

GREGORY NAZIANZEN'S CHRISTOLOGY OF MIXTURE

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Abstract

This article provides a reconsideration of Gregory Nazianzen's account of the Christological union by analysing Gregory's conception of the Christological union as a 'mixture' (μῆξις) or 'blending' (κρᾶσις). While scholars have long recognized that Gregory conceives of the union of Christ's humanity and divinity as a kind of 'mixture', there is disagreement as to which philosophical understanding of mixture—if any—underlies this conception. Three rival interpretations have dominated modern scholarship on this issue. The first, forwarded by Franz Portmann in 1954, regards Gregory as holding a Stoic understanding of mixture. A second line of interpretation, first proposed by Harry Wolfson in 1956, argues that Gregory conceives of the Christological union in terms of what Wolfson refers to as 'unions of predominance'—a subset of Aristotelian mixture in which the 'lesser ingredient' is converted towards the greater without being completely destroyed. More recently, in what is the most extensive consideration of Gregory's mixture Christology to date, Andrew Hofer has argued that Gregory's understanding of mixture 'fits no ancient philosophical model'. Against these three lines of interpretation, this article will demonstrate that Gregory conceives of the Christological union in terms of Neoplatonic accounts of mixture, which adapted Stoic mixture theory in order to explain the union of immaterial natures in terms of mutual interpenetration. Neoplatonic mixture theory allows Gregory to explain how Christ's humanity and divinity are both truly united and distinct, since according to the Neoplatonic model immaterial natures unite themselves to both material natures and other immaterial natures without either nature undergoing change or destruction. Recognition of Gregory's use of Neoplatonic mixture theory, then, allows us to grasp the fundamental logic underpinning Gregory's conception of the Christological union.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN's use of the language of 'mixture' (μῆξις) or 'blending' (κρᾶσις) to speak of the Christological union has posed an interpretative problem for scholars for over a century.¹ While

¹ Gregory's use of mixture language baffled Adolf von Harnack, who viewed Gregory's reliance on this language as indicating a lack of clarity in his conception of

the importance of mixture language for Gregory Nazianzen's conception of the Christological union is widely acknowledged,² the

the Christological union; Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. N. Buchanan from the third German edn. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1958), vol. 4, pp. 160–66, n. 2. Joseph Tixeront likewise found Gregory's use of mixture language problematic, stating that Gregory's use of the terms *μίξις* and *κράσις* suggests a 'monophysite' tendency; Joseph Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, trans. H. L. Brianceau from the fifth French edn. (St Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1914), p. 127. Against these readings, Karl Holl contended that the language of mixture plays a fundamental and precise role in Gregory's Christology, arguing that Gregory uses the terms *μίξις* and *κράσις* to denote the Christological union as an 'organic compound' ('organische Verbindung') in which Christ's human and divine natures are preserved without 'flowing into each other' ('Ineinanderfließen'); Karl Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den grossen Kappadoziern* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1904), pp. 189–90. Subsequent scholars have followed Holl in regarding mixture language as fundamental to Gregory's conception of the Christological union; see especially Franz Portmann, *Die göttliche Paidagogia bei Gregor von Nazianz* (Kirchengeschichtliche Quellen und Studien, 3; St Ottilien: Eos Verlag der Erzabtei, 1954), pp. 110–12; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 1: *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, trans. J. Bowden (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1965; 2nd edn., 1975), pp. 367–8; Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1: *Faith, Trinity and Incarnation* (2nd edn., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 397; Donald Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation: A Study in Gregory of Nazianzus* (Patristic Monograph Series, 7; Cambridge MA: The Philadelphia Patristics Foundation, 1979), p. 84; N. V. Harrison, 'Some aspects of Gregory the Theologian's Soteriology', *GOTR* 34 (1989), pp. 11–18; Christopher Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 131–2; Andrew Hofer, *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 91–121.

² Indeed, the frequency with which Gregory uses mixture language to speak of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ indicates the importance of this terminology for his conception of the Christological union. Gregory uses the terms *μίξις*, *μίγνυμι*, *κράσις*, *κεράννυμι* and cognates to describe the Christological union on a total of 49 occasions in his extant writings. These are: *μίξις*: *Or.* 2.23, *Or.* 30.3, *Or.* 38.13, *Or.* 45.9, *Carm.* 1.1.11.11, *Carm.* 1.2.1.155, *Carm.* 2.1.12.318; *μικτός*: *Carm.* 1.1.11.8; *μίγνυμι*: *Or.* 38.13, *Or.* 39.12, *Or.* 45.9, *Ep.* 101.36, 39, 49, *Carm.* 1.1.10.12, 59, *Carm.* 1.1.11.8, *Carm.* 1.1.27.61, *Carm.* 1.2.1.152, 334, 336, *Carm.* 1.2.2.675, *Carm.* 1.2.10.567, *Carm.* 2.1.1.14, *Carm.* 2.1.13.34; *κράσις*: *Or.* 38.13, *Or.* 45.9; *σύγκρασις*: *Or.* 30.6, *Or.* 30.8, *Or.* 37.2, *Ep.* 101.21; *ἀνάκρασις*: *Or.* 34.10; *κεράννυμι*: *Carm.* 1.1.9.51, *Carm.* 1.1.10.63, *Carm.* 1.1.36.14, *Carm.* 1.2.1.153, *Carm.* 1.2.1.422, *Carm.* 1.2.14.90, *Carm.* 2.1.34.83, *Carm.* 2.1.46.15; *συγκεράννυμι*: *Or.* 30.3, *Ep.* 102.9, *Carm.* 2.1.34.24; *ἀνακεράννυμι*: *Or.* 2.23, *Ep.* 101.46; *συνανακεράννυμι*: *Or.* 29.19; *κιννάω*: *Ep.* 101.30, *Carm.* 1.1.10.41, *Carm.* 1.1.20.2 (according to a series of TLG searches conducted between 22 February 2018 and 13 March 2018). Gregory also uses the verb *πλέκω* ('to weave') to describe the Christological union on one occasion (*Or.* 30.3), where he appears to treat it as synonymous with *μίξις*. The verb *πλέκω* is related to the terminology of mixture in that, while it plays no role in Stoic and Aristotelian discussions of mixture, some Neoplatonic thinkers use *πλέκω* (or its cognate, *διαπλέκω*) alongside *μίξις* and *κράσις* in their accounts of mixture; see, for instance, Plotinus *Enn.* 1.1.4.

question of how Gregory understood this terminology has not been satisfactorily resolved. At issue is whether Gregory's understanding of mixture is dependent on ancient philosophical theories of mixture, and, if so, which one. For much of the latter half of the twentieth century, two rival interpretations predominated. The first, forwarded by Franz Portmann in 1954, views Gregory's understanding of mixture as derived from Stoic mixture theory, according to which a mixture is a union in which constituent ingredients are united by mutual interpenetration while remaining preserved without alteration along with their qualities.³ The second, first proposed by Harry Wolfson in 1956, argues that Gregory's understanding of mixture draws on a category of union which Wolfson terms 'unions of predominance'—a subset of Aristotelian mixture in which the resultant 'is one of the two constituents, the one which happens to be greater or more powerful, and in which also the smaller is not completely destroyed but is related to the greater as matter to form'.⁴

More recently, Andrew Hofer has offered a third line of interpretation, arguing that Gregory's use of mixture terms 'fit[s] neatly into no single ancient model'.⁵ Hofer provides the most extensive discussion of Gregory's mixture Christology to date. However, Hofer's analysis gives insufficient attention to the close similarities between Gregory's account of the Christological union and

³ Franz Portmann, *Die gottliche Paidagogia*, pp. 64–5, 110–12. Aloys Grillmeier, Thomas Spidlik, Jean Bernardi, Paul Gallay, N. V. Harrison, and Norman Russell have all followed Portmann in interpreting Gregory's understanding of the Christological union in light of Stoic mixture theory; Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, pp. 367–8; Thomas Spidlik, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Introduction à l'étude de sa doctrine spirituelle* (OCA 189; Rome: PISO, 1971), p. 95, n. 82; Jean Bernardi (ed.), *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 1–3* (SC 247; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978), pp. 120–21; Paul Gallay (ed.), *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 27–31 (Discours Théologiques)* (SC 250; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978), p. 217; Harrison, 'Some aspects of Gregory the Theologian's Soteriology'; eadem, 'Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers', *SVTQ* 35 (1991), pp. 53–65; Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 213.

⁴ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 385; for the claim that this kind of union comprises a subset of Aristotelian mixture, see p. 386; for Wolfson's discussion of Gregory Nazianzen, see p. 397. Althaus, Winslow, and Wesche have each endorsed Wolfson's interpretation; Heinz Althaus, *Die Heilslehre des heiligen Gregor von Nazianz* (Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie, 34; Münster: MBT, 1972), p. 131; Winslow, *Dynamics of Salvation*, pp. 84–5; Kenneth Wesche, 'The Union of God and Man in Jesus Christ in the Thought of Gregory Nazianzen', *SVTQ* (1984), pp. 83–94, at p. 92.

⁵ Hofer, *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus*, p. 120.

Neoplatonic views of mixture. Indeed, as this study progresses, it will become evident that the unsettled state of previous scholarship results from an underappreciation of the full range of philosophical theories of mixture available in late antique philosophy. Moreover, previous scholarship has failed to recognize Gregory's more explicit statements on the question of mixture. The latter statements reveal that Gregory understands the Christological union in terms of Neoplatonic mixture theory,⁶ and in particular the theories of mixture associated with Porphyry and with the later Athenian school of Syrianus (and, later still, Proclus).⁷ This theory rejected Stoic mixture as an explanation for the union of material bodies but adapted it to explain the union of immaterial natures with each other and with material natures in terms of mutual interpenetration. This Neoplatonic understanding of mixture, I contend, supplies the fundamental logic for Gregory's conception of the Christological union.⁸

⁶ In her 1989 study of Gregory's soteriology, N. V. Harrison briefly suggested that Gregory's understanding of mixture might better fit Neoplatonic models of mixture, given he considers the divine nature to be immaterial; Harrison, 'Some aspects of Gregory the Theologian's Soteriology', p. 13. In that article, Harrison stated her intent to follow up this suggestion with a more thorough study demonstrating Gregory's dependence on Neoplatonic understandings of mixture. However, this study did not appear.

⁷ Although Syrianus writes in the early fifth century, he indicates that he is drawing on a prior philosophical tradition and identifies two pre-existing groups of philosophers who held similar positions; cf. Syrianus, in *Metaph.* 84.27–85.26.

⁸ By this I do not mean to suggest that Gregory's use of mixture language is dependent solely on philosophical use of these terms. As several scholars have noted, the immediate source for Gregory's application of this language to Christ is most likely Origen, whom Gregory follows not only in describing the Christological union in terms of mixture, but also in emphasizing the mediatory function of the soul in this union. Rather, my argument is that, while the application of mixture language to Christ is traditional, Gregory utilizes Neoplatonic mixture theory to explain the manner of union expressed in this language. On the influence of Origen on Gregory's use of mixture language, see Portmann, *Die gottliche Paidagogia*, p. 122; Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, p. 369; Winslow, *Dynamics of Salvation*, p. 84; Russell, *Doctrine of Deification*, p. 213; Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, p. 131. Christopher Beeley and Susanna Elm have both suggested that Apollinarius is also a source for Gregory's Christological use of mixture language; Beeley *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, p. 131; idem, 'The Early Christological Controversy: Apollinarius, Diodore and Gregory Nazianzen', *VC* 65 (2011), pp. 376–407, at pp. 401–2; idem, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in the Patristic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 187; Susanna Elm, 'Apollinarius of Laodicea and Gregory of Nazianzus—The Early Years' in Silke-Petra Bergjan, Benjamin Gleede, and Martin Heimgartner (eds.), *Apollinarius und seine Folgen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), p. 14. This suggestion is not new. In 1904 Karl

In order to demonstrate this contention, this article will proceed in four sections. The first provides an overview of ancient philosophical understandings of mixture. Following this overview, the second section provides an analysis of Wolfson's claim that Gregory understands the Christological mixture in terms of 'unions of predominance'. This analysis demonstrates that Wolfson's interpretation is premised on a misreading of Aristotle. Those passages which Wolfson identifies as presenting Aristotle's account of 'unions of predominance' actually belong to Aristotle's account of growth—a process in which the lesser ingredient is completely destroyed and converted into the greater. This observation renders Wolfson's interpretation untenable, since Gregory regards Christ's humanity as preserved without undergoing destruction in the Christological union. While the preservation of constituent ingredients fits both a Stoic and a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture, the third section will establish Gregory's debt to Neoplatonic theories of mixture in particular through a close analysis of two passages—*Or.* 28.8 and *Ep.* 101.37–45—in which Gregory provides explicit statements of his views regarding mixture. These passages reveal that Gregory rejected Stoic mixture theory but embraced a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture as the interpenetration of intelligible natures in order to explain the Christological union. Finally, the fourth section will show that Gregory utilized this Neoplatonic understanding of mixture in order to explain two fundamental tenets of his Christology. First, Neoplatonic mixture theory provides Gregory with a way of explaining the unity and distinction of Christ's human and divine natures in a manner that supports his preferred approach to Christological exegesis. Second, Neoplatonic mixture theory allows Gregory to explain how Christ's humanity is deified by its union with the divine Word without thereby ceasing to be fully human.

