THE SPLENDOUR OF THE DEIFIED FLESH.
GLORIFICATION (δεδοξασμένη) AND DEIFICATION (θέωσις)
INTO A CONTINUUM OF THEOPHANIES

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ABSTRACT. Saint Paul refers to Christ's ability to radiate his divine light of himself while other OT luminaries like Moses could only reflect that light. This experience of theosis is being, also, described as "transformation into unveiled glory" (2 Cor. 3.7-18). By this verse deification through the vision of God becomes an immanent and mystical event. This aspect of deification as transformation into glory (glorification) is both an inward quality of spiritual knowledge and an outward radiance. The nature of the glory of Moses and the visible splendour shining from his face from his direct contact with God (Exod 34.29) signifies God's visible, divine presence. As all believers encounter God directly (with unveiled faces) through the Spirit's presence they reflect this glory as mirrors and are themselves glorified in the process (from glory to glory). The transformation into this glory is not only noetic but also embodied because it is a visible manifestation. The noetic enlightenment is associated with participation in divine glory in 2 Cor 3-4 and is correlated to the somatic experience of glory in 2 Cor 4:16-5:5. Paul speaks also of this epistemic process of contemplation which generates the ontological mirroring process. And, because for us there is no veil over the face, we all see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and we are being transformed (μεταμορφούμεθα) into his image (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα) with ever-increasing glory. But Luke is the only evangelist to use the word "glory" (doxa) and the only to mention that Jesus and the three apostles went up the mountain specifically to pray (Lk 9:29-31). This is a detail in spiritual tradition of hesychasm which was richly developed, the vision of light at the culmination of intense periods of prayer is the deification of our nature. This light is an enhypostatic symbol, the uncreated radiance of God, a divine energy. This manifestation of Christ in the divine nature is not something external to ourselves. It is interiorized through the life of asceticism and prayer. Christ will radiate within us. But this pneumatic nature of Christ's luminous body is experienced through Eucharist as well. This holy sacrament accesses the divine light, veiled by Christ's visible body. Also, Sebastian Brock extends forms of light comparison to the internal light of Mary's womb when bearing Jesus. Christ's light transforms her body in which He resided, as it gleams from within. In her, the light-bearing Christ is 'woven' as a garment. Speaking of the hesychast method of prayer and transformation of the body,
Gregory Palamas also uses this Pauline theology of 2 Corinthians in Tr. I.2.2. But he adds that "We carry this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). So we carry the Father’s light in the face (prosōpon) of Jesus Christ in earthen vessels, that is, in our bodies, in order to know the glory of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, during the hesychast controversy, St Gregory Palamas defends the reality of the encounter with God of those monks who reported seeing a vision of light at the culmination of intense period of prayer. For the light is nothing less than the uncreated radiance of God—a divine energy accessible to the senses. This manifestation of Christ is not something external to ourselves.

**Keywords:** Glorification, Deification (Theosis), uncreated energies, Kabod (Doxa), Thaboric light, Shem, Name of Christ, Hesychastic prayer, Shekinah, Uncreated light, somatic experience of glory, Eucharist, robe of glory, Theophanies (revelation), Christification, Hesychastic Mariology.

**INTRODUCTION**

God is both absolutely transcendent and immanent with his creation, so that revelation and redemption are possible through God’s energies. Divine energies are God Himself as He has manifested Himself to us. These energies were originally identified as the „uncreated light“ encountered through theophanic experiences. For example, all the „anthropomorphisms in Scripture refer not to God in his essence, but to how he acts according to and through his energies”.1 Father Staniloae argues that „through apophatic knowledge we gain a kind of direct experience of His mystical presence”.

For Gregory Palamas this essence-energies distinction is rooted in God’s very being, as „transcendent and immanent reveal in the Incarnation itself”, but this distinction may seem „incoherent in light of formal logic, but coheres perfectly with the logic of deification”.2 Paweł Rojek tried to show that „Palamas’

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3 Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God. Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 13, 30. Dionysius and Gregory Palamas are the two great synthesizers of theological apophaticism and the essence/energies distinction. To Palamas this distinction at the heart of Christian ontology become the dogmatic basis for union with God in terms of a real communion between the created and the uncreated (Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 11, 25).
teaching on energies and deification is no less rational than any other ontological positions".4

Deification, however, is the event of a real divine-human communion and leads necessarily to antimony, but „it is validated doxologically, in that the soteriological principle of deification is a prais of the love of God toward creation".5 Palamas is only a witness of this Tradition of union with the transcendent and immanent God in which theosis sums up the divine economy.6

Within a „mystical realism" based on participation in God as light, St. Gregory Palamas identified three fundamental themes of Eastern Christian spirituality: theology as apophaticism, revelation as light and salvation as deification (Triad I.3.17).8 But Palama’s theology has been criticized for creating a new conception about „theosis”, identified with „theoria” or the vision of God’s glory, separate from „deification” of the old Holy Fathers, which is strictly the reverse of Christ’s incarnation and kenosis.9 St. Gregory Palamas developed a theory of deification through participation in the divine energies. Tabor Light is the intelligible manifestation of the divine glory, this light is like other divine energies, distinct from God’s essence. The light of ineffable glory seen by the saints is the enhypostatic, uncreated light. This same vision was seen in the present age by the chosen among the apostles on Thabor, by Stephen when he was being stoned, and by Anthony in his battle for inner stillness Palamas also affirm that the prophets and patriarchs were not without experience of this light. Moses the lawgiver, Stephen the protomartyr, and Arsenius the desert ascetic were visibly transformed by divine light (Tr. II.3.9). The hermeneutic key is the transfiguration of Christ, because He himself is the deifying light (Tr. III.1.16).

Deification is a supernatural gift that transforms both mind and body, making divinity visible (Tr. III.1.33). Therefore, in our study we aim to present the roots of the fourteenth century hesychast concept of deification in a holistic

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4 Paweł Rojek, „The Logic of Palanism,” in Logic in Orthodox Christian Thinking, edited by Andrew Schumann (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 74-75.
5 Papanikolaou, Being with God, 25-27.
6 Norman Russell, Fellow Workers with God. Orthodox Thinking on Theosis (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press Crestwood, 2009), 53.
view, at the same time biblical, mariological and sacramental: from prophetic vision (glorification, theoria) through hesychast Mariology (deiform life in Temple) and Tabor light (enhypostatic illumination) to sacramental Christomorphisation (clothed in Christ).

1. KABOD as divine light (theosis as 'glorification' during theophany).

Theophanic Kabod - participatory doxa (revelation and salvation)

According to Palamas’ interpretation of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the terms θέωσις (deification), ἑνωσις (mystical union) and ὤρασις (vision) are synonymous.\(^\text{10}\) This means that everywhere Palamas speaks of union between the prophets of the Old Testament and the glory of God or about prophet’s vision of the glory of God he is actually speaking of divinization. So, father Romanides said that the Old and New Testaments term for θέωσις (θέωσις) is “glorification” („lifted up in glory”, cf. Exod 15:1; „glorified”, cf. John 12:16).\(^\text{11}\)

Therefore, the presence of God is commonly said to be associated with light, especially in the act of the transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Matt.17:1-9), but there is precedents for such an association in Old Testament such as the light that shone on Moses’ face after being in God’s presence (Exod 34:29-35). This light is also seen by Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3-9) and Stephen at the moment of his martyrdom (Acts 7:54-60). Barlaam argued that such an experience of light was either a mere symbol of God or an angelic presence. In contrast to this, Palamas purported that a vision of light is a display of the uncreated energies of God and these visions of God’s energies have a deifying effect. In this regard Mantzarides states that "the hesychast monk of Mount Athos, in receiving the radiance of uncreated light, were experiencing direct communion with God, together with all the regenerative and deifying consequences of this".\(^\text{12}\) Thereat, Stephen Thomas submits that to read the Bible “is not only to gain guidance about how to be deified: it is actually part of the process of our deification, as we are lead up into the presence of God”.\(^\text{13}\)

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\(^\text{11}\) For the theological background of this debate see: Flogaus, *Theosis bei Palamas und Luther*, 262-68.


The Eastern Fathers speak of the Old Testament theophanies as appearances of the Logos (simultaneously with the concept of "glory of God" as a manifestation of the uncreated divine presence). The problem occurs when Augustine understands the nature of revelation as sight of God in the truth of the intellect (the third type of theophany, the intellectual one, alongside physical and spiritual). In *De Trinitate* II, 19-20 and III, 27 Augustine’s solution to the theophanies problem is the most drastic in the literature of the period. Properly speaking, there have been no theophanies until Christ, they were only angelophanies (corporales species) or simple symbolophanies.

