the Holy Spirit and the action of the force of the Divine Mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Word. b) Both Fathers considered that the vocabulary of human language is finite so it cannot express the Infinite Divine. So the words are used in an abusive importance. Isidore here emphasizes that only the term Nativity has literal meaning when it refers to the eternal existence of the Son of God, something that is not shared by Cyril. c) Commonplace in

---

[80] Math. 28:19.

both fathers is mostly their report to the falsehoods of Montano, Sabellius, Eunomius and in previous heretic people and they repudiate the falsehoods. The two fathers accept the decision of the First Ecumenical Council. Alongside they are perfectly aware of the theology of Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers. The difference is that Isidore named and called the heretics in the order they appeared. Cyril didn't always do something like that. d) it is explained why Isidore called the Son as the Father without sharing the falsehoods of the teaching of Sabellius. e) Both Fathers considered the fact of the Incarnation of Logos as the basic tenet of our faith through which the doctrine of the Triune God and of the Holy Spirit is revealed. This revelation is the cornerstone of the edifice of the Church. Both Fathers used the term Incarnation as synonym for emptyness, the incarnation of the divine Logos. Also both Fathers knew that it is difficult God to be understood by the human mind, because it is not possible to seek physical evidence on the God's eternal nature. His nature is superior to our intellectual and our language. And the both insisted on the one God with three prosopons is properly and primarily simple and incomposite.