Holl wrote that Gregory's Christology agreed with that of Apollinarius on nearly all points, and that Gregory is largely indebted to Apollinarius for his Christological terminology; Holl *Amphilochius von Ikonium*, p. 85. While there are similarities between Apollinarius' and Gregory's use of mixture theory, Gregory's view that Christ's mind/soul mediates between his divinity and his flesh in the Christological mixture differentiates his Christology from that of Apollinarius.

I. ANCIENT PHILOSOPHICAL ACCOUNTS OF MIXTURE

Richard Sorabji has cast light on the diverse understandings of mixture which developed after the accounts of Aristotle and Chrysippus.⁹ As Sorabji shows, Aristotle's account of mixture was variously developed and re-interpreted in later Peripatetic thought.¹⁰ For instance, Galen reports that some Peripatetics viewed mixture as applying to the qualities of a body alone, while Alexander of Aphrodisias, on the other hand, holds that both the qualities and the substance of bodies were combined together in cases of mixture.¹¹ Notably, for our purposes, Sorabji also shows that various Neoplatonic accounts of mixture emerged alongside the Stoic and Aristotelian accounts.¹² These accounts, following Plotinus, largely accepted Peripatetic criticisms of the Stoic view that two material bodies could interpenetrate. At the same time, Neoplatonic discussions of mixture were not satisfied with the Aristotelian account of mixture, since they sought to also explain what prevents interpenetration. As different answers to this question emerged, so too did different accounts of when and what kind of bodies or substances could and could not interpenetrate. For instance, Simplicius argued that it is properties which prevent interpenetration, and so allowed the interpenetration of two material extensions so long as they are 'qualityless' (*ἀπολόν*),¹³ while Philoponus argued that it is matter which prevents interpenetration, and so allowed the interpretation of two immaterial extensions.¹⁴

It is my belief that lack of attention to these diverse understandings of mixture has prevented previous scholars from correctly identifying the philosophical background to Gregory's understanding of mixture. For Gregory's understanding of mixture, I argue, belongs to a particular line of Neoplatonic thought which adapted Stoic mixture theory to explain the union of immaterial substances with each other and with material bodies. In order

⁹ Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion: Theories in Antiquity and Their Sequel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 60–122.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 72, 76–7.

¹¹ Galen, in *Hipp. nat. hom.* (Kühn, vol. 15, p. 32 = *SVF* 2.463); Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 15. 231.15–16. Cf. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 72.

¹² Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 106–19.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 106–7; cf. Simplicius, in *Phys.* 623.11–18.

¹⁴ Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 107; Philoponus, in *Phys.* 559.9–11, 14–18.

to understand this account of mixture, however, we must first review the Aristotelian and Stoic accounts of mixture it opposes and builds upon. This section, then, begins with a brief review of Aristotle's account of mixture, before moving to the Stoic account and, finally, to the Neoplatonic tradition.

1.1 Aristotle's Account of Mixture

Aristotle outlines his understanding of mixture in *On Generation and Corruption* (GC) 1.10. There, Aristotle identifies mixture as the union of two bodies in which the constituent ingredients undergo an alteration to produce a *tertium quid*, while nevertheless continuing to exist along with their qualities 'in potentiality' (δυνάμει). According to Aristotle, when two ingredients are combined by means of mixture, 'the new compound is in actuality (ἐνεργείᾳ) something else, but in potentiality (δυνάμει) each ingredient is what it was before and is not utterly destroyed.'¹⁵ The alteration of the constituent ingredients into a new compound—a *tertium quid*—distinguishes mixture from unions of 'composition' (σύνθεσις), in which the ingredients are preserved 'without alteration' (μὴ ἡλλοιωμένων) and are merely set alongside each other, like grains of barley and wheat.¹⁶

For Aristotle, cases of composition do not produce true mixture because the resultant is not homogeneous—every part is not the same as every other part, nor is every part the same as the whole—and so is not a true unity.¹⁷ In cases of mixture, by contrast, each ingredient 'changes' (μεταβάλλει) so as to form a homogeneous *tertium quid*, with qualities intermediate between those of the original ingredients.¹⁸ For example, in the case of the human body, which is a mixture of fire, water, earth, and air, the coldness of the water and the heat of the fire 'no longer exist in actuality . . . but are replaced by a single intermediate temperature characteristic of

¹⁵ Aristotle, GC 1.10, 327b26–28. Greek text is from E. S. Forster and D. J. Furley (eds.), *Aristotle: On Sophistical Refutations; On Coming-to-be and Passing Away; On the Cosmos* (Loeb Classical Library, 400; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955). All translations of primary texts are my own unless otherwise stated.

¹⁶ Aristotle, GC 1.10, 327b1–2; cf. 327b8–10; 328a2–8.

¹⁷ Aristotle, GC 1.10, 328a8–12; Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 66.

¹⁸ Aristotle, GC 1.10, 328a29–32; Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 68.

flesh'.¹⁹ At the same time, the process of mixture does not utterly destroy the constituent ingredients. For, Aristotle says, in mixture the ingredients are preserved in potentiality, as can be seen by the fact that the constituent ingredients can be separated once more out of the mixture.²⁰

1.2 Stoic Mixture Theory

Our principal sources for Stoic understandings of mixture are Alexander of Aphrodisias and Arius Didymus, both of whom claim to be reporting the teaching of Chrysippus. According to Alexander, Chrysippus and the Stoics distinguish between three kinds of union: 'juxtaposition' (παράθεσις), in which the ingredients are preserved and lie side by side, like beans and grains of wheat; 'confusion' (σύγχυσις), in which the ingredients are destroyed and a *tertium quid* is produced, as in the production of drugs; and 'blending' (κρᾶσις), in which the ingredients are preserved while being united together by permeating and extending throughout each other.²¹ Arius Didymus, on the other hand, identifies four categories of union recognized by Chrysippus: 'juxtaposition', 'confusion', 'mixture' (μίξις—referring to the mutual co-extension of dry bodies), and 'blending' (κρᾶσις—referring to the mutual co-extension of liquids).²²

While Alexander's and Arius Didymus' accounts diverge regarding the number of kinds of union identified by Chrysippus, both agree regarding the essential details of Stoic mixture theory. According to Alexander, Chrysippus identifies 'blending' (κρᾶσις) as 'the mutual coextension (ἀντιπαρέκτασιν) of some two or even

¹⁹ Sorabji *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 68; cf. Aristotle, *GC* 2.7, 334b8–18.

²⁰ Aristotle, *GC* 1.10, 327b28–32. It is worth noting that no scholar has suggested that Gregory understands the Christological mixture in the sense outlined in this section—that is, as a kind of union in which two ingredients are changed to produce a homogeneous *tertium quid*. Indeed, such an interpretation is *prima facie* untenable, since this understanding of mixture requires that both ingredients undergo alteration, whereas for Gregory the divine nature is incapable of change. See, for instance, *Or.* 34.8; cf. Portmann, *Die gottliche Paidagogia*, pp. 110–11. Some scholars have argued for an 'Aristotelian' background to Gregory's understanding of mixture on the basis of Wolfson's claim that Gregory understands the Christological mixture in terms of 'unions of predominance'. I provide a consideration of Wolfson's interpretation in the next section of this article.

²¹ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 3. 216.14–28.

²² Arius Didymus, fr. 28, ap. Stobaeum, *Eclogae* 1.17.4.

more bodies in their entirety with one another (ὅλων δι' ὅλων) so that each of them preserves (σώζειν) its own substance (οὐσίαν) and its qualities (ποιότητας) in such a mixture (μίξει).²³ Arius Didymus supplies a similar definition, stating that Chrysippus identifies 'mixture' (μίξις) and 'blending' (κρᾶσις) as the 'complete mutual coextension' (ἀντιπαρέκτασις δι' ὅλων) of bodies through each other, in which the 'substance' (οὐσία), 'natures' (φύσεις), and 'qualities' (ποιότητες) of the bodies are preserved without undergoing 'change' (μεταβολή), and without being 'juxtaposed side by side' (παρὰτιθέμενος).²⁴

When comparing the Aristotelian and Stoic accounts of mixture, we may begin by noting some areas of agreement. First, the Stoics, like Aristotle, affirm that the ingredients are not destroyed, pointing to the separability of constituent ingredients of a mixture as evidence of their preservation.²⁵ Second, the Stoics follow Aristotle in rejecting juxtaposition as producing genuine mixture, or blend.²⁶ Like Aristotle, the Stoics reject juxtaposition as producing a mixture on the basis that the resultant is not truly unified, whereas a mixture is fully united so as to be uniform throughout.²⁷ For instance, Alexander reports Chrysippus as saying that in cases of mixture, the ingredients are 'united (ἐνοῦσθαι) together in their entirety'²⁸ because there is not one part of the ingredients which is not blended with the other:

He [Chrysippus] assumes that such a mutual extension (ἀντιπαρέκτασις) of constituents occurs as constituent bodies go through one another (χωρούντων δι' ἀλλήλων), so that there is no part (μόριον) of them that does not partake (μετέχον) of everything in such a product of mixture (μίγματι)

²³ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 3. 216.14–217.2. Text and translation here and throughout this article are from R. B. Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics* (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

²⁴ Arius Didymus, fr. 28, ap. Stobaeum, *Eclogae* 1.17.4. Greek text is from H. Diels, (ed.), *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin: Reimer, 1879; reprinted, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965), pp. 463.24–464.6; translation is from Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 82–3.

²⁵ The separability of ingredients is illustrated by the example of a blend of water and wine, in which the water may be separated from the wine by means of an oil-soaked sponge. See Arius Didymus, fr. 28, ap. Stobaeum, *Eclogae* 1.17.4.21–23.

²⁶ Cf. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 66, 79.

²⁷ Cf. Aristotle, *GC* 1.10, 328a6–8.

²⁸ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 4. 217.27–28.

through blending (κεκραμένω): otherwise the result would no longer be blending (κρᾶσιν) but juxtaposition (παράθεσιν).²⁹

While Chrysippus' insistence on the unified, uniform nature of a mixture fits Aristotle's account of mixture, his understanding of the manner in which mixture is unified does not. For Aristotle, as we have seen, the uniformity of a mixture results from the 'alteration' (ἀλλοίωσις) or 'change' (μεταβολή) of its constituent ingredients into a *tertium quid*.³⁰ Chrysippus, on the other hand, explicitly denies the survival of ingredients which undergo a change in their qualities, and so for Chrysippus the change of ingredients into a *tertium quid* does not constitute a mixture. Rather, Chrysippus identifies such a union as 'confusion' (σύγχυσις).³¹ Instead, Chrysippus maintains that the unity of a mixture or blend results from the 'complete mutual coextension' (ἀντιπαρέκτασιν δι' ὅλων) of the ingredients, in which the bodies of the constituent ingredients 'go through one another' (χωρούντων δι' ἀλλήλων).³² Thus, while for Aristotle it is the alteration of the constituent ingredients into a *tertium quid* which ensures the unity and uniformity of a mixture, for the Stoics this is produced by means of the mutual co-extension and interpenetration of the constituent ingredients.

A second difference between the Stoic account of mixture and that of Aristotle concerns the manner in which the ingredients in a mixture are said to survive. For Aristotle, the ingredients and their qualities survive only in potentiality, since in actuality the ingredients have been changed towards an intermediate state.³³ The Stoics, on the other hand, admit no such change. Instead, Alexander reports Chrysippus as saying that, in cases of κρᾶσις, the 'substances' (οὐσίαν) and the 'qualities' (ποιότητας)—and therefore the 'natures' (φύσεις)—of the constitutive ingredients are

²⁹ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 3. 217.9–12.

³⁰ Aristotle, *GC* 1.10, 328b23: 'mixture (μίξις) is the union (ἔνωσις) of mixables (μικτῶν), when they have been altered (ἀλλοιωθέντων)'.

³¹ Didymus, fr. 28, ap. Stobaeum, *Eclogae* 1.17.4.25–27.

³² By contrast, Aristotle and his followers rejected as absurd the notion of 'body going through body'; see Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 66, 98–102.

³³ Aristotle *GC* 1.10, 328a29–32.

preserved.³⁴ As evidence for this, Stoic thinkers pointed to the fact that, in cases of mixture, not only can the constituent ingredients be separated again but their individual qualities continue to 'show forth together' (συνεκφαίνεσθαι) in the mixture.³⁵ The ongoing preservation of the constituent ingredients and their qualities is in turn explained by the Stoic view that the constituent ingredients in a mixture are united by mutual interpenetration rather than by alteration. The concept of the mutual interpenetration of bodies, then, provides the fundamental theoretical foundation upon which the Stoic account of mixture rests.