I see the biblical foundations of theosis in the terminology of kabod (gr. doxa), because within the Old Testament texts kābōd is closely associated with divine light (Exod 24:17; Lev 9:23f.; Ezek 1:27f.; 10:4; 43:2) or „shine forth" (Deut 33:2; Ps 49:2; 79:2; 93:1). This texts are certifying the existence of light that occurs in conjunction with a theophany.

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14 Robin Margaret Jensen, *Face to Face. Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). See especially chapter 3: „The Invisible God and the Visible Image. Justin Martyr: Refutation of Idols and Divine Theophanies” (Jensen, *Face to Face, 69-99*). In his study, Jensen enable us to understand the function of prophecy while analyzing the nature theophany. So, Justin, thereby, „explains all the Old Testament theophanies as christological events” (Jensen, *Face to Face, 72*) and „Word, has the capacity to become visible... [He] makes God known to humans through the gift of prophecy and visions” (Jensen, *Face to Face, 75*).


the sanctuary was attached to the notions of kābōd (the central term of the Priestly theology), and šēm (the corresponding key term of the Deuteronomistic tradition). The differences between these theologies may not be neglected: "Kabod theology follows the theology of immanence promulgated by the Zion-Sabaoth theology, while the Name theology emphasizes instead God's transcendence".¹⁹

In Priestly traditional material (Exod 40:34-38 and Ezek 43:1-9) kābōd is said to fill the Tabernacle (Exod 40:34-38), because kābōd was conceived of as continuously present, visible above the kapporeth. The basic notion here is that of divine immanence, divine kābōd is constantly present in the tabernacle. If kābōd denote a divine attribute in pre-exilic times, now designates God himself, as referring to the complete manifestation of divine majesty. Kābōd is used in Ezekiel as a central theological term in text where visual contact with God is important.²⁰ The omnipresence of God is complementary, rather than contradictory, to his immanence in the Temple.

The kabod consists of unspeakably bright light, and this was the semblance of the form of YHWH's kabod (Ezekiel 1:26-8). Similarly, in Jeremiah 14:9 the presence of God in the people’s midst is equated with God’s shem. As Benjamin Sommer emphasizes, the notion of 'shem' functions outside deuteronomistic and priestly texts both as a "synonym for God and as a hypostasis or emanation of God that is not quite a separate deity."²¹ A similar ambiguity can be found in many uses of the term kabod which in biblical Hebrew means God’s body as "divine Presence": "kabod might be a body of God without being the body of God; it might be an emanation from but not the entirety of the divine self."²²

Therefore, the central theme of priestly tradition is "the desire of the transcendent God to become immanent on the earth this God had created".²³

The culmination of the experience into the late currents of mysticism of merkabah (hermeneutics) and hekhalot (experiential) is transformative, in the sense that the Jewish and Christian mystics "thought they could be glorified in

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²⁰ Mettinger, The dethronement of Sabaoth, 106-7. At the same time the frequent use of words like demut „likeness“, mareh „appearance“ and tabnit „form“ serve the same purpose as the smoke and the train on the mantle in Isaiah’s throne-vision.
²¹ Benjamin D. Sommer, The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59. The term “name” in ancient Near Eastern cultures can refer to the essence of any thing and hence can be a cipher for the thing itself. An Orthodox understanding of this spirituality of God’s name is provided by the hesychast method of prayer; cf. Kallistos Ware, The Power of the Name. The Jesus Prayer in Orthodox Spirituality (Oxford: SLG Press, 1989) 13-59.
²² Sommer, The Bodies of God, 60-62.
²³ Sommer, The Bodies of God, 74.
body", Thus, the persistent core of early Jewish and Christian mysticism is the belief that God or his manifestation can be experienced directly and immediately ("as a rapture experience or as one solicited by a particular praxis"), not just after death or eschatologically on the last day. The centerpiece of this cosmology is the belief that God has a "body," called the "Glory" or Kavod of Yhwh. Here we note the paradox of the Hidden God whose very countenance or face cannot be seen, but only the luminous mask of the Glory that simultaneously covers and reveals him: "This luminosity of the Kavod acted as a mask or screen, functioning in such a way that protected the seer from direct gaze of Gods body." This Jewish Kavod doctrine had a profound impact on the development of early Christian mysticism: "eschatology, the secret revelation of the imminence of the end, is only part of the discussion. The other part is the mystical, the belief in the immediate and direct experience of God." But the terms of ruach, pneuma and shekhinah also served as "ways of referring to God's presence and activity, rather than to a being or beings hypostatically distinct from God".

Another issue is found in some scriptural texts in which glorification (i.e., deification) is understood as a re-creation in the Glory Image. This state is shown through metaphor of clothing (put away unclean robes – put on clean robes). Paul focuses on and adopts this metaphor of putting on God's likeness like clothing. The putting on of the clothing of holiness follows a putting off of unfit clothing (Eph 4:22, 24; Col 3:9, 10 as in Zech 3). Another component of the Glory likeness is the visible glory of transfiguration, an outward luminosity, a physical radiance. This visual glory is eschatological and it is the glorification that "the redeemed will experience when they behold Jesus, arrayed with the Glory-Spirit, coming in the clouds of heaven". In this context you have to mention that the act of "clothing in the garments of skin" hold the meaning of a "re-investiture with priestly status and dominion. Clothing made of animal skin had to be procured through sacrificial death."
Other issues on the interpretation of Old Testament theophanies are related to their angelomorphism. The angelology is very complex, but usually there is one highly exalted angel, such as the "Angel of the Lord," the "Angel of the Countenance," "Metatron," or "Christ." Sometimes, says DeConick, it is difficult "to differentiate between this exalted angel and God's glorious manifestation, the Kavod or Doxa, who is enthroned on the merkabah seat in the holy of holies, the devir, the highest of the heavens."

The hesychasts in fact never claim that the deifying light is an angel. "The vision of angels takes place in various ways, according to the capacities of those who behold it: sometimes in the form of a concrete essence, accessible to the senses, and visible even to creatures full of passions and totally foreign to all initiation; sometimes under the form of an ethereal essence which the soul itself can only see in part; sometimes as a true vision, which only those who are purified and who see spiritually are worthy to behold".

Bogdan Bucur also reaches to underlining the "face" mentioned in Matt 18:10 is none other than the Son. The angels do not have direct access to the Face, but they are rather enabled to see, guided and illumined by the Holy Spirit. Bucur understands that angelomorphic pneumatology as centered around the phenomenon of prophecy. The prophetic-visionary context leads us to recognizing their mystagogic role. As emphasized by Bogdan Bucur to Gregory Palamas angelomorphism of the Spirit designate the divine energies: "This author is uninhibited in using precisely those biblical verses that had once supported angelomorphic pneumatology."

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32 DeConick, Paradise Now, 15. The celestial merkabah is the special wheeled chariot made of four sacred creatures whose outspread wings formed the seat itself, much like the ark of the covenant in the earthly temple.
34 Bogdan Gabriel Bucur, Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 69. By analyzing theological authors like Justin, Clement, Aphrahat in there using specific biblical texts (Matt.18:10; Zech 3:9; 4:10; Isa 11:2-3) lead B. Bucur in establishing a connection between "Face" Christology and angelomorphic pneumatology: "Face' Christology never became a major player in classic definitions of faith. Like 'Name' christology, 'Wisdom' christology, or 'Glory' Christology - once crucial categories in the age of Jewish Christianity - this concept went out of fashion, giving way to a more precise vocabulary shaped by the christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries... The Shepherd of Hermas and Aphrahat illustrate the link between angelomorphic pneumatology and early Christian ascetic theory" (Bucur, Angelomorphic Pneumatology, 190).
35 Bucur, Angelomorphic Pneumatology, 192: "In his Fifth Antirhetikos against Akindynos (ch. 15; 17), Gregory Palamas identifies the seven gift's of the Spirit in Isaiah 11 with the seven eyes of the Lord (Zech. 4:10), the seven spirits of Revelation, and the "finger/spirit of God" (Luke 11:26; Matt. 12:28). All of these, he says, designate the divine energies referred to in Scripture as seven, and should therefore not be considered created. The exact same cluster of passages occurs also in Palamas' One Hundred and Fifty Chapters (chs. 70-71), and in his Dialogue between an Orthodox and a Barlaamite (chs. 27)."
To Barlaam "the best of our theologians is inferior to the least of the angels", thus says him, "a man can only meet God through the mediation of an angel, for we are subordinate to the angelic hierarchy". Palamas’s answer is emphatically expressing his entire conception on the distinction between theophanies and angelophanies: “Tell me, which of the angels was it that said to Moses, ‘I am He who is, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,’ (Ex. 3:14-15) if not the Son of God, as the great Basil has written? (C. Eun. 11.18, PG 29, 609B). What do these words of Exodus signify: ‘The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend’? (Ex. 33:11) And if He Who spoke to Abraham and ‘swore by Himself’ (Gen. 22:16) was only an angel, how could the Apostle have said, ‘He could not swear by one greater than Himself’? (Heb. 6:13) But if God saw fit to speak Himself to those Fathers in the shadow of the Law, how much the more has He manifested Himself directly to the saints, now that the truth has appeared, and the law of grace has been shown forth! According to this law of grace, it is the Lord Himself who has saved us, “not an angel or a man,” (Isa. 63:9)? (...) Did He not deign to make His dwelling in man, to appear to him and speak to him without intermediary”.

Stephen was not surrounded with angelic assistance when he saw what he did; but, full of the Holy Spirit, saw the glory of God and the only Son of God (Acts 7:55-56). For it is not possible to see the light without seeing in the light, this vision is accessible through the Spirit, and it’s not a form of cognition or an act of the intellect, but a direct vision of the uncreated glory of the Trinity through the grace of the Spirit.

Palamas goes on to mention examples from the OT of God appearing to the Patriarchs and Prophets without intermediary. He intends showing how “The Lord dwells in men in different and varied ways according to the worthiness and way of life of those who seek Him. He appears in one way to an active man, in another to a contemplative, in another again to the man of vision, and in yet different ways to the zealous or to those already divinised. There are numerous differences in the divine vision itself: among the prophets, some have seen God in a dream, others when awake by means of enigmas and mirrors; but to Moses He appeared ‘face-to-face, and not in enigmas’ (Num. 12:8).”

The experience of God’s hiddenness, just as the experience of his presence, is an integral part of Israelite faith. Both experiences derive from the nature of God himself who is both hidden and present. Generally, the dichotomy “hidden vs. manifest” is usually expressed by two connected symbols (“cloud” vs. kabod, shem vs. kabod, God’s “face” vs. hidden God). Instead of describing

37 Triads II.3.59 and III.1.28, Gendle (1983), 83-84.
the dazzling light of God or asserting the impossibility of seeing the divine face, Philo translates, through the distinction *ousia-hyparxis*, this ancient biblical dichotomy between the hidden and the manifest dimensions of the divine. Therefore, says Giulea “*Christians theologians elaborated the apophatic philosophical language predominantly within the exegetical context of the Old Testament theophanies of the Kabod.*”

2. Theosis as mirroring „unveiled glory (δόξα)“. Identification of Jesus Christ with kabod (inter-Trinitarian reciprocal glorification and its somatic experience)

*Kabod* is the most important term in the Bible defining God’s glory and it is shaped the *doxa* of the New Testament. This glory is seen in theophanies, when God’s manifestations as kabod of God proves itself to be much more immanent than transcendent. This glory is intrinsic to God (1 Chr 29:11), not a peripheral manifestation of God’s character but an essential quality of His personhood. The *participatory doxa*, as revelation of God is not only manifested as kabod, but also as salvation (*yeshua*, cf. Isa 62:1; 58:8). Dragoș Andrei Giulea looking into the origins of Kabod soteriology, he sees the connection between the vision of the divine light and the idea of salvation to be an old credence in ancient Israel according to which God’s shining face or presence (*פניים*) procures salvation (*ישועה*). So this salvation comes through the manifestation of God’s glory and consists of living before the Divine Face: “*the expectation of the visio Dei becomes a key social-soteriological feature.*”

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45 Dragoș Andrei Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology in Paschal Contexts. The Case of the Divine Noetic Anthropos* (Leiden: Brill 2014), 99-103. While in Ps 67:1-2, 80:3, and 80:7 God’s shining face or presence (*פניים*) procures salvation (*ישועה*), Psalm 104 makes clear that the manifestation of *הדר* is the way God grants life to all creatures. Ps 104:1 articulates, the terms of *הוד* (splendor) and *הדר* (majesty) seem to refer to Yahweh’s garments.
God's doxa, in the New Testament, is more than a continuation of the OT kabod, but make a decisive breakthrough by applying the full weight of the term to the person of Jesus Christ. The „otherness” of Jesus proposed by the Transfiguration narrative ("the appearance of his face become different [heteron]" Luke 9:20) becomes a matter of faith. The union in God's glory begins the process of knowing God, which is indeed eternal life (John 17:3), but this “union in God's glory becomes union with Christ”. Also, God's glorification is seen in terms of inter-Trinitarian works of love, as John depicts the reciprocal glorification of the Trinity.

Salvation, therefore, comes through the divine kabod and essentially consists in living within the glory of God: "glory enacts its salvific operations through direct manifestation." Christian glory soteriology distinctive element resides in the identification of Jesus Christ with the kabod. In 1 Cor 2:8 Christ receives the title "Lord of Glory" (Κύριος τῆς δόξης), a designation of Yahweh used throughout the Old Testament. Regarding Christ and the Glory-Temple, Meredith G. Kline refers to the heaven and earth thus have the character of a temple, a place where God's Glory-Presence is revealed. The cosmic Glory-temple, as God's own self-manifestation, constitutes a perpetual epiphany of the divine Presence: "Incarnate Son and endoxate Spirit are alike epiphanic embodiments of the God of Glory."

Likewise, Luke's narrative obviously identifies Mary's baby with the Lord of Glory descended to earth as a veiled divine throne (merkavah) in 2:8-20. The old priest Symeon compares the baby with the glory, therefore with the kabod: “a
light (φῶς) for revelation to the nations, and the glory (δόξα) of your people Israel" (Lk. 2:29-41). Into John’s Gospel, one notes the depiction of the event of the incarnation, in glory terminology, as the coming of the divine light. It is obvious that “salvation is instantiated through direct intervention of the divine light.”

Also, Matthew’s translation of Emmanuel (1:21-3) applies to Jesus the functional, messianic character of the divine presence formula, “God with us”, Matthew has given his audience the restoration of the OT promise of divine presence: a static nature (Matt.18.20), with cultic connotations, and, also, a dynamic presence (Matt.28.20). The tradition of Jesus’ naming as “Emmanuel – God with us” and his Yahwistic “I am with you” declaration were provocative, describing “God’s saving immanence, retrospectively and immediately, ‘with’ his people”.

But Luke is only evangelist to use the word “glory” (doxa) and only to mention that Jesus and the three apostle went up the mountain specifically to pray (Lk 9:29-31). This is a detail in spiritual tradition of hesychasm which was richly developed, the vision of light at the culmination of intense periods of prayer is the deification of our nature. This light is enhypostatic symbol, the uncreated radiance of God, a divine energy. This manifestation of Christ in the divine nature is not something external to ourselves. It is interiorized through the life of ascetism and prayer. Christ will radiate within us like to the desert Fathers: Pambo, Sisoe, Silvanus, Ramfors. In the later monastic tradition apocalyptic visions recede and ecstasies come to be connected more with the vision of light (St. John Climacus in 7th and St Simeon the New Theologian in 10th century). Transfiguration becomes an interior experience to St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833) and Archimandrite Sophrony (1896-1991).

This “glory soteriology” doctrine sees salvation coming through the theophany of the divine glory. Now, still remaining in the context of the New Testament we will be searching into the Pauline theology the basis of “biblical theosis” and its link to the theophanies. Thus, drawing from 1 Cor. 15:10, 42-49; 2 Cor. 3:13-18; Rom. 8:14-16, 28 and Phil. 3:21 Stephen Finlan focus on the

55 Andreas Andreopoulos, Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2005), 20-21; Archimandrite Sophrony, We shall See Him As He Is (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1988), 155-156.
assocation of Pauline theology and theosis. He highlights Paul's use of the terminology of being "transformed into Christ likeness, which can truly be called theosis". For Finlan "theosis in Paul always involves both cruciform and anastasiform living (Phil 1:23).". Becoming like Christ or christification, is equivalent to becoming like God or deification. Christopher Barina Kaiser is looking for the traces of this "Kyriocentric Visions" in 1 Cor. 9:1-2. Here Paul justifies his apostleship on the basis of his having seen the Lord Jesus. Paul’s language here is clearly visionary – he had never seen Jesus in the flesh (Gal. 1:11-12, 15). The Kyriocentric nature of the vision he describes is indicated by the combination of the verb to see (ὁράω, horáō) with the title Lord (Κύριος, ho Kyrios).57

Theosis, also, is described as "transformation into unveiled glory" (2 Cor. 3.7-18). By this verse (2 Cor. 3.18) deification through the vision of God become an immanent and mystical event. This aspect of deification as transformation into glory (glorification) is "both an inward quality of spiritual knowledge and an outward radiance". The nature of the δόξα (glory) of Moses and the visible splendour shining from his face (πρόσωπον) from his direct contact with God (Exod 34:29) signifies "God’s visible, mobile, divine presence" and "by virtue of the fact of his presence with God, Moses face was glorified (δεδοξασμένη)". As all believers encounter God directly (with unveiled faces) through the Spirit’s presence they reflect this glory as mirrors and are themselves glorified in the process (from glory to glory).