Chrysippus, it seems, developed his account of mixture in order to address a broader concern within Stoic thought, namely, the relationship between the active principle (God/Pneuma/Logos) and the passive principle (matter). In Alexander's report, we see that Chrysippus used his theory of mixture to explain how Pneuma 'pervades' (διήκω) matter, causing it to be unified (ἡνωσθαι), to hold together (συνέχεται), to be stable (συμμένει), and to be interactive (εἶναι σύμπαθες) with itself.³⁶ Here we may note two important corollaries of this depiction of the relationship between the active and passive principles, in which the active pervades the passive. First, it is the activity of the active element on the passive which causes the resultant of the blend to be unified. Second, the active principle causes the interaction between the two principles. It is this interaction between the active and passive principles which ensures the preservation of both in a blend: 'the bodies that are being blended with one another must be reciprocally acted on by one another (this is why neither is destroyed, since the one acted on by the other reacts in the process of being acted on)'.³⁷

³⁴ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 3. 216.27, 217.1. In Stoic thought, 'undetermined matter' (οὐσία ὕλη) or 'substrate' (ὑποκείμενον), qualified by 'common properties' (κοινὴ ποιότης), constitutes a 'nature' (φύσις). Thus, if the substance and properties of the constituent ingredients survive, so does their nature. On the Stoic understanding of nature, see Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, pp. 128, 372–3; Paul B. Clayton, 'The Chalcedonian Formula and Twentieth Century Ecumenism' in Alan Avery-Peck, Craig A. Evans, and Jacob Neusner (eds.), *Earliest Christianity within the Boundaries of Judaism: Essays in Honour of Bruce Chilton* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p. 399.

³⁵ Didymus, fr. 28, ap. Stobaeum, *Eclogae* 1.17.4.20.

³⁶ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 3. 216.14–16; cf. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 83–4; Ronald Heine, 'The Christology of Callistus', *JTS*, ns 49 (1998), pp. 56–91, at pp. 75–6; Anthony Briggman, 'Irenaeus' Christology of Mixture', *JTS*, ns 64 (2013), pp. 516–55, at pp. 517–18.

³⁷ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 11. 226.30–32.

This notion of the mutual interaction between active and passive principles in a blend proved useful for Stoic conceptions of the soul–body union, which the Stoics also viewed as a union of active and passive principles in a blend.³⁸ The soul, by pervading the body, is present throughout the entire body and so is one with the body, yet neither loses its own substantiality. This understanding of the soul and body as a blend of active and passive principles explains the interaction between soul and body. Cleanthes comments upon this relationship thus: ‘the soul interacts with (συμπάσχει) the body when the body is ill or cut, and body is affected with the soul, for when the soul is ashamed the body becomes red, and pale when it is afraid’.³⁹ This interaction allows the activities and experiences of the soul and the body to be shared between the two without causing one to change into the other and thus compromise their distinctive existence.

1.3 *Neoplatonic Theories of Mixture*

In his study of ancient philosophical accounts of mixture, Sorabji observes that, in spite of Plotinus’ rejection of Stoic mixture theory in *Enneads* 4.7.8 and 2.7.1–2, several Neoplatonic thinkers developed accounts of mixture which adapted the Stoic account in order to explain certain cases of union in terms of interpenetration. As I noted at the start of this section, different Neoplatonic thinkers placed different restrictions on when and with what kind of bodies or substances interpenetration could occur. For the purposes of this article, we will focus on the theory that, while material bodies cannot interpenetrate each other, immaterial natures can interpenetrate both material and immaterial natures.⁴⁰

³⁸ Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 83; Heine, ‘The Christology of Callistus’, p. 76; Briggman, ‘Irenaeus’ Christology of Mixture’, p. 520. Cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 4. 217.32–36.

³⁹ Cleanthes ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 2.21. Greek text here and for subsequent citations from Nemesius is from M. Morani (ed.), *Nemesii Emeseni de natura hominis* (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana; Leipzig: Teubner, 1987); translation is from R. W. Sharples and P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius: On the Nature of Man* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), with alterations.

⁴⁰ The application of Stoic mixture theory to immaterial natures may not be as novel as first appears, given that later Stoics came to view *Pneuma* as ‘something not akin to matter, but rather to force’; Shmuel Sambursky, *Physics of the Stoics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 36. At the same time, Neoplatonic understandings of mixture exhibit a definite departure from Stoic thought by denying that material natures could interpenetrate.

Plotinus, while explicitly rejecting Stoic mixture theory, paves the way for its application to immaterial beings, when he argues that what is immaterial may pass through material bodies. Plotinus provides two examples. First, he argues that qualities may pass through bodies because they are incorporeal:

one should consider carefully the sense of the assertion that when a body passes through a body (σῶμα χωροῦν διὰ σώματος) it cuts it up completely: since we ourselves say that qualities (ποιότητας) go through bodies (διὰ τῶν σωμάτων χωρεῖν) without cutting them. The reason is that they too are incorporeal (ἀσώματοι).⁴¹

For Plotinus, material bodies divide each other by necessity when they go through each other.⁴² Immaterial natures such as qualities, on the other hand, neither divide nor are divided when passing through bodies. Therefore, while material bodies cannot interpenetrate, immaterial natures can.

The same logic underpins Plotinus' second example, namely, that of the soul's interpenetration of the body. In *Enn.* 4.7.8², Plotinus uses the fact that soul goes through the body to establish the immateriality of the soul. Again, Plotinus arrives at his position through criticism of Stoic mixture theory. If the soul is material, he reasons, it must be united to the body by 'blending' (κρᾶσις).⁴³ Yet material bodies cannot interpenetrate, because in doing so they divide one another.⁴⁴ The inability of material bodies to interpenetrate, for Plotinus, proves the immateriality of the soul, since 'the soul penetrates (χωρεῖν) through whole bodies (δι' ὅλων), therefore it is immaterial (ἀσώματος)'.⁴⁵ While his primary aim is to demonstrate the immateriality of the soul, Plotinus' affirmation that the soul can penetrate the body because it is immaterial further establishes his position that, while material bodies

⁴¹ Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.7.27–29. Text and translation here and throughout this article are from A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus: Enneads II* and *Plotinus: Enneads IV* (Loeb Classical Library 441, 443; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966, 1984).

⁴² This line of argument has its origins in Peripatetic criticisms of Stoic mixture theory, which saw Stoic mixture as implying the progressive division of bodies into imperceptible parts; see, for instance, Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 7. 221.25–34; cf. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 102 and below, n. 51.

⁴³ Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.7.8².1–3.

⁴⁴ Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.7.8².7–21.

⁴⁵ Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.7.8².22–23.

cannot interpenetrate each other, immaterial natures can interpenetrate both material and immaterial natures.

Several later Neoplatonic thinkers adopted a similar stance. For instance, Porphyry appears to have taught that the soul, unlike material natures, is able to permeate and mix with the body without being confused and destroyed or juxtaposed because it is an 'intelligible nature' (νοητός φύσις) and 'incorporeal' (ἀσώματος).⁴⁶ This enables the soul to interpenetrate the body, since 'intelligibles' (νοητά) are not impeded by bodies (σώματων), but pervade through the whole body (διὰ παντός σώματος χωροῦντα).⁴⁷ Like the Stoics, Porphyry considers the soul-body union as a relationship between active and passive principles in a blend: the soul, as the active principle, pervades the entire body without losing its own substantiality, causing the body and soul to be unified by means of their 'interaction' (συμπάθεια).⁴⁸

By the early fifth century, the view that immaterial natures can interpenetrate both material and immaterial natures had become a commonly held position. Syrianus and his student Proclus both endorse the position that immaterial natures may interpenetrate.⁴⁹ Syrianus' and Proclus' debt to Stoic thought can be seen in their description of immaterial natures as interpenetrating 'unconfusedly' (ἀσυχχύτως), a description which depends on the Stoic distinction between mixture and 'confusion' (σύγχυσις), and in their description of immaterial bodies as 'going through one another' (χωρεῖν δι' ἀλλήλων).⁵⁰ Thus, these Neoplatonic thinkers continued to make use of Stoic mixture theory to explain the interpenetration

⁴⁶ Porphyry ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 3.39.17–40.22. The identity of this fragment's author remains disputed, although scholarly consensus has tended to favour Dorrie's argument that this passage is in fact taken from Porphyry's *Miscellaneous Questions on the Soul*; Heinrich Dorrie, *Porphyrios' "Symmiktá zetemata": ihre Stellung in System und Geschichte des Neuplatonismus, nebst einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten* (Münich: Beck, 1959). Dorrie's argument builds on that of H. von Arnim, 'Quelle der Überlieferung über Ammonius Sakkas', in *Rheinisches Museum* 42 (1887), pp. 276–85. For an alternative view, see John Rist, 'Pseudo-Ammonius and the Soul/Body Problem in Some Platonic Texts of Late Antiquity', *The American Journal of Philology* 109 (1988), pp. 402–15.

⁴⁷ Porphyry ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 3.41.10–11.

⁴⁸ Porphyry ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 3.40.10–12: 'The soul is, then, unified (ἥνωται) with the body in an unconfused union (ἀσυχχύτως ἥνωται). Their interaction (συμπάθεια) shows that they are unified; for the whole living thing interacts (συμπαθεῖ) with itself, since it is one (ἐν).'

⁴⁹ Syrianus, in *Metaph.* 84–86; Proclus, in *Remp.* 2.162.20–163.9; in *Tim.* 254.13–14.

⁵⁰ Syrianus, in *Metaph.* 85.17, 21; Proclus, in *Tim.* 2.254.14.

of immaterial natures even as they rejected Stoic claims about the interpenetration of material bodies.

The remainder of this article seeks to demonstrate that Gregory's understanding of mixture draws upon these Neoplatonic adaptations of Stoic mixture theory. We begin in the next section with a refutation of Wolfson's claim that Gregory's understanding of mixture belongs to a category not discussed above, namely, Aristotelian 'unions of predominance'. We then turn in the third section to an analysis of *Or.* 28.8 and *Ep.* 101.37–45, which together reveal that Gregory rejected Stoic mixture theory in favour of a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture.

II. WOLFSON ON UNIONS OF PREDOMINANCE AND GREGORY'S MIXTURE CHRISTOLOGY

Wolfson's interpretation of Gregory's mixture Christology rests on his claim to have identified a category of union different from those discussed above, namely, the category he terms 'unions of predominance', which he considers to be a subset of Aristotelian mixture. According to Wolfson, the category of 'unions of predominance' denotes cases of mixture in which one ingredient is greater in volume or power than the other such that their union, instead of producing a *tertium quid*, results in the conversion of the lesser ingredient into the greater without altogether destroying the lesser ingredient.⁵¹ However, Sorabji's work brings Wolfson's

⁵¹ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, pp. 385–6. Wolfson introduces the category 'unions of predominance' because he believes the other ancient understandings of mixture were inappropriate for orthodox Christological usage. However, Wolfson's account does not deal with Neoplatonic discussions of mixture. Moreover, Wolfson's rejection of Stoic mixture as a viable model is premised on a misunderstanding of Stoic thought. Wolfson, following the testimony of Nemesius, argues that the Stoics understood mixture as occurring by the juxtaposition of imperceptible parts, and that therefore Stoic mixture was incapable of accounting for the unity of Christ. Sorabji's study of ancient theories of mixture has shown this interpretation to be false: the Stoics did not understand mixture to be the juxtaposition of imperceptibles, but rather understood mixture as involving the total mutual interpenetration of bodies, resulting in a united and uniform body in which the constituent ingredients are nevertheless preserved. See Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 79–81, 102. This being the case, we have no *prima facie* reason to rule out the viability of the Stoic account of mixture for early Christian accounts of the Christological union. Indeed, Ronald Heine and Anthony Briggman have shown that mixture language was used in precisely this sense in the Christologies of Callistus of Rome and Irenaeus. See Heine, 'The Christology of Callistus'; Briggman, 'Irenaeus' Christology of Mixture'.

account of unions of predominance into question.⁵² In fact, a close reading of Aristotle's account of mixture shows that the category 'unions of predominance' is not native to Aristotle's thought, but rather is a construction of Wolfson's intended to explain what he considered to be the only possible orthodox sense of mixture language.⁵³

Wolfson cites four examples given by Aristotle which he takes to be illustrative of unions of predominance: (1) a drop of wine in ten thousand gallons of water (*GC* 1.10, 328a25–28); (2) tin and bronze (*GC* 1.10, 328b13); (3) wine with a little water (*GC* 1.5, 321a33–321b2); (4) fire and wood (*GC* 1.5, 322a10–11, 14–16). Wolfson views these examples as cases of union in which 'the resultant individual is one of the original constituent bodies, the one of greater power of action', yet 'the body of the lesser power of action . . . does not disappear'.⁵⁴ However, a closer analysis of these passages reveals that they are all cases of a different Aristotelian category, namely, that of 'growth' (*αὐξήσις*), in which the lesser ingredient is entirely converted into the greater ingredient, such that the greater ingredient increases in magnitude. Rather than being a subset of Aristotelian mixture, Aristotle explicitly denies that this process results in a true mixture. Moreover, Aristotle is clear that in such cases the lesser ingredient is not preserved, but rather is entirely destroyed by the process. As such, there is no real union at all in cases of growth: the lesser ingredient is simply destroyed and converted into the greater.

Sorabji has already shown that case (2) refers to the persistence of an inessential quality—a qualitative accident—in cases of growth.⁵⁵ A close reading of cases (1), (3), and (4) shows that Aristotle also intended them to be illustrations of growth. Further, in the cases (1) and (4) Aristotle explicitly denies that a mixture takes place. We will treat these three cases in the order they appear in Aristotle's work, beginning with (3).

⁵² Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 60–122, esp. pp. 66–72; cf. Briggman, 'Irenaeus' Christology of Mixture', p. 523, n. 34.

⁵³ As Briggman shows, Wolfson presupposes predominance as the only valid Christological model, and then uses this presupposition to guide his reading of early Christian authors. Thus: 'Having established as his starting place that early Christians actively sought an analogy for the Christological model of predominance, Wolfson finds what they, and he, sought in "unions of predominance"'; Briggman, 'Irenaeus' Christology of Mixture', p. 524.

⁵⁴ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 378.

⁵⁵ Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 70.

In order to make sense of Aristotle's appeal to case (3), it will be helpful to first highlight some salient features of Aristotle's account of growth. Aristotle provides his principal discussion of growth in *GC* 1.5. There, Aristotle initially defines growth as a 'change concerning magnitude' (μεταβολή . . . περὶ μέγεθος),⁵⁶ before proceeding to identify three criteria for cases of growth: (1) for growth to happen, every part of that which grows must increase; (2) growth must occur by means of addition (of something external to that which is growing); (3) that which grows must persist throughout the process of growth.⁵⁷ The requirement that the subject of growth must persist throughout the process of growth distinguishes cases of growth from cases of 'generation' (γένεσις), in which something comes to be which previously did not exist. However, this requirement raises a question for Aristotle: what is that which grows and, thus, what is it that must persist in the process of growth? Is it that which is added, that to which something is added, or both?⁵⁸

It is in the course of answering this question that Aristotle brings up case (3). According to Aristotle, that which grows is that to which something has been added. That which is added does not undergo increase, but rather is converted into the predominant element. Aristotle provides two examples to illustrate this point. First, when a person's leg grows as the result of the addition of food, the 'substance' (οὐσία) of the leg persists and increases, while the substance of the food does not, because the food has been converted into the matter of the leg. Second, when water is added to wine, it is the wine that grows, not the water, since the water is converted into wine: 'since it is also said that the predominant element (τὸ ἐπικρατοῦν) in the mixture (μίξει)—that is, the wine—increases, for it makes the mixture as a whole to have the function (ἔργον) of wine and not of water.'⁵⁹

Wolfson's claim that Aristotle views the addition of water to wine as an example of a 'union of predominance' disregards the fact that Aristotle introduces the case of water added to wine to illustrate his understanding of growth. There is no indication that Aristotle views the process of growth as a kind of union in which

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *GC* 1.5, 320a14–15.

⁵⁷ Aristotle, *GC* 1.5, 321a18–22. Cf. Inna Kupreeva, 'Aristotle on Growth: a Study of the Argument of On Generation and Corruption I.5', *Apeiron* 38 (2005) pp. 103–59, at p. 119.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *GC* 1.5, 321a30–32. Cf. Kupreeva, 'Aristotle on Growth', p. 121.

⁵⁹ Aristotle, *GC* 1.5, 321b1–2.

a lesser element is preserved alongside a greater element. Rather, Aristotle's claim that the resultant mixture performs the function of wine rather than water implies that the water no longer exists as water but has instead been converted into wine.⁶⁰ That the added substance is destroyed in the process of growth becomes clear when we come to Aristotle's analysis of the nature of added substances, a few lines later:

What must be the nature of that by means of which a thing grows (τὸ ᾧ αὖξάνεται)? Evidently it must be this thing potentially (δυνάμει). For example, if it is flesh [which is growing] it must be potentially flesh (εἰ σὰρξ, δυνάμει σάρκα). In actuality (ἐντελεχείᾳ), then, it is something else. This, therefore, is destroyed (φθαρὲν) and becomes flesh (σὰρξ γέγονεν)—certainly not alone by itself, for this would be generation (γένεσις) and not growth (αὖξις)—but together with the growing thing. How then is it affected by that which has grown? Is it by admixture (μικθὲν), as when someone pours water into wine, which has the power to convert that admixed liquid into wine (οἶνον ποιεῖν τὸ μικθὲν)? And as when fire lays hold of a combustible, so in that which is growing and is already really flesh the inner principle of growth lays hold of that which is potentially flesh (δυνάμει σαρκὸς) and makes it to be actual flesh (ἐποίησεν ἐντελεχείᾳ σάρκα)—when, that is, both are present together. For if they are separate it is generation. For in this way it is possible to make fire by placing wood on an already existing fire, and this is growth, but whenever the wood is set on fire by itself, this is generation.⁶¹

According to Aristotle, the added substance must be potentially that which is growing, since growth is brought about by means of the conversion of the added substance into the substance that is growing. This conversion destroys the added substance. Thus, in bodily growth food is 'destroyed' (φθαρὲν) and becomes 'flesh' (σὰρξ γέγονεν), just as, water, when added to wine, is converted into wine and so ceases to be water, and wood added to fire becomes fire and ceases to be wood.

The example of the addition of wood to fire which Aristotle gives towards the end of this passage comprises the fourth case of a 'union of predominance' adduced by Wolfson. Commenting on this passage, Wolfson states: 'if one adds wood to fire already burning, the wood will be changed into fire, and the change will be called "increase" (αὖξις)

⁶⁰ Cf. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 71.

⁶¹ Aristotle, *GC* 1.5, 322a5–16.

and not generation (*γένεσις*), the implication being that the change of wood into fire constitutes a mixture of predominance'.⁶² The first half of this statement is accurate. Wolfson's claim that Aristotle regards the change of wood into fire as a 'mixture of predominance', however, misrepresents Aristotle's thought in this passage.

Wolfson's interpretation seems to rest on Aristotle's claim that the added substance must be 'present together' with the growing thing in order for growth to occur rather than generation. For Wolfson's interpretation to succeed, we would need to view this claim as indicating that some sort of union has taken place between the wood and the fire, in contrast to cases of generation in which one element (the wood) is simply converted into another (fire) without any union taking place. Moreover, for this to count as a 'union of predominance' (according to Wolfson's definition), we would have to further claim that the wood is not completely destroyed in this union, since 'something of it remains'.⁶³

Yet Aristotle is clear that the substance which is added in cases of growth is 'destroyed' (*φθαρέν*). Given this, cases of growth do not involve union, since the product of the process of growth is simply one of the two ingredients. Water added to wine does not result in a mixture of wine and water; rather, the product is wine *simpliciter*. Likewise, the addition of wood to fire produces fire, not a union of fire and wood, since the wood is destroyed and converted into fire. Aristotle's claim that the added substance must be 'together with' that which grows simply reflects the criterion of persistence in cases of growth: in order for the conversion of wood into fire to constitute a case of growth, the wood must be added to pre-existent fire and not merely set alight on its own, since it is the persistence and increase in magnitude of this already existing fire which makes this a case of growth, instead of generation.

Nor does Aristotle's use of the language of 'mixture' to speak of the addition of water to wine indicate that he thinks of this process as a subset of mixture in the technical sense.⁶⁴ Indeed, Aristotle explicitly denies that growth involves 'mixture' in the course of his account of mixture in *GC* 1.10:

⁶² Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 378.

⁶³ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, pp. 378–9.

⁶⁴ Cf. Kupreeva, 'Aristotle on Growth', p. 132: 'Aristotle invokes "mixture" here not in a specific sense of combination of stuffs, but to illustrate a more likely physical mechanism by which the incoming nourishment could acquire the relevant properties of the growing tissue and become its functional part.'

If the destruction (*φθαρέντος*) of one ingredient occurs, then it is not a mixture (*μεμίχθαι*), but rather one ingredient exists while the other does not exist (*τὸ μὲν εἶναι τὸ δ' οὐκ εἶναι*), whereas a mixture (*μίξιν*) preserves both ingredients in existence . . . truly, we do not say that matter is mixed (*μεμίχθαι*) with fire, nor do we say that it mixes (*μίγνυσθαι*) when it is burning—either with its own particles or with the fire—but rather that fire comes-to-be (*πῦρ γίνεσθαι*), while the matter is destroyed (*φθείρεσθαι*).⁶⁵

Aristotle's use of mixture language to describe the process of growth in *GC* 1.5 may be explained as reflecting a looseness in his terminology at this stage in the treatise. As Aristotle himself notes later in *GC* 1.10, the term 'mixture' admits of both a strict, technical sense and a general sense.⁶⁶ It seems, then, that Aristotle is happy to use mixture language in the looser, more general sense when discussing growth in *GC* 1.5, but feels the need to differentiate cases of growth from cases of mixture after he has provided his more precise account of mixture in *GC* 1.10.

The need to differentiate cases of growth from cases of mixture leads Aristotle to the example of a drop of wine added to ten thousand gallons of water—the first case adduced by Wolfson as an example of 'unions of predominance'. According to Aristotle, the addition of a drop of wine to ten thousand gallons of water does not produce a mixture. Rather, the wine is converted into water, with the result that the volume of water is increased, while the wine is destroyed:

Concerning things which are capable of acting or being acted upon (however easy they are to divide), compounding a large number or volume of these with a small volume does not produce a mixture (*μίξιν*), but rather the growth (*αὔξησιν*) of the predominant ingredient. For, the other ingredient is changed (*μεταβάλλει*) into the predominant. For example, a drop of wine does not mix (*μίγνυται*) with ten thousand gallons of water. For its form (*εἶδος*) dissolves and it changes (*μεταβάλλει*) into the totality of water.⁶⁷

Wolfson suggests that, since it is the form of wine that is destroyed rather than its material substance, the wine is not 'completely destroyed', but rather persists in relation to the water 'as matter to

⁶⁵ Aristotle, *GC* 1.10, 327b3–5, 12–14.

⁶⁶ Aristotle, *GC* 1.10, 328a1.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *GC* 1.10, 328a24–28.

form'.⁶⁸ But this suggestion would be nonsensical to Aristotle, since for Aristotle the destruction of the form and distinctive properties of an ingredient entails the destruction of the ingredient itself.⁶⁹ Rather, in this case as in the other supposed cases of 'unions of predominance' identified by Wolfson, the lesser ingredient is completely destroyed and converted into the greater ingredient. No union takes place, nor less any mixture. Instead, each of the cases identified by Wolfson belongs to Aristotle's category of 'growth', in which one ingredient increases in magnitude while the other is utterly destroyed and converted into the growing ingredient.

This observation raises a number of *prima facie* problems for Wolfson's interpretation of Gregory's mixture Christology. First, Wolfson's argument rests on his claim that Aristotle views the above cases as kinds of mixture. Yet, as we have just established, Aristotle explicitly denies that cases of growth result in a mixture. A second difficulty lies in Aristotle's claim that the destruction of the lesser ingredient in cases of growth results in the increase of the predominant ingredient. Applied to the Christological union, this suggests that the conversion of Christ's humanity into divinity would result in the increase of his divinity. Yet this contradicts Gregory's conception of the divine nature as perfect and incapable of increase.⁷⁰

Still more, for Aristotle cases of growth result in the complete destruction of the lesser ingredient. This requirement renders the category of growth incompatible with Gregory's understanding of the Christological union, in which the continuing existence of Christ's humanity plays an important role. A consideration of some key passages from the *Theological Orations* will suffice to illustrate this point. In these passages, Gregory indicates that he views Christ's humanity, along with his human qualities, as surviving its mixture with the divine Word. The first passage I wish to discuss is Gregory's description of the incarnation in *Or.* 29.19:

⁶⁸ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 385.

⁶⁹ Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 66–7; Kupreeva, 'Aristotle on Growth', pp. 125–33.

⁷⁰ See, for instance, *Or.* 31.4: 'Indeed, what is divinity (θεότης) if it is not perfect (τελεία)? And how is it perfect (τελεία), if it is lacking (λείπει) something for its perfection (τελείωσιν).' Greek quotations from Gregory's *Theological Orations* (*Or.* 27–31) are from Paul Gallay (ed.), *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 27–31 (Discours Théologiques)* (SC 250; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978).