59 S. Finlan, “Can We Speak of Theosis in Paul?,” 75.


But Christ is not merely reflecting the glory of God as Moses did, He is the glory of God, He is the light of this glory. Therefore, transformed into Christ’s divine glory, believers are participating in the divine presence. For Paul εἰκών is fundamentally somatic and this implies that the “transformation into this glory is not only noetic but also embodied because it is a visible manifestation”. The noetic enlightenment is associated with participation in divine glory in 2 Cor 3-4 is correlated to the somatic experience of glory in 2 Cor 4:16-5:5. So, we “cannot separate christosis from theosis”. Participation plays the structural role within this christo-form soteriology which includes a “holistic - noetic, moral, and somatic - transformation of the human modelled around Christ’s restoration of humanity”. In a similar context, speaking of the hesychast method of prayer and transformation of the body, Gregory Palamas also uses this Pauline theology of 2 Corinthians in Tr. I.2.2: “Paul says: ‘God, who has ordered light to shine from darkness, has made His light to shine in our hearts, in order that we may be enlightened by the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ’ (2 Cor. 4:6); but he adds, ‘We carry this treasure in earthen vessels’ (2 Cor. 4:7). So we carry the Father’s light in the face (prosōpon) of Jesus Christ in earthen vessels, that is, in our bodies, in order to know the glory of the Holy Spirit.”

Therefore, in 2 Cor. 3:18 Paul present a Christian version of theosis as “sharing in God’s reality in Christ”. Michael Gorman says that this text would “become foundational for the doctrine of theosis”. For him the best description of Paul’s soteriology is “cruciform theosis” as transformative participation in Lord’s kenotic life. Paul speaks also of a noetic illumination through the intimate cooperation between mind (νόημα, 2 Cor. 3.14) and hearts (καπδία, 2 Cor. 3.15).

In anthropological terms of the theosis, man is the mirror of divine glory (δόξα). In pre-nicene christological theology, borrowed from Jewish mystique of the second temple, Adam’s prelapsarian ontological status was presumed to be that of a glorious being, it was luminous and quasi-angelic. The 1 Cor 11:7 illustrates clearly that Paul conceives of the human being as the image of God:

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66 Michael J. Gorman, Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009), 120.
67 Gorman, Inhabiting the Cruciform God, 162.
68 See the link between δόξα and εἰκών in 2 Cor. 3.18 and 4.4.
69 Giulea, Pre-Nicene Christology, 150.
“A man (ἀνήρ) must not cover his head, because man is the image (εἰκών) of God and the mirror of his glory (δόξα).” Also, in 2 Cor 3:18 the increasing glory of the human being comes actually as the result of contemplating Jesus’ divine glory as in a mirror.70 *Eikon* soteriology, therefore, represents the transformation from being the *eikon* of Adam into the *eikon* of the glorious Jesus (τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης Phil 3:21).71 All those who will be saved and deified will be transformed through Μορφὴ θεοῦ, the Jesus’ Pre-Incarnate and eschatological Form. But this pneumatic nature of Christ’s luminous body is experienced through Eucharist as well. This holy sacrament access the divine corporeality of light, veiled by Christ’s visible body. The Eucharist is subsequently identified with the “great body of Christ” on which the “light of the world” is set (ἔδυ).72 In order to access the divine corporeality of light, veiled by Christ’s visible body, Christians need to be initiated. Thus, Jesus unveils his Divine and Glorious Form on the Mount of Transfiguration.73

So, the event of the transfiguration plays the significant pedagogical role of revealing both “the pre-incarnate Form of the Logos and the paradigm and telos of human destiny, its eschatological, deified, and glorious condition”.74

3. MOTHER OF LIGHT concealed in the light of her Son. Mary the first fully deified human hypostasis (*deification precedes salvation*)

At St. Gregory the deiform life from the Holy of holies of the Virgin has a similar interpretation, says John Meyendorff, as the one gave by Gregory of Nyssa to the ascent of Moses on Sinai, expression of the mystical ascent of the soul to God.75 Thus, in *Homily* 5376 the Virgin Mary is seen by Saint Gregory Palamas as the biblical prototype of this hesychast life. She realizes in herself the likeness of God, and through the the grace of deification gains the form of God (morphe tou Theou; cf. Hom. 53, 61). Her deification precedes the Incarnation,

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70 Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 153. The “epistemic process of contemplation generates the ontological mirroring process”: because for us there is no veil over the face, we all see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου), and we are being transformed (μεταμορφούμεθα) into his likeness (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα) with ever-increasing glory (ἀπὸδόξης εἰς δόξαν).

71 Again, human beings are not transformed into Adam’s prelapsarian image or glory, as in Qumran theology, but into Christ’s image: the *eikon* of the Heavenly Anthropos and the second Adam; cf., Newman, *Paul’s Glory-Christology*, 227, 250-1; Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 156.


“God being united with her flesh after she has previously united her mind with Him”.77 In the Holy of Holies attained to the highest and most perfect realization of quiet and mental prayer (νοητὴν σιγήν).78 In the Triads Gregory had laid emphasis on deification as an experiential reality (Tr. I.3.5).79 Papanikolaou says that Incarnation gives priority to ontology over epistemology. The type of knowledge that results from union with God is manifested in one person – the Theotokos. As a deified person, the Theotokos experiences the fullness of union with God. By being united to Christ through the Incarnation, she offered her human nature to Christ and receives it purified. Therefore, „Theotokos manifests in her person all the glory that is the goal for all individuals, but also the church”.80

In his Mariological homilies, St. Gregory Palamas’ intuition of the relationship between deification and salvation, shows a Byzantine theological theme concerned by soteriological report of Virgin Mary and Her Son. Thus, developed on the same hesychastic line by Nicolas Cabasilas, too, Mariology becomes in his case a launching deck of the Orthodox apology of deification, as creational vocation of the human being, in the byzantine-scholastic debate of oikonomic axes (creation-deification versus sin-salvation).

Cabasilas’ movement of terminology from the deification to Christomorphisation led him withal to the assertion of a theocentric humanism, represented by the central figure of the Virgin Mary. Adam’s predestination was mariological one, man being made in order to Virgin Mary’s appearance.81 Marian homilies of Nicholas Cabasilas could be a chapter of the Life of Christ, given their complementarity. Thus, gravitating around the the central theme of byzantine mariology (hidden life of the Virgin Mary), Saint Nicholas Cabasilas theological synthesis represent a mystagological complementarity to the Palamism doctrine, which provides an ontological content to deification, understood as Christification.82 The American Greek Theologian, Constantinos Tsirpanlis, demonstrates that at the basis of Cabasilas’s humanist Mariology is a completely different theological anthropology than that of Augustin. He insists upon the ascetic-spiritual nature of purity and 

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77 Meyendorff, Introduction, 214-5.
78 Homily 53, in Veniamin (ed.), p. 339-345. This „silence of mind” (noetic prayer stops in ecstatic union), the heschasm fruit, is achieved when nous unites itself with the Divine Mind beyond its own nature.
80 Papanikolaou, Being with God, 45-46.
81 Panayotis Nellas, Omul – animal îndumnezeit. Perspective pentru o antropologie ortodoxă (Sibiu: Deisis, 1999), 266.
holiness of the Virgin, giving expression to a "mariocentric christology" as synthesis between a "mariocentric humanism" and an "anthropological Christology." Marian homilies could be a chapter of Life in Christ, due to their complementarity and his "mariocentrism completes his christocentrism".