For the one who you now disparage was once above you. He who is now human was once incomposite. What he was he remained (διέμεινεν); what he was not he assumed (προσέλαβεν). In the beginning he is without cause—for what could cause God? But later he came to be through a cause: to save you O proud one, who scorn the divinity because he took on your thick materiality, and communicated with the flesh through the mediation of the mind, making lowly humanity to become God, because it was co-blended throughout (συνανεκράθη) with God, and became one (εἷς), the dominant part prevailing (τοῦ κρείττονος ἐκνικήσαντος), so that I might become God to the extent that he became man.⁷¹

Wolfson argues that Gregory's statement in this passage that Christ's divinity 'prevailed' (ἐκνικήσαντος) over his humanity indicates that Gregory understood the Christological mixture in terms of 'Aristotelian predominance', according to which (as has been shown above) Jesus' humanity would be converted into divinity and so destroyed.⁷² Yet Stoic and Neoplatonic theories of mixture also allow for one element to predominate over the other, since both Stoic and Neoplatonic accounts use the notion of mixture to explain the interaction between active and passive principles in a blend.⁷³ Moreover, Wolfson's interpretation does not fit the broader exegetical argument of this passage. In *Or.* 29.19 and the surrounding passages of this oration, Gregory is arguing that Christ's divine nature can be distinguished from the humanity he assumed, and that this distinction explains those passages of Scripture which appear to subordinate Christ. This distinction requires the continued existence of Christ's humanity, since Gregory is arguing that those passages of Scripture which appear

⁷¹ *Or.* 29.19.

⁷² Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 397.

⁷³ Indeed, Sorabji remarks that 'For the character of the mixture involved, one would expect orthodox believers in two natures to draw on Stoic, rather than Aristotelian theory. For the ingredients in a Stoic mixture persist actually, not potentially, and one can be dominant, as the divine nature was supposed to be, without obliterating the other.' Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 120. While Sorabji refers to Stoic mixture theory here, his observation equally applies to Neoplatonic mixture theory, since some Neoplatonic thinkers followed the Stoics in using the notion of mixture to explain the union of the soul and body in terms of the relation between active and passive principles in a blend (see above, p. 744, and also below, n. 114 and section IV).

to subordinate Christ in fact refer to Christ's activities as human rather than as God.⁷⁴

That Gregory believes that Christ's humanity persists in the Christological mixture is confirmed by his discussion of the Christological union in *Or.* 30.8. There, Gregory seeks to refute Eunomius' interpretation of John 20:17 ('I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'). In his *Apology*, Eunomius interpreted Jesus' use of the phrase 'my God' as indicating the creaturely status of the Son, since the Father is the Son's 'God', as he is for all other creatures.⁷⁵ In *Or.* 30.8, Gregory responds specifically to Eunomius' more developed argument in his *Apology for the Apology*, where Eunomius argues that Jesus' pairing of 'my God' and 'my Father' with 'your God' and 'your Father' in John 20:17 indicates that the Son has the same ontological status as his disciples:⁷⁶

[The passage 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, and my God and your God' indicates] that either, through the terms expressing the relationship, sharing of being between the disciples and the Father is simultaneously attested, or else the Lord himself is not directing us by this expression to sharing the nature of the Father; and just as the fact that the God over all is named 'their God' argues the servile status of the disciples, by the same argument it is conceded by these words that the Son is in servitude to God.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *Or.* 29.19 is thus a classic example of the pro-Nicene practice of 'partitive exegesis'; for further discussion of Gregory's exegetical argument in this and surrounding passages, see F. W. Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning: The Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 153–4; John Behr, *The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 349–52; Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, pp. 133–7; Andrew Hofer, 'Scripture in the Christological Controversies' in P. M. Blowers and P. W. Martens (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 463. As each of these authors observes, Gregory does not practice partitive exegesis by distinguishing between Christ's humanity and divinity as separate subjects, but rather by distinguishing between those passages which refer to Christ qua human and Christ qua God, thereby maintaining the unity of Christ as a single acting subject. Christ, as a single subject, possesses both human and divine properties, and so can act in human and divine ways.

⁷⁵ Eunomius, *Apology* 21.10–12; cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* 3.10.1.

⁷⁶ Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* 3.10.7.

⁷⁷ Eunomius, *Apology for the Apology*, ap. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* 3.10.8. Greek text is from Werner Jaeger (ed.), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* II (Leiden: Brill, 1952); translation is from Stuart Hall in Johan Leemans (ed.), *Gregory of Nyssa, Contra Eunomium III: An English Translation with Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 12th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Leuven, 14–17 September 2010)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

Gregory responds to Eunomius' exegesis of this passage thus:

'God' would be spoken not with regards to the Word, but with regards to the visible one (τοῦ ὁρωμένου). For how could there be a 'God' of the one who is properly (κυρίως) God? In the same way also, 'Father' is not spoken with regards to the visible one, but with regards to the Word. For indeed he was double: so that the one is properly (κυρίως) said and one is not properly (κυρίως) said by each. The opposite holds for us: for us, God is properly (κυρίως) 'God', but not properly (κυρίως) 'Father'.⁷⁸

Gregory first responds to Eunomius' claim that the phrase 'my God' indicates the creaturely status of the Son. He does this by distinguishing between the Word in its divine nature and the 'visible one': the phrase 'my God' is spoken from the perspective of the visible one, while the phrase 'my Father' is spoken from the perspective of the divine Word.⁷⁹ Thus, God is 'properly' (κυρίως) God of the visible one, that is, of Christ's humanity. Conversely, God is 'properly' Father of the divine Word. This distinction also explains the sense in which God is 'God' and 'Father' of the disciples. Just as God is 'properly' God of Christ's humanity but not 'properly' Father, so too God is 'properly' God of the disciples, but not 'properly' Father. Thus, the pairing of 'my God' and 'my Father' with 'your God' and 'your Father' does not indicate sameness of ontological status between the divine Word and his disciples, but between the disciples and Christ's humanity. Significantly, Gregory could not make this exegetical move had Christ's humanity not survived its union with the Word, since it is the fact that Christ is both human and divine that allows Gregory to distinguish two ways of interpreting the words spoken by Christ in John 20:17. For Gregory, then, Christ's humanity and divinity are preserved in the Christological mixture. Therefore, neither Wolfson's category of 'unions of predominance', nor the Aristotelian account of growth upon which it is based, suits Gregory's understanding of the Christological union.

⁷⁸ *Or.* 30.8.

⁷⁹ Gregory of Nyssa makes a similar argument in *Eun.* 3.10.2–6.

III. TWO CASES OF NEOPLATONIC MIXTURE: *Or.* 28.8 AND *Ep.*

101.37–45

Gregory's claim that Christ's humanity persists in the Christological mixture fits both Stoic and Neoplatonic accounts of mixture, since both of these regard mixture as a union in which the constituent ingredients survive along with their distinctive qualities. Further analysis is necessary, then, if we are to determine which of these accounts of mixture—if either—underpins Gregory's conception of the Christological union. In fact, Gregory clearly endorses a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture on two separate occasions: *Or.* 28.8 and *Ep.* 101.37–45. An analysis of these two passages will establish that Neoplatonic mixture theory has a place in Gregory's thought, and that Gregory makes use of it on at least one occasion to explain the Christological union. The next section will then establish the role played by Neoplatonic mixture in Gregory's conception of the Christological union as a whole.

3.1 *Gregory on Mixture I: Or.* 28.8

Gregory does not discuss the Christological union in *Or.* 28.8. Nevertheless, this passage is key to grasping his understanding of mixture, since in it Gregory provides an explicit discussion of philosophical theories of mixture as part of an argument against divine corporeality. Gregory begins his argument with the observation that Scripture claims that God fills the universe, before going on to argue that this claim is incompatible with the belief that God is corporeal:

How is God's 'pervading all' (διὰ πάντων διήκειν) and 'filling all' (πληροῦν τὰ πάντα) preserved, as it is written "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord' (Jer. 23:24) and 'The Spirit of the Lord fills the world' (Wis. 1:7), if God both circumscribes and is circumscribed. For either he goes through an entire vacuum (διὰ κενοῦ χωρήσει τοῦ παντός), and so our 'all' disappears—so that you might blaspheme God, making him both to be a body and to not possess that which he made—or else body will be in bodies (σῶμα ἐν σώμασιν ἔσται), which is impossible (ἀδύνατον). Or he will be weaved (πλακήσεται) and set alongside it (ἀντιπαρετεθήσεται),⁸⁰ as in the

⁸⁰ Here following the Maurist reading, instead of Gallay's emendation to ἀντιπαρεκαθήςσεται; see my discussion of this below.

mixing of liquids (τῶν ὑγρῶν μίγνυται), the one cutting (τέμνει), the other being cut (τμηθήσεται), which is an even more ridiculous old wives' tale than the atoms of Epicurus.⁸¹

For Gregory, the one who believes that God is corporeal must understand this scriptural claim in one of three ways: either (1) God fills the universe as body fills a vacuum; or (2) God fills the universe as body going through body; or (3) God fills the universe by being set alongside it, as in the mixing of liquids. While Gregory ultimately dismisses each of these explanations, his discussion is revealing with regards to his understanding of mixture.

To begin with, Gregory's rejection of explanation (2) reveals that he rejected Stoic mixture theory. In Peripatetic and Neoplatonic discussions of mixture, the language of 'body in bodies' (σῶμα ἐν σώμασιν), along with similar phrases such as 'body receiving body in itself' (σῶμα δεχόμενον σῶμα ἐν αὐτῷ) or 'body going through body' (σῶμα διὰ σώματος), is used to speak of the Stoic view of mixture as the interpenetration of material bodies.⁸² By claiming that it is impossible for body to be in body, then, Gregory repudiates the Stoic claim that material bodies can interpenetrate.

Gregory's discussion of explanation (3) also provides insight into his understanding of mixture. Gregory suggests that God fills the universe by being 'weaved (πλακῆσεται) and set alongside it (ἀντιπαρατεθήσεται), as in the mixing of liquids (τῶν ὑγρῶν μίγνυται)'. Scholars have long suspected that Gregory is interacting with Stoic mixture theory in these lines. In a piece published in 1938, Bernhard Wyss argued that these lines are concerned with the Stoic view that liquids are united by means of interpenetration when mixed together in a blend.⁸³ However, this interpretation does not fit with Gregory's use of the term ἀντιπαρατεθήσεται—'to set alongside'—a term which suggests juxtaposition rather than Stoic mixture, inasmuch as it speaks of objects lying alongside each other rather than interpenetrating each other. Therefore, Wyss suggested that ἀντιπαρατεθήσεται is a scribal error, and that this passage should read ἀντιπαρεκταθήσεται—'co-extended'—a word

⁸¹ Or. 28.8.

⁸² See, for instance, Plutarch, *Comm. Not.* 1077E, 1078B; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 5. 218.10 – 6. 220.12; 7. 220.23–24; Themistius, *in Phys.* 134.22–134.31; Philoponus, *in Phys.* 560.33–561.3.

⁸³ Bernhard Wyss, 'Gregorius Nazianzenus Or.28.8 (P. Gr. 36.36 a Migne)', *Hermes* 73 (1938), p. 360.

that better fits Stoic understandings of mixture. Subsequently, Lionel Wickham and Fred Williams noted that a Syriac translation of this oration preserved in a manuscript in the British Library (*Br. Libr., Add. 14549*)⁸⁴ reads ܡܠܝܚܐ —‘cleaving/adhering’⁸⁵—a reading which, they noted, could provide support for Wyss’s suggested emendation.⁸⁶ On the basis of these two studies, Gallay accepted Wyss’s emendation in his critical edition of the oration.⁸⁷

While I agree that Gregory’s reference to the mixing of liquids reflects philosophical accounts of mixture, Wyss’s suggested emendation should be rejected as lacking textual support. *ἀντιπαρεκταθήσεται* is not attested in the Greek manuscript tradition of this oration, which shows no variation on *ἀντιπαρετεθήσεται*.⁸⁸ Instead, Wyss must appeal to an outside source—namely, the fragments of Chrysippus—to support his substitution.⁸⁹ Yet this is hardly sufficient justification for amending the text of *Or.* 28.8. While the Syriac reading preserved in *Br. Libr., Add. 14549* could reflect an original reading of *ἀντιπαρεκταθήσεται*, the best Syriac witnesses⁹⁰ read ܡܠܝܚܐ ܡܠܝܚܐ —‘contrasted in opposition’—suggesting juxtaposition and therefore supporting the extant Greek reading of *ἀντιπαρετεθήσεται*.⁹¹ Wyss’s proposed emendation of *ἀντιπαρετεθήσεται* to *ἀντιπαρεκταθήσεται*, then, lacks robust textual support.

⁸⁴ For details of this manuscript, and other manuscript witnesses to Syriac translations of Gregory’s *Or.* 28, see Jean-Claude Haelewyck (ed.), *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni opera: versio syriaca. IV: Orationes XXVIII, XXIX, XXX et XXXI* (CCSG 65; Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. viii–xiii.

⁸⁵ *Or.* 28.8, Syriac *Versio Nova* (CCSG 65, p. 29).

⁸⁶ L. R. Wickham and F. J. Williams, ‘Some notes on the text of Gregory Nazianzen’s First Theological Oration’, *SP* 14 (1976), pp. 365–70, here pp. 369–70.

⁸⁷ Gallay, SC 250, p. 114.

⁸⁸ The only variation of *ἀντιπαρετεθήσεται* listed by Gallay is the apparent scribal abbreviation *ἀντιπαρεθήσεται*.

⁸⁹ Wyss refers to *SVF* fr. 479, while Gallay cites Wyss.

⁹⁰ The Syriac tradition of Gregory’s *Or.* 28 has come to us in three versions, the *Versio Antiqua* (*S1*), the *Versio Media* (*Sm*), and the *Versio Nova* (*S2*), of which *S1* is the oldest, followed by *Sm*, with *S2* thought to be the most recent. The reading ܡܠܝܚܐ, preserved in *Br. Libr., Add. 14549*, belongs to *S2* (CCSG 65, p. 29). *S1* and *Sm* both read ܡܠܝܚܐ ܡܠܝܚܐ (CCSG 65, p. 28). On the Syriac manuscript tradition for Gregory’s *Orationes*, see Haelewyck, CCSG 65, pp. v–vii.

⁹¹ Wickham and Williams recognized this variation in the Syriac tradition, noting that another manuscript in the British Library (*Br. Libr. Add. 17146*) reads ܡܠܝܚܐ ܡܠܝܚܐ. On this basis they concluded that the scribe who produced the translation preserved in *Br. Libr. Add. 17146* ‘clearly read *ἀντιπαρετεθήσεται*’; Wickham and Williams, ‘Some notes on the text of Gregory Nazianzen’s First Theological Oration’, p. 369.

In fact, the original reading makes perfect sense when we recognize that Gregory is here drawing on Peripatetic and Neoplatonic critiques of Stoic mixture theory. As Jean-Marie Mathieu has shown, Gregory's association of the mixing of liquids with juxtaposition reflects a line of criticism which alleged that material bodies divide each other when mixed together, and that the resulting compound was composed of imperceptible particles arranged in juxtaposition with one another.⁹² While Mathieu identifies this line of criticism as Neoplatonic, it seems to have appeared first in Peripatetic criticisms of Stoic mixture theory, being only later adopted by Neoplatonic thinkers such as Plotinus.⁹³

A passage from Alexander of Aphrodisias nicely illustrates this line of criticism. There, Alexander considers the possibility that blending occurs through the progressive division of bodies. Alexander argues that, even if the Stoics were to account for blending in this way, they still would not have true mixture by means of the interpenetration of bodies, but rather juxtaposition:

Furthermore, if blending (*κρᾶσις*) occurred through the constituents dividing (*διαρύντων*) one another (for blending occurs this way particularly in liquids because they are easily divisible (*εὐδιαίρετα*) and one [constituent] will easily pervade (*δέισει*) the other and divide it (*διαρύνει*), as we see in the case of wine poured into water and blended with it), then if the bodies dividing one another leave behind some mutually undivided parts, those would not be blended (for undivided parts must be unmixable and unmixed)—if, that is, blending and mixture qua blending occur by division and have this as their defining characteristic; thus blending would again occur by juxtaposition (*παράθεσις*) and certainly not through the bodies that have been blended pervading (*διηκόντων*) one another totally.⁹⁴

As Sorabji notes, and as Alexander himself seems to recognize, it does not seem that any Stoics actually believed that blending occurred through progressive division.⁹⁵ Nonetheless, this line

⁹² Jean-Marie Mathieu, 'Sur une correction inutile (Or. 28, 8, lignes 8–9 Gallay) et sur la critique néoplatonicienne de la *κρᾶσις* δι' ὅλον chez Grégoire de Nazianze', in Justin Mossay (ed.), *Symposium Nazianzenum II: Louvain la Neuve, 25–26 août, 1981* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1983), pp. 53–9.

⁹³ Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 102. That Gregory distinguishes this explanation of how God fills the universe from the notion of God filling the universe as body goes through body may indicate that he is aware that this is not what the Stoics actually teach.

⁹⁴ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 7. 221.25–34.

⁹⁵ Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 102.

of criticism became popular in later Neoplatonic thinkers, who argued that material bodies necessarily divide each other when mixed together.⁹⁶

I would like to suggest, in agreement with Mathieu, that this line of criticism lies behind Gregory's proposed third explanation in *Or.* 28.8 of how a corporeal God could fill the universe. This suggestion has the merit of being able to explain three otherwise peculiar features of the text as we have it. First, it explains Gregory's use of the verb *ἀντιπαρτεθῆσεται* to characterize the mixing of liquids, since according to this line of criticism, the result of mixing material bodies is a juxtaposition. Second, it explains Gregory's specific appeal to the mixing of liquids. For, in the passage quoted above, Alexander claims that the theory of progressive division pertains to liquids in particular. Finally, it accounts for Gregory's otherwise enigmatic remark that liquids in a mixture 'cut' (*τέμνω*) each other, a remark which makes sense in light of the Peripatetic and Neoplatonic line that material bodies divide each other when mixed together.

Gregory's adoption of this line of criticism, along with his explicit rejection of the Stoic view of mixture as the interpenetration of material bodies, suggests he holds either an Aristotelian/Peripatetic or a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture. Based on what we have seen so far, a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture seems to best fit Gregory's thought, since it allows for the survival of the constituent ingredients and their properties in certain cases of mixture, as Gregory does in the case of Christ. That Gregory's understanding of mixture follows broadly Neoplatonic lines is further suggested by the third feature of *Or.* 28.8 I wish to discuss here, namely, Gregory's tacit endorsement of the belief that material bodies can penetrate a vacuum. I repeat the relevant lines from *Or.* 28.8 here for convenience:

How is God's 'pervading all' (*διὰ πάντων διήκειν*) and 'filling all' (*πληροῦν τὰ πάντα*) preserved, as it is written "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord' and 'The Spirit of the Lord fills the world', if God both circumscribes and is circumscribed. For either he goes through an entire vacuum (*διὰ κενοῦ χωρήσει τοῦ παντός*), and so our 'all' disappears—so that you might blaspheme God, making him both to be a body and to not possess that which he made . . .⁹⁷

⁹⁶ See Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.7.1.23–33; also Proclus ap. Simplicium, in *Phys.* 612.16–17.

⁹⁷ *Or.* 28.8; for the continuation see above, at n. 81.

Gregory's appeal to the analogy of body going through a vacuum in this passage is significant, as it once more indicates his engagement with contemporary philosophical discussions of mixture. The question of whether body could penetrate a vacuum (κενόν) has its origins in Aristotle's objections against the notion of vacuum in his *Physics*.⁹⁸ While Aristotle most likely intended simply to oppose the notion of vacuous space, later Peripatetic thinkers, including Gregory's contemporary Themistius, applied Aristotle's argument to the question of mixture, arguing that a body and a vacuum cannot interpenetrate, since extension going through extension implies body going through body, a notion which the Peripatetic tradition rejected as absurd.⁹⁹

Neoplatonic discussions of mixture also engaged the question of whether a body could penetrate a vacuum. Notably, Syrianus argued that a body could go through a vacuum on the basis that vacuum is extension minus matter, while it is matter that prevents interpenetration:

It is not impossible in all cases for a couple of three-dimensional solids (στερεὰ) to be in the same place (ἄμα). In attending to this point, one should look not to the Stoics who allowed even material volumes (ἐνύλους ὄγκους) to pass through each other (χωρεῖν δι' ἀλλήλων), but should look rather to those who postulate that an extension (διάστημα) goes through the whole world and receives into itself the whole of corporeal nature.¹⁰⁰

Gregory endorses a position similar to that put forward by Syrianus. In contrast with the criticism of Stoic mixture theory which follows, Gregory does not here attack the notion that

⁹⁸ Aristotle, *Physics* 4.8, 216a26–b12; cf. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 76.

⁹⁹ Themistius, in *Phys.* 134.25–26, 31: 'If a body is in a vacuum, then an extension is in an extension (διάστημα ἐστὶν ἐν διαστήματι), for the body will not withdraw from the vacuum, and being in place is a property of body only when extended. But if extension is in an extension, then a body can also be in a body (σῶμα ἐν σώματι ἔσται) . . . But it would be odd for body to be in a body. So, it is also impossible for a body to be in a vacuum (σῶμα ἐν κενῷ εἶναι).' Greek text is from H. Schenkl (ed.), *Themistii in Aristotelis physica paraphrasis* (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, 5.2; Berlin: Reimer, 1900); translation from Richard Sorabji in Sorabji (ed.), *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200–600 AD: A Sourcebook*, vol. 2: *Physics* (London: Duckworth, 2004), p. 314.

¹⁰⁰ Syrianus, in *Metaph.* 84.28–33. Greek text is from W. Kroll (ed.), *Syriani in metaphysica commentaria* (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, 6.1; Berlin: Reimer, 1902); translation is from Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 112.

material body can penetrate a vacuum. Rather, he attacks this putative explanation of how God fills the universe on the grounds that it implies that the universe is a vacuum, and therefore non-existent. Gregory's argument thus rests on the tacit assumption that a material body can penetrate a vacuum. In this regard, he is closer to a Neoplatonic position, as represented by Syrianus, in allowing material bodies to penetrate immaterial extensions, than to the Peripatetic position as represented by Themistius.

The above analysis of *Or.* 28.8 allows us to draw three conclusions regarding Gregory's understanding of mixture. First, Gregory rejects Stoic mixture theory, understood as the claim that two material bodies may interpenetrate. Second, Gregory endorses the Peripatetic and Neoplatonic line of criticism that material bodies divide each other when blended. Third, Gregory seems to align himself with Neoplatonic accounts of mixture that allow for interpenetration in cases where one of the interpenetrating objects is immaterial—specifically, in this instance, the case of body going through a vacuum. Taken together, then, Gregory's remarks in *Or.* 28.8 suggest a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture. However, they do not provide a positive account of his own understanding of mixture, nor do they provide a discussion of mixture in relation to the incarnation. Gregory provides both of these in *Ep.* 101.37–45.

3.2 *Gregory on Mixture II: Ep.* 101.37–45

Ep. 101.37–45 provides Gregory's clearest endorsement of a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture in the context of his Christology. In this passage Gregory responds to Apollinarius' claim that Christ's human mind could not coexist with the divine Word.¹⁰¹ Against Apollinarius, Gregory argues that whereas material bodies cannot coexist in the same space, immaterial bodies can:

But there is no room (*ἐχώρει*), he says, for two perfect entities (*τέλεια*). Indeed there is not—if, that is, one investigates the matter corporeally (*σωματικῶς*). For a vessel holding one bushel cannot contain (*χωρήσει*) two bushels, nor can the space of one body (*σώματος ἑνὸς τόπος*) hold two or more bodies. If, however, one investigates the matter intellectually (*νοητὰ*)

¹⁰¹ Cf. Apollinarius, fr. 81: 'if God was joined to man as perfect to perfect (*τέλειος τελείῳ*), there would be two things (*δύο*), one the Son of God by nature (*φύσει*), the other by adoption (*θετός*).' Greek text and fragment numbering are from Hans Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule* (Tübingen, 1904; repr. Hildesheim, 1970), p. 224.

and incorporeally (ἀσώματα), one finds that one has in oneself room for (ἐχώρησα) soul, reason, mind, and the Holy Spirit. And before me, this universe—I mean that which is composed out of visible and invisible things—had room for the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. For the nature (φύσις) of intellectual things (νοητῶν) is such that they mix (μίγνυσθαι) with each other and with bodies incorporeally (ἀσωμάτως) and without division (ἀμερίστως).¹⁰²

In this passage, Gregory once again exhibits his familiarity with Peripatetic and Neoplatonic critiques of Stoic mixture theory. First, Gregory's concluding statement that intellectual natures can mix with each other and with bodies 'without division' (ἀμερίστως) suggests once more that Gregory endorses the Peripatetic and Neoplatonic view that material bodies divide each other when blended together. Second, Gregory's example of a vessel holding one bushel as incapable of containing two bushels appears to reflect what Sorabji terms the 'sea in a cup' objection.¹⁰³ According to this objection, if one ladleful of sea water added to a cup of wine coexists in the same place as the wine without increasing the volume of the overall mixture (since both bodies occupy the same volume),¹⁰⁴ then by the process of progressive mixture one could eventually fit the entire sea into a cup of wine. But the notion of the sea fitting into a cup of wine is absurd. Therefore, two bodies cannot exist in the same place. Gregory's assertion that a vessel holding one bushel cannot contain two bushels would appear to be a truncated form of the same objection. If two bodies could coexist in the same place, then a vessel possessing a volume of one bushel could contain two bushels worth of stuff, since each of these bushels would occupy the space of the other. But a vessel possessing a volume of one bushel cannot contain two bushels. Therefore, bodies cannot coexist in the same space.

¹⁰² *Ep.* 101.37–39. Greek quotations from *Ep.* 101 are from Paul Gallay and Maurice Jourjon (eds.), *Grégoire de Nazianze: Lettres Théologiques* (SC 208; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1974).

¹⁰³ Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 73, 101. This objection is found in Aristotle (*Phys.* 4.6, 213b5–12). Later commentators developed this objection and illustrated it with the image of the sea being contained in a cup; see, for instance, Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Anima* 20.8–15.