For Sherwood, Mary, in Byzantine theology, is co-dweller with Him in the eternal tabernacles and there having obtained unceasing intercession to Him: "the ascription of the fulness of grace is grounded in her role as Theotokos". And to Behr-Sigel "this acquisition of the fulness of grace appropriate to the age to come, could only happen to a deified being". Also, Lossky notes that "Incontestably she who was chosen to be the Mother of God was at the summit of Old Testament holiness."

In such a context Lossky says that the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception places her outside the rest of humanity-before-Christ and "seems to break up this uninterrupted succession of instances of Old Testament holiness". Here, in the above statements, the two strong currents of Marian thought, that we have met in Palamas and Cabasilas, come together.

The Scripture and Church tradition only emphasize the three prerogatives: Mother of God (Theotokos), Ever-Virgin (Aeiparthenos) and over worship (hyperdoulia), but Mary's life has as its own characteristic the fact that "she remains hidden in her Son's light". The Ascension of Virgin Mary was not seen because the Light covered her completely, an absorption of materiality in the light of her Son's glory. As Indicated by Stăniloae "the creature deified by God equates with her enveloping and covering by God's glory". And this hidden into the light also means a double paradoxal "humbleness" (ascension is humbleness in Orthodoxy). This aspect of Virgin Mary's humbleness, of her hiding into the light of her Son is, in fact,

89 Sherwood, "Byzantine Mariology," 130-131. Lossky’s doctrine on the Mother of God is clearly in the Palamite tradition; equally clearly it is indebted to Scripture.
also a so complete union that (as Teophan of Nicaea shown), "there is a single energy of the Son and His Mother, the uncreated divine energy". So, the Son is inseparable from both His Father, by hypostatic relationship, and from His Mother, by energy relationship. Christ sent all His graces through His Mother, so all our prayers to Christ passes through her. Prayer is the maximum effect of union with God, while her mediation means her diveing and covering in Christ and in the light of His glory. Her Glory is always a glory from Christ and in Christ. Thus, in his Mariology, "Orthodoxy reconciles the glory of the Virgin Mary with the most categorically christocentrism".93

Mother of God is full of the divine energies more than anyone else, energies poured from His humanity; therefore, she is "the real mediator of divine energy." As a result, "all the gifts and graces ontologically pass from Christ to us through her" and then "to be united with Christ" means, at the same time, "to be united also with his Mother": "The idea that Mother of God is also an irradiator, irradiating of the divine energy, not only a prayer to God, can not be taken into dissucion without undermining all the essential principles of orthodox spirituality and thinking".94 According to Gregory Palama and Teophan, Mother of God is "God's laboratory of exchanges with us": through Mother of God we gave Him the humanity in the act of incarnation, so the Son of God doesn't offer us instead deification without mediation of the Virgin.95 Mother of God is a "torch full of divine light, one that captures all the light of which creation is capable of". Becoming light herself, she is "the creation in which God is even from now all in all", in who was accomplished "the mystery of her supreme union [theosis] with God".96

Resurrected and raised beyond death and and judgment, on the throne at the right of her Son in His glory (new merkabach), Mother of God is also icon of eschatological glory to which the entire humanity is being called; she is also the anticipated vivid image of accomplished redemption. Mariology represents the inner organic structure and logic of Orthodoxy.

In Homily 57, St Grigory Palamas claims that the purity of the Virgin for the the Son of God's incarnation from her, was prepared by the purity of a whole series of predecessors.97 By preparing herself through personal efforts, Virgin Mary reduced the ancestral sin from her to a pure passive potency, man's condition before the Fall, the ideal original beauty of the adamic man. Also, for Teophan of Nicaea, the "Mariologue" of Byzantine theology, Mary became both Mother of God

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95 Stănîloae, "Virgin Mary as mediatrix," 95.
96 Stănîloae, "Virgin Mary as mediatrix," 125-6.
97 Homily 57, "concerning the genealogy according to the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Ever-Virgin Mother of God who bore Him in virginity", Christopher Veniamin ed., 2014, 468-476.
and Mother of rational creatures - angels and humans – “deified in Christ through her”. And this is because, in Teophan’s view, ”the first created receptacle of graces or of divinity’s plenitude is Christ’s humanity, and the second - the one through which He is disseminated to all rational creatures - is Mother of God.”

A deep theological meditation upon the Annunciation reflected in the episode Lucan’s prologue is commented by father Stăniloae starting from amply quoted Mariological homilies of Nicolas Cabasilas. Her position special “border between the created and the uncreated” make her the Mediatrix of all graces of God for both angels and humans. At the Annunciation there was’t a cleansing, but a ‘adding grace’. Now the Holy Spirit gave her the stillness in direct contemplation of God, which is for Cabasilas eschatological states.

As stated by Louis Bouyer and ”from the first moment of her existence, God’s grace has taken possession of our nature”. Therefore, there is into The Mother of God a process of growth in holiness from that of the Old Testament in that holiness of the Church (Pentecost) to eschatological kingdom of heaven which they entered by Dormition. So, Mary is “the first human hypostasis fully deified”.100

Eva, although she hadn’t had the stain of an inherited sin, yet she had fell and had tarnished herself. Instead Mary, without having had the saving grace of redemption, had the maximum degree of grace (filling her with grace even before the Incarnation of the Word) and the general power for avoiding evil and for doing good, features that the righteous of Old Testament had them, too. For instance, Ephrem juxtaposes the image of Moses being veiled with Jesus’veiling oh Himself in the Incarnation. Face of Moses shone and he laid veil over his face, just as Lord, from the Womb, entered and put on the veil of the Body (Hom. on Nativity 73). Sebastian Brock extends comparison between two forms of light with the internal light of Mary’s womb when bearing Jesus: ‘brightness which Moses put on’ is coming form outside him, but to the river in which Jesus was baptized, He ‘put on Light from within’. Mary’s womb weaves a garment of glory and

reclthes sinful Eve who stripped off the garment of glory. In Mary, the light-bearing Christ is woven as a garment. Christ’s light transforms her body in which He resided, as it gleams from within.\textsuperscript{102}

Summit of Old Testament holiness, Mary is fulness of grace and manifests in her person all the glory. Thereby, mariology is becoming the Orthoadox shield of deification, as creational vocation of man.

4. TABORIC LIGHT and \textit{theosis} through the uncreated divine energy. „He himself is deifying light” (deification as enhypostatic illumination)

Gregory calls the light seen on Mount Tabor ‘enhypostatic’, i.e. without any hypostasis of its own (\textit{Tr. III.128}), for its hypostasis is Christ: „He himself is the deifying light” (\textit{Tr. III.1.16}). Palamas is quoting from Damascene’s assertion that the Taboric light is not alien, but natural to the divinity: “The splendour of divine grace is not something external, as in the case of the splendor possessed by Moses, but belongs to the very nature of the divine glory and splendor” (Hom. in Transfig. 10, PG 96, 561D). But when he speaks on the vision of God face-to-face, he recalls the testimony of Maximus and comes to a proper definition of deification: “\textit{Deification is an enhypostatic} and direct illumination which has no beginning, but appears in those worthy as something exceeding their comprehension. It is indeed a mystical union with God, beyond intellect and reason, in the age when creatures will no longer know corruption. Thanks to this union, the saints, observing the light of the hidden and more-than-ineffable glory, … the symbol of the authentic and real adoption, according to the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit, thanks to the bestowal of which grace the saints become and will remain the sons of God” (Maximus, \textit{Ad Thalas}. 61, PG XC, 636C; also Scholion 16, \textit{ibid}. 644C).\textsuperscript{104}

Saint Gregory Palamas identifies light with God, as deification’s source, as the agent of human sanctification, and as deification itself [αὐτοθεων, \textit{Triads I.3.23}]. The light can be portrayed as Other and external to the human subject and as the transformative power working within. Gregory does not see these two facets of light as either mutually exclusive or inherently opposed. Therefore he quotes Denys: „\textit{This light is a supraluminous and theurgic ray, also called the deifying gift and source of Divinity}” (\textit{Triads III. 1.29}) and in he contends that the light

\textsuperscript{102} Hymn on the Church 36 (6), in Brock, \textit{Bride of Light}, 29.

\textsuperscript{103} In the sense that the divine life finds its personal locus in each of those being sanctified.

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Tr. III.1.28}, Gendle ed., 83-84.
"deifies those who contemplate it" (Triads III. 3.9). Gregory combines both tendencies in apparent harmony saying that "those who see the light consider it as invisible" (Triads I.3.24). Palamas resolves the tension between see and invisible by stressing that they know this light is God: "Since the light is a person, Williams adds, seeing the light constitutes a species of knowing".