¹⁰⁴ Sorabji questions this interpretation of Stoic mixture theory arguing that the Stoics are not committed to the view that no increase of volume takes place in a mixture; Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, p. 101. Nonetheless, this objection was popular amongst late antique authors.

Yet, according to Gregory, while material natures cannot coexist in the same place, intellectual natures can. Gregory cites the coexistence of soul, reason, mind, and the Holy Spirit in the human being as evidence of his claim. This argument fits broadly with some Neoplatonic accounts of mixture. Indeed, we have already seen that a number of Neoplatonic thinkers argued that immaterial bodies are capable of interpenetration, while rejecting Stoic accounts of the interpenetration of material bodies. The fundamental logic of this understanding of mixture is expressed in Porphyry's claim that 'intelligibles (*νοητά*) are not impeded by bodies (*σωμάτων*), but pervade through the whole body (*διὰ παντός σώματος χωροῦντα*).'¹⁰⁵ Gregory's statement that 'the nature (*φύσις*) of intellectual things (*νοητῶν*) is such that they mix (*μίγνυσθαι*) with each other and with bodies incorporeally (*ἄσωμάτως*) and without division (*ἀμερίστως*)'¹⁰⁶ indicates that a similar underlying logic is at work in Gregory's account of mixture.

We can, however, be more specific. For, Gregory's account particularly resembles that of the later Athenian school, as reported by Syrianus.¹⁰⁷ Like Gregory, Syrianus argues that material bodies cannot interpenetrate, while affirming the interpenetration of immaterial natures. Although Syrianus writes a generation after Gregory, he does not claim his position to be original, but rather attributes it to a pre-existing philosophical tradition. Commenting on Aristotle's claim that 'it is impossible for two solids to coexist in the same place',¹⁰⁸ Syrianus refers to 'those who hold that simple (*ἀπλά*), immaterial (*ἄυλα*) bodies pass through each other (*χωρεῖν δι' ἀλλήλων*) without dividing each other (*ἀδιαιρέτως*)'.¹⁰⁹ He summarizes this position thus:

What they say is that it is absolutely impossible for two material (*ἐνυλα*) and resistant (*ἀντίτυπα*) bodies to occupy the same place (*τὸν αὐτὸν . . . τόπον*), but that immaterial (*ἄυλα*) bodies¹¹⁰ resemble the light emitted from different lamps which goes right through (*κεχωρηκόσι*) the whole of the same building (*διὰ παντός τοῦ αὐτοῦ οἰκήματος*), the light of each

¹⁰⁵ Porphyry ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 3.41.10–11.

¹⁰⁶ *Ep.* 101.39.

¹⁰⁷ Syrianus, in *Metaph.* 85.16–28.

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle, *Metaph.* 13.2, 1076b.

¹⁰⁹ Syrianus, in *Metaph.* 85.16–17.

¹¹⁰ For Syrianus, the term 'body' (*σῶμα*) refers to anything possessing 'extension' (*διάστημα*), regardless of whether or not it is enmattered; see Sorabji *Matter, Space and Motion*, pp. 111–13.

lamp passing through that of the other without being fused (*ἀσυνγχύτως*) or divided (*ἀδιαίρετως*). Even if someone wants to call the light incorporeal (*ἀσώματά*), it still has the same extension (*συνδιασπάντα*) as bodies and stretches with them over three dimensions, and nothing prevents the light of each lamp occupying the same place as that of every other and of the various bodies. The reason is none other than that the light of each lamp is simple (*ἀπλᾶ*) and immaterial (*ἄνυλα*) and is not divided (*μερίζεται*) or parted (*διαιρούμενα*), but is united with its source (*ἀρχῇ*) and so attached to it that it exists when it is shining, and departs when the source leaves.¹¹¹

Two features of above passage are noteworthy. First, Syrianus views the ability of immaterial natures to interpenetrate as, in part, a consequence of their indivisibility. He argues that multiple lamps can illuminate the same space because their light is ‘simple’ (*ἀπλᾶ*), ‘immaterial’ (*ἄνυλα*), not ‘divided’ (*μερίζεται*), and not ‘parted’ (*διαιρούμενα*), and therefore their light can interpenetrate the same space ‘without being divided’ (*ἀδιαίρετως*). Gregory adopts a similar stance when he notes that ‘intellectual things’ (*νοητῶν*) mix without ‘division’ (*ἀμερίστως*), suggesting he views indivisibility as one of the qualities of immaterial natures which enables them to interpenetrate.

The second noteworthy feature of this passage is the illustration of the interpenetration of immaterial natures using the image of multiple lamps lighting the same building. In *Ep.* 101 Gregory uses a near-identical image to describe the interpenetration of Christ’s human mind by his divinity. Having argued that intellectual natures may coexist in the same place, Gregory goes on to respond to Apollinarius’ more specific claim that two ‘perfect entities’ (*τέλεια*) cannot occupy the same place. Gregory’s response is twofold. On the one hand, Gregory implies that Christ’s human mind is only perfect relative to its species, not compared to his divinity. Thus, the union is not of two perfects, but rather of greater and lesser.¹¹² On the other hand, Gregory argues that two immaterial natures may coexist in the same place even when one is much greater than the other, as in the case of a human mind and divinity. In order to illustrate this point, Gregory uses the image of two lights, that of the sun and that of a lamp, lighting the same house:

¹¹¹ Syrianus in *Metaph.* 85.18–28.

¹¹² *Ep.* 101.41–5.

How, indeed, is the human or angelic mind perfect in comparison with divinity, such that the former is squeezed out (*ἐκθλιβῆ*) by the presence of the greater (*μείζωνος*)? For neither some light in relation to the sun, nor a small amount of moisture in relation to a river is such that one must first remove the former—the light of the building or the moisture of the earth—so that there might be room for (*χωρηθῆ*) that which is greater (*μείζω*) and more perfect (*τελεώτερα*).¹¹³

The logic of Gregory's analogy of the sun and the light of the house corresponds to that of Syrianus' analogy of multiple lamps lighting a single room. For Syrianus, the light of each lamp illuminates the same space without confusion or division by means of complete mutual interpenetration, such that the light of each lamp fully permeates and illuminates the whole house. Similarly, for Gregory, the light of the sun may illuminate the same place as the light of the building without destroying the lesser light, since the light of each interpenetrates so as to occupy the same space.¹¹⁴

Gregory's understanding of mixture in this passage stands in the same tradition we see later in Syrianus, which rejected the Stoic account of mixture as the interpenetration of material natures while allowing the interpenetration of immaterial natures. Hence, while material bodies cannot interpenetrate, the divine Word interpenetrates the human mind of Christ, since 'the nature of intellectual things is such that they mix with each other and with bodies incorporeally and without division.'¹¹⁵ While Gregory here appeals to Neoplatonic mixture theory to explain the union of the Word with Christ's human mind, the same understanding of mixture seems to underpin his account of the union of Word with Christ's flesh a few lines later in *Ep.* 101.49, where Gregory explains that Christ's human mind plays a mediatory function,

¹¹³ *Ep.* 101.40.

¹¹⁴ Gregory goes on to indicate that Christ's divinity predominates over his human mind, using the image of a small lamp and a large flame to illustrate the Christological mixture: 'when a small lamp comes near a great flame, it is neither destroyed (*ἀπόλλυται*) nor made visible nor divided; rather, it is wholly flame, since the predominant entity prevails (*ὅλον ἐστὶ πυρκαϊά, τοῦ ὑπερέχοντος ἐκκυκίσαντος*)'; *Ep.* 101.45; cf. Hofer, *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus*, p. 148. Gregory's image of a large flame predominating over a small lamp without destroying it also fits Neoplatonic mixture theory, since, as we shall see in the next section of this article, in relation to the deification of Christ's humanity, Neoplatonic mixture theory allows for the stronger element in a mixture to prevail over the weaker, transforming the weaker element without destroying it.

¹¹⁵ *Ep.* 101.39.

such that the Word's interpenetration of Christ's mind enables it to also interpenetrate Christ's flesh:

The Mind [viz. the Word] was mixed (μίγνυται) with mind (νοῦ), being closer and more akin, and through this—because it mediated (μεσιτεύοντος) between divinity (θεότητι) and thickness (παχύτητι)—with the flesh (σαρκί).¹¹⁶

Gregory's use of the language of mixture to speak of the Word's union with both Christ's human mind and Christ's flesh suggests he envisages the same model of union as applying to each. This move accords with his claim that intellectual things can mix with bodies as well as with other intellectual things. It also accords with Neoplatonic models of mixture. For, as we have already seen, Neoplatonic thinkers such as Plotinus use the notion of mixture to explain how immaterial natures penetrate material natures, such as when qualities penetrate matter, or when the soul penetrates the body. Here, then, Neoplatonic mixture theory not only explains how the Word was united to Christ's immaterial mind; it also accounts for the union of the Word with Christ's material flesh.

IV. NEOPLATONIC MIXTURE AND THE CHRISTOLOGICAL UNION

While the preceding analysis shows that Gregory draws upon Neoplatonic mixture theory on at least one occasion, we have not yet established the place of Neoplatonic mixture theory within his conception of the Christological union as a whole. In this final section, I will demonstrate that Gregory utilizes Neoplatonic mixture theory to explain two fundamental aspects of his Christology. First, Neoplatonic mixture theory provides Gregory with a way of explaining the unity and distinction of Christ's human and divine natures in a manner that supports his exegetical approach to Christological passages of Scripture. Second, Neoplatonic mixture theory explains how Christ's humanity is deified through its union with the divine Word.

As we observed in the second section of this article, Gregory counters Eunomian exegesis of passages which appear to indicate the lower ontological status of the Son by distinguishing between those passages which are true of Christ in virtue of his humanity from those which are true of him in virtue of his divinity. In *Or.*

¹¹⁶ *Ep.* 101.49; cf. *Or.* 2.23; *Carm.* 1.1.10.56–60.

30.8 Gregory appeals to the notion of the Christological union as a kind of 'co-blending' (σύγκρασις) in support of this practice. There, following on from his discussion of John 20:17, Gregory explains that the Eunomians fail to correctly interpret Christological passages of Scripture because they fail to recognize that Christ's two natures remain distinct within the Christological blend:

Indeed, this is the cause of the error of the heretics: the conjoining (ἐπιζευξίς) of the names (ὀνόματων), when the names overlap (ἐπαλλαττομένων) because of the co-blending (διὰ τὴν σύγκρασιν). The sign is this: whenever the natures (αἱ φύσεις) are distinguished (δύστανται) by conceptualization (ἐπινοίας), the names (ὀνόματα) are distinguished as well. Listen to what Paul says: 'The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory'. 'God' of Christ, but 'Father' of Glory. For, even though the two together are indeed one (εἷν), yet this is not in nature (φύσει), but in the meeting together (συνόδῳ) of these.¹¹⁷

According to Gregory, the 'co-blending' (σύγκρασιν) of Christ's human and divine natures causes the 'names' (ὀνόματα) proper to each to join together and overlap. The reason for this overlap is supplied towards the end of this passage, where Gregory states that the two natures come together in the Christological mixture to form 'one thing' (εἷν). Gregory's point, it seems, has to do with Christological predication: Christ's human and divine natures are co-blended such that they comprise a single concrete individual—Christ, the Word incarnate—and so the names proper to each nature are joined together in a single subject of predication (a fact which is reflected in Gregory's exegetical practice, since Gregory continues to treat Christ as the sole subject of all Christological passages even when he distinguishes between those which are proper to his human nature and those which are proper to his divine nature).¹¹⁸ Yet, even though Christ is 'one thing', we can nevertheless distinguish between those scriptural names of Christ which are true of Christ in virtue of his humanity and those which are true of him in virtue of divinity. We can do this because Christ's human and divine 'natures' (φύσεις) are preserved in the Christological blend such that we can continue to distinguish between them by means of 'conceptualization' (ἐπινοίας).

¹¹⁷ Or. 30.8.

¹¹⁸ Cf. above, n. 74, and further discussion below.