The knowledge constitutes one form of apprehension and vision is another: "The logic of the connection between these two cognates and theosis lies in the relation they imply between knower and known, seer and seen. Because what is known and seen is no less than God, this contact is transformative." The intellect is seen as a point of contact with the grace of incarnate God: "They see the vesture of their deification, their intelligence being glorified and filled by the grace of the Word" (Tr. I.3.5). Gregory Palamas maintaining that by deification, "a person finds himself above vision and knowledge [ὁρῶν καὶ ἐνεργῶν]; that means he sees and acts in a way that exceeds us and is already God by grace" (Tr. II.3.52).

Vision is an appropriate way of understanding the transforming encounter with God. So, the illuminations is a vision because "He sees God by God" (Tr. II. 3.52). For describing this deifying vision Palamas, often uses seeing alongside knowing, in order to show that the organ of vision was neither the senses nor the intellect: "their vision is not a sensation [αἴσθησις] since they do not receive it through the senses; nor is it an intellection [νόησις], since they do not find it through thought [λογισμῶν]" (Tr. I.3.18).

Contemplation [θεωρία] provides a natural link between knowledge and vision, because it seems to partake of the quality of both: "contemplation expresses an activity that is both a form of knowing and a form of seeing". Contemplation is not simply abstraction or negation but a union and a divinization by the grace of God (Tr. I. 3.17): "Those worthy of this most happy contemplation recognise that this deifying action is superior to any vision, not by way of negation, but by a vision in the Spirit" (Tr. II.3.26). Contemplation thus functions not only as the means to theosis but as the end itself: "By unifying perfection [Denys] meant the coming and indwelling of God in us, which are accomplished in union and which nourish the spiritual eye by contemplation" (Triads II.3.74). Therefore, theoria is rooted both in history and eternity, like theosis, it is the inauguration of the next world.

105 “This spiritual light is thus not only the object of vision, but is also the power by which we see” (Triads II.2.14). Cf. Triads II.3.5: “It is not possible to see the light without seeing in the light” (Psalm 36:9).


107 Williams, The Ground of Union, 111.

108 Williams, The Ground of Union, 113.
The deifying light pertains to God’s essence but is not itself the essence of God. The disciples "from being blind men, they began to see" and contemplate this light as: “inaccessible, immaterial, uncreated, deifying, eternal, radiance of the Divine Nature, glory of the divinity, beauty of the heavenly kingdom, [which] is at once accessible to sense perception and yet transcends it.”109

Deification is a supernatural gift that transforms both mind and body, making divinity visible (Tr. III. 1.33). *Our mixed human nature, which was assumed by the Lord, has taken its seat on the right hand of the divine majesty in the heavens* (Heb. 8:1), *being full of glory not only (like Moses) in the face, but in the whole body* (Triads I.3.29). For Gregory the greatest of Biblical images for both deification and light is the Transfiguration, which represents the christological dimension of divinization: „Our nature has been stripped of this divine illumination and radiance as a result of the transgression... [On Tabor the Word] indicated what we once were and what we shall become through Him in the future age if we choose here below to live according to his ways as much as possible” (Capita 66).110

Palamas also specifically identifies light with both the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity. He calls Christ the true light, the radiance of glory (Tr. III.1.15). With respect to the Spirit, he writes that such a divine and celestial life belongs to those who live in a manner pleasing to God „participating in the life inseparable from the Spirit” (Tr. III.1.9).

Thus, concludes Williams, Saint Gregory Palamas „is associating light with what we would call the economic rather than the immanent Trinity. The conclusions one would draw from the texts regarding the divine status of light correlate with what he claims explicitly of the essence-energies distinction: the agent of divinization, that in God which we encounter and which transforms us, is the divine energy, not the divine essence”.111 Glory operates as an alternate name for divine energy and signifies the communicability of divine life: „God, while remaining entirely in himself, dwells in us by his superessential power, and communicates to us not his nature, but his proper glory and splendour” (Tr. I.3.23). Palamas appears to equate grace and theosis. Thus, for him this divine energy not only deifies the saints but also dwells in them permanently: „the spiritual grace that comes into the heart is a permanent energy produced by grace, tied to the soul and rooted in it” (Triads II.2.9).

As a cognate for deification, Gregory uses adoption (υιοθεσία) which functions as a correlative to deification: „You should not consider that God allows Himself to be seen in His superessential essence, but according to His...”

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109 Tr. III.1.22, Gendle ed., 80.
111 Williams, The Ground of Union, 118.
deifying gift and energy, the grace of adoption, the uncreated deification, the enhypostatic illumination” (Tr. III.1.29). He understands by adoption the ontological regeneration, and it is hypostatic „The saints clearly state that this adoption, actualised by faith, is enhypostatic” (Tr. III.1.31).

In conclusion, Moses the lawgiver, Stephen the protomartyr, and Arsenius the desert ascetic are examples from the Bible and the Fathers of men who were visibly transformed by divine light (Tr. II.3.9). God transcends the senses yet the knowledge of God is experiential.112 The monks know this. They see the hypostatic light spiritually – in reality not in a symbolic way. The divine light is the „ineffable glory seen by the saints, the enhypostatic, uncreated light, eternally” (Tr. III. 1. 6). But the „hermeneutic key” is the transfiguration of Christ, for what Christ is by nature the Christian can become by grace. The saints henceforth live with the life of God (Tr. III.1.35).

Since the light of Thabor is identical with the eternal glory of Christ, it must be a natural symbol. The angels do not only contemplate and participate in the glory of the Trinity, he declares, but also in the glorification of Jesus through “participation in the knowledge of His theurgic light” (De cael. hier., 7.2, PG 3, 20BC).113

Although He Himself is deifying light, Palama rejects the identification of Hypostasis with energy. St. Gregory extended Christology in the area of Trinitarian theology, so Tabor light is the uncreated energy of Son, that “innate motion” or “active and essential movement of nature”. So, perichoresis has for Gregory a dynamic character, manifesting the mystery of the Trinity's energy as consubstantiality and mutual indwelling.114

The aim of Torstein Tollefsen about activity (he prefers this term instead of the energy) and participation is to interpret the Palamite doctrine of the experience of light according to the principles of the ontology. So, he says that in the image Palamas gives of the Trinity he tries to secure a „unified dynamic”.115 The divine nature or essence eternally manifests within its eternal Triadic dynamics:

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113 Tr. III.1.16, Gendles ed., 77. This light is “theurgic” in the sense of “divinizing”.
114 Amphiloque Radovic, Le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité selon saint Grégoire de Palamas (Paris: Cerf, 2012), 170. The term enhypostasized has several meanings for St. Gregory Palamas; Saint Gregory Palamas, Dialogue Between an Orthodox and a Barlaamite (New York: Binghampton University, 1999) 45-93, here 38 and 72.
God is dynamically Himself eternally, is the Form in forms as the primal Form and this has to do with participation. Palamas says that all things participate in God, and they are constituted by this participation in His activity”.116

5. SACRAMENTAL THEOSIS – clothed in Christ as anthropological content of deification. Baptism - „place” of glory and Eucharist - a „veil” concealing the divinity

Adam was to be deified, and through him, all of creation would experience theosis. For Norman Russell theosis is our „restoration as persons to integrity and wholeness” by participation in Christ through the Holy Spirit: „We, thus, transcend our fallen humanity by becoming the body of Christ. It is through participating in Christ intellectually, ascetically and liturgically, in mind and body, that we receive the gift of theosis”.117 Also, Eastern tradition proclaim deification, its central soteriological category, as a process, because this „Participation is a way of speaking about how «in Him we live and move and have our being» (Acts 17:28).”118

Theosis is thoroughly grounded in the Incarnation by which Lord inaugurates a new human ontology. But „deification must not remain a general category but must acquire a specific anthropological content”119 understood again as Christification. Having an iconic ontology, man’s essence is found in the archetype. So, prior to the hypostatic union (even before the fall), man was „prechristic” and had need of salvation, since he was an „imperfect and incomplete «child»”. Therefore, „salvation of man is something much wider than redemption; it coincides with deification”.120

The focus here is soteriological or „economic”121, as Kharlamov expresses it. For John Behr, too, theosis is equivalent to Christification, because Christ assimilates us to himself and „we are brought into the identity of Christ, becoming his body – incarnating the Word – so that we can also call upon the one God as Abba,

116 Tollefsen, Activity and Participation, 189.
117 Russell, Fellow Workers, 21, 120.
120 Nellas, Deification in Christ, 24, 33, 39. Redemption is received by baptism, where the process of Christification begins. Deification as process is a Eucharistic act where the union with Christ is complete and full (ad 121-127)
"Father", All believers can share in the deified creation corporeally through sharing in the body of Christ and this transformation take place through the Eucharist, because "deified creation already exists wholly deified as the body of Christ".

There is a movement from the biblical sharing in the divine attribute of glory to the human nature transformed in Christ. By clothing ourselves in Christ through the agency of the Spirit we acquire a new identity which enables us to live with the life of Christ. Donna R. Hawk-Reinhard argues that the "doctrine of theosis is the hermeneutical key that Cyril of Jerusalem employed in his teachings on baptism and the Eucharist". Our dynamic participation in the divine life is accomplished ontological within the sacraments. In Cyril's later writings "partaking of the divine nature" replace "deification" (theopoiesis). Our participation in Christ through the Eucharist is both corporeal and spiritual. For St Symeon the Theologian, the same as for Palamas, this is expressed on the one hand through the vision of the divine light, and on the other by union with Christ through receiving him in the Eucharist. These are not two ways, two alternative approaches. As Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev observes, Symeon "presupposes that the Holy Spirit should be 'manifested' in the one who has partaken of the Eucharist... on mystical illumination by the divine light through Communion".

First of all, the affirmation made by saint Gregory Palamas starting with Homily 53 of the real deification of the Virgin Mary before de embodiment of the Son of God, has produced difficulties regarding interpretation. So, for some of the occidental savants, the theology of the of the uncreated energies would

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124 Donna R. Hawk-Reinhard, "Cyril of Jerusalem’s Sacramental Theosis," Studia Patristica 66 (2013): 247-256 at 247-8. Cyril thought that a person is made holy by participation (μετοχή), asceticism (ἄσκησις), and prayer (εὐχή) (Mystagogic Catechesis 5.19). Through this scriptural reference of 2 Peter 1:4, Cyril taught that Christians receive a share in Christ’s body and blood, “become of one body and one blood with Christ, and thus have become Christ-bearers who share in the divine nature through the Eucharist” (Mystag. 4.2-3). For Cyril’s use of 2 Peter 1:4 in Mystagogic Catechesis 4 see: Donna R. Hawk-Reinhard, From Christianoi to Christophoroi: The Role of the Eucharist in Christian Identity Formation according to Cyril of Jerusalem (PhD Diss., Saint Louis University, 2011) and also Paul F. Bradshaw, Eucharistic Origins (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012) 139-158.
push in second plan both Christology (H-G Beck), or even the whole triadology (D. Wendebour). The Jesuit G. Podskalsky has tried to surpass the assertions of H.-G. Beck affirming that the centrality of the Incarnation, sacraments and grace, evident in homilies, is undermined in the polemic writings about energies, through a metaphysical emanation and mysticism climbing of Neoplatonic type.129 The two tendencies being unintegrable in Podskalsky’s conception. More recently, Christiaan Kappes points out that Palamas, in thomistic view, was catalogued as a „less subtle or feeble imitator of scotistic metaphysics“ and „little more than an ill-conceived son of Scotus”.130 Instead, for the Orthodox theologians (J. Meyendorff, G. Mantzaridis) in the center of the palamite theology stands Incarnation and its extension in the Church Sacraments, would have brought a christological corrective to the evagriano-dionisiene mysticism.

Indeed, as we shall see, in his Homilies St. Gregory Palamas has a sacramental vision of deification. Through the sacraments we will be „clothed” in Christ: „so that you will be not only in God’s image, but eternally and heavenly kings and gods clothed in Me” (Hom. 56.11). As the light of the transfiguration the light-bearing robe of the unfallen Adam has a equally theological importance for theosis. Deification means to be „reclothed in cleanliness” and it is built on the idea of Adam and Eve being clothed first in light/glory and then skin/figleaves/shame. Therefore, „the concept of clothing in early Syrian writings is a representation of a state of being, namely theosis”.131 Accordingly, theosis as a divinizing function of the Incarnation is phrased here as a process of stripping off and reclothing, a symmetrical stripping of the glory of the Godhead to match that lost by Adam, and reclothing of Adam through Jesus being ‘clothed in a body’.132

As we’ll show in the following, this rich Syrian symbolism is used also by Saint Gregory Palamas in his mystical interpretation of the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist as clothing in Christ. In Palama’s view there is a complementarity

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132 This is expressed in *Hymn 23 on the Nativity* (13): “All these changes did the Merciful One effect./Stripping off His glory and putting on a body./For he had devised a way to reclothe Adam/In that glory which Adam had stripped off”, in S. Brock, *The Syrian Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1987), xxiv; Cf., Hunt, *Clothed in the Body*, 137-8.
between hesychasm and Eucharist. Because, in order to "preserve the mystery undiminished" we need Him "not just to seeing Him, but also to unite and nourish with Him" (Hom. 56.11). Sacraments bring us adoption, God’s radiance, making us anointed (χρίσματος) of God. The Eucharistic bread is “like a veil (gr. katapétasma) concealing divinity” (Hom. 56.8) and through communion we will „shape Him inside of our heart“ and we’ll become by "clothing in imperial purple dress" “gods clothed in God” (Ib.). So, in Eucharistic celebration theoria / theoptia, or the spiritual vision is united, therefore, with theosis or deification.

By appealing to the Holy Eucharisty, Palamas demonstrates the falsity of Barlaam’s monastic living „from the time he came to us, nobody saw him partaking of the Holy Eucharisty.” The palamit homiletic spirituality is a hristocentric and liturgical spirituality where, without making a so much use of being-energies distinction, it is shown to us „an integrated hesychasm into the sacramental life of the Church”,

Saint Gregory Palamas distinguishes between a corporeal and a spiritual aspect to our dynamic participation in God. Through the Eucharist the Son dwells within us in a corporeal sense, while the Spirit renews us and transforms us spiritually. The Logic of St. Gregory’s theology is as follows: Christ comes to dwell in us through two means, we partake of him in two ways, both spiritually (through the Holy Spirit) and somatically (through the Eucharist). Here is the results of our dual participation in Christ: ‘participation’ (μέθεξις) in the Spirit through Baptism and, at the same time, in the Spirit and in the flesh of Christ through the Eucharist, becoming ‘concorporeal’ (σύσσωμοι) with Christ, the incarnate Word. For Palamas is Christ integral (totus), Spirit and flesh, who is present and is received in the Eucharist, a dear influence Cyrillian. Ezra Gebremedhin points out that Cyril spoke about the mode of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist in term of an distinction between ‘soma’ and ‘pneuma’ and that the faithful participate in and are vivified in two manners: σωματικῶς (the level of a physical participation μέθεξις φυσική) and πνευματικῶς (unity of the faithful in the Eucharist not only a Christological but also a Pneumatological dimension). The somatic mode of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist represent a corollary of Cyril’s doctrine of the Incarnation. He shows a special preference for the language of 2 Peter 1: 4 (‘partakers of the divine nature’, θείας φύσεως κοινωνοί), which he frequently ties to the notions of sanctification and a dual ‘participation’ (μέθεξις) in the Spirit

through baptism and in the flesh of Christ through the eucharist.\textsuperscript{136} With his understanding of the trinitarian dimension and his integration of the Eucharist and the moral life into how human beings participate in the divine nature, Cyril "brings the doctrine of deification to full maturity".\textsuperscript{137}

If we "dress" ourselves with the Holy Body and Blood "we will shine (\textit{Shekinah}) like the sun": "We dress the imperial Porfira or rather we dress the imperial body and blood - a! Wonder of wonders! - we trasnsform ourselves for the divine adoption when the divine radiance/brightness of God will mysteriously come to us, this radiance/brightness, above shine and beyond nature, is making us anointed of God, giving us power and His promise that at His Second Coming we will shine like the sun" (Homily 56, 13).

Nellas affirms that it is insufficient to study the 14th century only through the prism of saint Palamas' theology, without the study of saint Cabasilas theology in paralel, which binds the conflict for \textit{deification} to the sacramental life of the Church, placing it on a biblic foundation, offering the logic cathegory of deification a practical content through the „displacement of terminology from deification to christification“,\textsuperscript{138} in an orthodox vision of a \textit{theocentric humanism}. The pauline expression „life in Crist“ is interpreted by Nicolae Cabasila as a true and real \textit{deification}, which he explains as a \textit{christification}.\textsuperscript{139}

Cabasilas as "ascetic layman"\textsuperscript{139} and "humanist hesychast"\textsuperscript{140}, without speaking nowhere in his writings about Tabor light or about the uncreated energies, he was himself an "independent Palamite", receiving selectively the nepolemics themes from Palamite homilies: "Nicholas Cabasilas and Palama would have been much closer to each other, if polemical needs would not have pushed the latter to force certain features of his thinking into a direction in which Cabasila does not follow him".\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{137} Norman Russell, \textit{The Doctrine of Deification}, 191-192.
\textsuperscript{139} R.-J. Loenertz, „Chronologie de Nicolas Cabasilas,” \textit{Orientalia Christiana Periodica} 21 (1955): 214-215. It is significant that Manuel Kalekas belonged also to a „brotherhood“ of laics.
In his descriptions of the inner presence of Christ in man, Cabasilas relies on the doctrine of deification. According to Pekka Metso’s interpretation, Cabasilas would say that through koinonia (as christological perichoresis - mutual interchange of properties of the two natures) and henosis (as mystical union), Christ is more close to man than man is to himself: “Cabasilas’ understanding of henosis can be classified as christification: through Eucharistic communion man becomes like Christ, sharing his life and operation”. According to him, the communicatio idiomatum or the christological perichoresis also operates in the Holy Eucharist. The human and divine natures come together and are united in a similar manner as they did in the incarnation of the Logos: “What Christ has assumed from humanity He gives to the communicant: His body and blood... of deified humanity of the incarnate God”. Therefore, the incarnational realism of the Eucharistic mystery is for Cabasilas his understanding of the proper nature of Eucharistic sacrifice.

To complete circularly the four dimensions of theosis, we have to analyze also the sacramental experience of God’s glory as theophany. For Alexander Golitzin the mutual indwelling of Son in His Father, Their presence into the interior of the believer, is nothing but Glory (dóxa, cf. John 17:5, 22-24). Through Baptism, at least in potency, the believer becomes himself “the place” of Glory, being called to become a „Theophany”.

CONCLUSION

In the first part of this study we analyzed kabod theology and its relationship with the deification (glorification) in the uncreated light as a link between the two Jewish and Christian spirituality of Holy Scripture. I emphasized that, since the first human being was created in God’s image, Adam must have been a reflection of the Kavod and the restamping of God’s image on the soul, means restoring it to its original Form and Glory. Thereby, man become “glorified” or “angelic” and clothed in shining white garments. These interpretations

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142 Pelka Metso, Divine Presence in the Eucharistic Theology of Nicholas Cabasilas, (Dissertations in Education, Humanities, and Theology 2, University of Eastern Finland: Joensuu, 2010), 190-191.
143 Metso, Divine Presence, 100.
146 Golitzin, Mistagogia, 44-45.
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assumes the reformation of the mystical praxis into the sacramental rituals of the early Christian church, presented as the vehicles through which one come into the very presence of God and is reintegrated into the divine immediately and ontologically.

Also, this theophanic Kabod was a participatory doxa, as revelation and salvation. Participation entails (and guarantees) both a „a true relation and a real distinction”\(^ {148}\) and helps us put together God’s transcendence and otherness with the intimate communion with Triune God. „It is because God is truly transcendent that he can also be truly immanent, without any confusion”.\(^ {149}\)

Throughout our entire presentations we saw that the kernel of theosis is participation in the divine energeis through communion with Christ in his Body which is the Church. The approaches are different but complementary. Thus, the spirituality of the Orthodox Church is both liturgical and monastic and takes full account of our corporeal nature as part of our identity.

The hermeneutic key is the transfiguration of Christ, but Palamas also affirm that the prophets and patriarchs were not without experience of this light. Theosis is experienced as participation in God as light, in this life by practicing the hesychast method of prayer. In the saints this communion is expressed in the way God’s glory is reflected in their faces, in anticipation of the age to come.

For Wesche „union with God is the goal of theosis and the content of salvation”.\(^ {150}\) In this deified humanity of Christ’s, man is called to participate, and to share in its deification. This is the meaning of the sacramental life and the basis of Christian spirituality”\(^ {151}\).

As we have said, this mingling of human existence, renewed in baptism, with Christ’s deified and deifying body, provides the basis for Palamas’ teaching on the mystical vision of the uncreated light. The man regenerated in Christ through baptism receives the power to became a son of god and a co-inheritor with Christ (Hom. 16 and 59, 2). Through the Holy Eucharist we become not merely one body with Him, but one spirit: „He has bound us to Himself and united us, as the bridegroom unites the bride to himself, through the communion of this His blood, becoming one fles with us” (Homily 56, 7). This sacramental union is a real union with His deifying grace or energy. The bread of the Eucharist is „like a veil

\(^{149}\) Keating, Deification and Grace, 101-104.
\(^{151}\) John Meyendorff, Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 164.
concealing the divinity” (Homily 56) „through participation in His holy body, becoming one body with us and making us the temple of the entire divinity”.152

R. Flogaus sees at Palamas the juxtaposition of two heterogeneous fundamentally contradictory soteriologies: one, a mystico-hesychast neoplatonic soteriology, based on contemplative deification, and the other, a Pauline-biblical soteriology, where deification is strictly the reverse of kenosis. Palama would propose a new conception of theosis identified but theoria (θεωρία) or to uncreated glory of God.153

Without recepting the Palamit distinction between salvation and deification, Flogaus can not understand the fact that deification is creational vocation of human. So, the visual experience of the uncreated Glory of God’s unembodied Logos is possible also before the Incarnation and outside it.154

Regarding the theophanies of the Old Testament, the illumination of Moses’ face, the vision of Stephen the first martyr, the light on the road to Damascus, and above all, the light of Christ’s transfiguration on Tabor – all these are various forms of the revelation of God’s natural light to men. God, invisible and nonparticipable in His essence, becomes visible and participable by virtue of His energy. The Byzantine theologians and Palamas synthesized these two traditions and linked the vision of God with man’s deification.

Yannis Spiteris, also, demonstrated that for Palamas Mary is the incarnation of his theology, „the argument/proof of his teaching about grace” and „the full realization of his ascetic and theological premises”.155

So Gregory Palamas operates with a more subtle nuanced understanding of the concepts of salvation and deification, and he states the continuity of theophanies and the identity of revelation and of her deifying experience in the two Testaments. The same uncreated glory of God is being seen by the patriarchs, prophets, Mary, the apostles, saints in a synergistic process of ascetic-contemplative ascent of man and of energetical descent of God.

153 Reinhard Flogaus, Theosis bei Palamas und Luther (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1997), 228-271, 234, 282: „Die Kontinuität und Identität der Offenbarung und Vergöttlichung vor und nach der Inkarnation” (The continuity and Identity of revelation and deification before and after the Incarnation)
154 Ioan I. Ică jr, Maica Domnului în teologia secolului XX și în spiritualitatea ishastă a secolului XIV, Grigorie Palama, Nicolae Cabasila, Teofan al Niceei (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008), 195.
155 Spiteris, Palamas: la grazia e l’esperienza, 173-4.
Glorification (δεδοξασμένη) through Kabod and Deification (θέωσις) by uncreated light a continuum of Theophanies

| δεδοξασμένη | θέωσις | γνώσις and ἐνώσις | νοητήν σιγήν |
| glorification | deification | mystical union | uncreated energies |
| Kabod | Doxa | enhypostatic illumination | ἱεράς (charis) „ful of grace” |
| shem | Thaboric light (τό φώς) | | |
| shekinah | | Uncreated light (τό φώς) | | |
| | | „His face was shining like the sun, and his clothing became white as light” Matt. 17:2 | | |
| | | δόρασεις (vision) Moses, Stephen, and Arsenius visibly transformed by divine light | | |
| merkabah | Eucharist | Clothied in Christ sacramentally The glory robe „gods clothed in Me” (Hom. 56.11) | co-corporeal (σύσσωμοι), co-participating (συμμέτοχοι) and co-formed (συμμορφοι) with Christ |
| hekalot | Veil (gr. katapétasma) concealing the divinity | | |
| Theophanies (revelation) | Theology (Christology) | Anthropology (Christification) | Hesychastic Mariology (pnevmatology) |
| | Ex. 33:11, 20-23 | Matt. 17:2 Heb. 10:20 | 2 Cor. 3:18 Lk. 1:28 |

**REFERENCES**