Gregory's argument, then, requires an understanding of *σύγκρασις* which allows him to consider Christ as truly 'one thing' while also maintaining the persistence of Christ's human and divine natures within the Christological blend. Neoplatonic mixture theory provides such an understanding. For, on a Neoplatonic understanding the interpenetration of two substances in a mixture or blend produces a unity in which the original substances and their qualities persist so long at least as one of the substances is immaterial, as is the case in the Christological union.¹¹⁹

While in *Or.* 30.8 Gregory appeals to the notion of the Christological union as a kind of 'co-blending' (*σύγκρασις*) primarily in order to support the practice of 'partitive exegesis', he elsewhere appeals to this way of conceiving the Christological union in order to support a single-subject approach to Christological exegesis. In his anathema against those who 'introduce two Sons' in *Ep.* 101.18–21, Gregory invokes the concept of mixture in order to show that Christ is 'one thing' (*ἓν*) and so cannot be divided into two subjects of predication:

If someone introduces two Sons, one from God and the Father, the second from the mother, and does not regard these as one and the same, they shall fall from the adopted sonship which is promised to those who believe aright. For while the natures (*φύσεις*) are two (*δύο*), God and human—since there is both a soul and a body—there are not two sons or two Gods. For, neither do we here have two humans, even if Paul refers to the inner and outer human. And, if I must speak concisely, the Saviour exists from 'one thing' (*ἄλλο*) and 'another thing' (*ἄλλο*)—if indeed the invisible and visible are not the same, nor the timeless and that which exists in time—but he is not 'one' (*ἄλλος*) and 'another' (*ἄλλος*)—certainly not! For both are one thing (*ἓν*) in the co-blending (*συγκράσει*), God having been humanized (*ἐνανθρωπήσαντος*) and humanity having been deified (*θεωθέντος*), or whatever one calls it.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Porphyry, for instance, calls the blend of body and soul an 'unconfused union' (*ἀσυγχύτως ἥνωται*) and 'one thing' (*ἓν*), while maintaining that both are preserved without undergoing 'alteration' (*ἀλλοίωσις*); Porphyry ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 3. 40.11–13. Stoic mixture theory would also support Gregory's argument in this passage. However, given his explicit rejection of Stoic mixture earlier in the *Theological Orations* (*Or.* 28.8), and his explicit endorsement of Neoplatonic mixture theory elsewhere in his corpus, we should identify the understanding of mixture in this passage as Neoplatonic rather than Stoic.

¹²⁰ *Ep.* 101.18–21.

Gregory's concern in this passage is first and foremost exegetical. His opponents—probably Diodore and his followers¹²¹—are practitioners of 'two-subject' exegesis. That is, they treat the divine and human natures of Christ as two separate subjects of predication, attributing Christ's divine experiences to the divine Son and his human experiences to the human nature he assumed.¹²² Specifically, Gregory here attacks the view that the divine Son was not the subject of Christ's human birth from Mary, a view which Gregory regards as treating Christ's human nature as a 'second Son'. This view contrasts Gregory's own approach to Christological exegesis, expressed a few lines prior to this passage in the letter, according to which 'one and the same' (ἐνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν) Son is subject of both Christ's human and divine predicates and experiences.¹²³ As in *Or.* 30.8, Gregory appeals to the image of 'co-blending' (σύγκρασις) in order to support his approach to Christological exegesis: against those who distinguish Christ's human and divine natures as two different subjects of predication, Gregory points out that the co-blending of these natures causes them to be 'one thing' (ἓν). And, as in *Or.* 30.8, Gregory's appeal to the notion of co-blending is best understood in terms of the Neoplatonic theory of mixture he explicitly advocates later in the same letter, since this understanding of mixture allows him

¹²¹ See Beeley, 'The Early Christological Controversy', pp. 397–400. Hofer agrees that Gregory probably has followers of Diodore in mind here, although he adds that the anathema may have 'broader relevance'; Hofer, *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus*, pp. 136–7.

¹²² Compare Gregory's remarks (again seemingly directed at Diodore and his circle) in *Or.* 22.13: 'God is dishonoured by the view that he was not born at all, nor nailed to the cross, and clearly was not buried nor rose again either—as certain wicked "Christ-lovers" think—but is only honoured here, where honour becomes dishonour, and as a result is cut or arranged into two Sons.' Greek text is from Justin Mossay (ed.), *Gregoire de Nazianze: Discours 20–23* (SC 270; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1980). See also Beeley, 'The Early Christological Controversy', pp. 396–7.

¹²³ *Ep.* 101.13–14: 'For we do not divide (χωρίζομεν) the human being from the divinity, but rather we confess one and the same (ἐνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν), who first was not man but God and Son alone before all ages, unmixed (ἀμυγῇ) with the body or anything bodily, but who, in the end, assumed humanity for our salvation—passible in flesh, impassible in divinity, circumscribed in body, uncircumscribed in spirit, the same one (τὸν αὐτὸν) both earthly and heavenly, visible and intellectual, contained and uncontained—so that the whole human being who had fallen from sin might be remade by this same one's whole humanity and divinity.'

to explain how the two natures come together to form one thing without obliterating the distinction between the natures.¹²⁴

Gregory's utilization of Neoplatonic mixture theory can also be seen in his claim that Christ's humanity is deified as a result of being blended with the divine Word. In *Ep.* 101.21, Gregory presents the deification of Christ's humanity and the 'humanization' of his divinity as parallel effects of their co-blending. More frequently, however, Gregory speaks solely of the deification of Christ's humanity as an effect of its union with his divinity in the Christological mixture.¹²⁵ Wolfson, Althaus, and Winslow each cite the motif of the deification of Christ's humanity as evidence of that Gregory conceives of the Christological union in terms of Aristotelian predominance.¹²⁶ Yet, as we have seen, Aristotelian unions of predominance cannot account for the continuing existence of Christ's humanity in the Christological mixture, a key feature of Gregory's account.

Hofer, recognizing this difficulty, argues that the Christological mixture is one in which Christ's humanity is 'transformed' without being destroyed.¹²⁷ For Hofer, Gregory's twin emphases on the preservation of Christ's humanity and its deification demonstrate that 'Gregory's own use of mixture terms for both himself and

¹²⁴ While Gregory's emphasis in this passage is on Christ's unity, he nevertheless maintains the ongoing distinction between Christ's human and divine natures, noting that the 'invisible and the visible are not the same' even when united together in the Christological mixture. Gregory makes a similar argument in *Or.* 37.2, where he once again invokes the notion of *σύνγκρασις* in order to oppose two-subject exegesis without compromising the distinction between the two natures.

¹²⁵ Gregory uses deification terminology (*θέωσις/θεόω, γίννομαι θεόν, θεόν ποιέω*, etc.) with reference to Christ's humanity on 16 occasions: *Or.* 29.19; *Or.* 30.3; *Or.* 30.14; *Or.* 30.21; *Or.* 38.13; *Or.* 39.16; *Or.* 40.45; *Or.* 45.9; *Ep.* 101.21; *Ep.* 101.46; *Carm.* 1.1.2.48; *Carm.* 1.1.10.61; *Carm.* 1.2.14.92; *Carm.* 2.1.1.16; *Carm.* 2.1.34.84; *Carm.* 2.2.7.165. In addition to this, Gregory frequently refers to the product of the Christological mixture as 'one God'; see, for instance, *Or.* 37.2; *Carm.* 1.2.1.149–154.

¹²⁶ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 397; Althaus, *Die Heilslehre des heiligen Gregor von Nazianz*, p. 131; Winslow, *Dynamics of Salvation*, p. 87.

¹²⁷ Hofer, *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus*, p. 120.

his Christ fit neatly into no single ancient model.¹²⁸ On the one hand, Aristotelian predominance by itself cannot support such an account, since it does not allow for the preservation of the weaker element in a blend (Christ's humanity);¹²⁹ on the other hand, the Stoic understanding of mixture 'is inadequate to capture his radical sense of transformation of the stronger prevailing over the weaker'.¹³⁰

A Neoplatonic understanding of mixture, however, can account for both the preservation of Christ's human nature and its deification. For, as Richard Cross has shown, Neoplatonic mixture theory allows for a communication of attributes to occur within a mixture.¹³¹ Specifically, Porphyry's account of mixture presents the stronger/active principle in a blend as imparting its attributes to the weaker/passive principle. The relevant passage forms part of Porphyry's discussion of the soul-body union, preserved by Nemesius. In this passage, Porphyry describes the soul-body union as a 'blend' (κρᾶσις) in which the soul remains 'unconfusedly united' (ἀσυνγύχτως ἥνωται) with the body while at the same time imparting life to the body.¹³² According to Porphyry, the soul pervades and 'dominates' (κρατεῖ) the body, allowing it to impart its own life and light to the body in the same manner that the sun imparts its light to the air:

¹²⁸ Ibid. In addition to the apparent discordance between these twin emphases in Gregory's Christology, Hofer cites the inappropriately materialistic understandings of mixture provided by Stoic and Aristotelian mixture theory, and the apparent absence of standard philosophical examples of mixture in Gregory's writings (such as the mixture of wine and water) as evidence that Gregory's understanding of mixture is not dependent on any particular philosophical model of mixture. Yet Neoplatonic mixture theory, since it is designed to show how immaterial natures are united with material natures or other immaterial natures, is perfectly appropriate for conceiving of the Christological union. Moreover, while Gregory does not use the standard Stoic and Aristotelian examples to illustrate his understanding of mixture, he does use Neoplatonic examples, as we saw in our discussion of *Ep.* 101.37–45 in the previous section of this article.

¹²⁹ Hofer, *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus*, p. 113.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 120.

¹³¹ Richard Cross, 'Perichoresis, Deification, and Christological Predication in John of Damascus', *Medieval Studies* 62 (2000), pp. 69–124, at pp. 90–95.

¹³² Porphyry ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 3.40.5–7: 'if soul, which is life, were to be changed (μετεβάλλετο) when blended (κράσει), it would be altered (ἡλλοιώθη) and would not still be life. But what would it contribute to the body unless it provided it with life? Therefore, the soul is not altered (ἡλλοιοῦται) with unification (ένώσει).'

For being incorporeal (ἀσώματος) it [the soul] has permeated [the body] throughout (δι' ὅλου κεχώρηκεν) as do things that have perished together with one another (συνεφθαρμένα), yet without perishing (ἀδιάφθορος) and <remaining> unconfused (ἀσύγχυτος), preserving itself as one (ἐν) and making the things in which it comes to be conform (τρέπουσα) to its life while not being transmuted (τρεπομένη) by them. For as the sun by its presence (τῇ παρουσίᾳ) transforms (μεταβάλλει) the air into light, making it light-like (φωτοειδῆ), and light is unified (ἐνοῦται) with the air, permeating (κεχυμένον) it unconfusedly (ἀσυγχύτως), in the same way the soul is unified (ἐνουμένη) with the body while remaining unconfused (ἀσύγχυτος), differing only in that the sun, being a body and circumscribed in place, is not everywhere that the light is . . . But the soul, being incorporeal and not circumscribed in place, occupies as a whole the whole of its own light and of its body, and there is no part to which it gives light in which it is not present as a whole (ὅλη πάρεστιν). For it is not dominated (κρατεῖται) by the body, but itself dominates (κρατεῖ) the body.¹³³

As Cross observes, Porphyry's conception of the soul-body union in this passage draws heavily on Stoic mixture theory: Porphyry makes use of the Stoic technical terms for 'blending' (κρᾶσις) and 'confusion' (σύγχυσις), and conceives of the soul-body blend as a relationship between active and passive principles, in which the active principle (the soul) pervades the passive principle (the body).¹³⁴ Unlike Stoic mixture theory, however, Porphyry's account allows for the weaker, passive principle to be transformed by the stronger, active principle, yet without being destroyed. This transformation occurs because the stronger element in a blend imparts

¹³³ Porphyry ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 3.40.19 – 41.4, 5–9.

¹³⁴ Cross, 'Perichoresis, Deification, and Christological Predication in John of Damascus', p. 93. Wolfson regards Porphyry's use of κρατεῖν ('to dominate') as indicating Aristotelian influence; Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 405. Against this interpretation, Cross notes that such a reading is not consonant with Porphyry's description of the soul-body union as a 'blend' (κρᾶσις), nor is it compatible with Porphyry's insistence that the body is not destroyed in the blend. By contrast, a Stoic background can account for Porphyry's view that the soul is dominant over the body while also allowing for the body's preservation in the blend. That Porphyry has the Stoic distinction between active and passive principles in mind is further suggested by description of the 'interaction' (συμπάθεια) between the soul and the body as the basis for their unity (Porphyry ap. Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 3.40.10–12), since according to Stoic mixture theory it is the interaction of active and passive principles that produces unity in a blend.

its own properties to the weaker element.¹³⁵ So, for instance, the soul imparts life to the body, while the sun imparts light to the air. While this brings about a change in the weaker element, it does not destroy it, since the weaker element does not lose its own natural properties but rather gains new properties from the stronger element. Moreover, the weaker element does not possess these new properties in its own right, but rather only possesses them insofar as the stronger element is present within it. The body only possesses life so long as the soul is present within it; when the soul is separated from the body at death, the body ceases to be alive. Likewise, the air only possesses light so long as the sun's light is present in it—should the sun's light cease to be present in the air (as at night-time or when the sun is blocked by a cloud), then the air will cease to be light and become dark.

Porphry's account of mixture supplies three principles pertinent to Gregory's claim that Christ's humanity is deified in the Christological mixture. First, Porphyry's account of mixture allows for one element in a blend to transform the other element without destroying it by imparting its own properties to the other element—as when, for instance, the soul which is blended with the body causes the body to become alive by imparting its own life to the body. Second, this transformation is brought about because one element in the blend dominates the other—as the soul dominates the body. Third, it is the 'presence' (παρουσία) of the dominant element within the weaker element that allows the weaker element to receive the properties of the stronger element. The body receives life from the soul because the soul is present in the body; when the soul departs, the body ceases to be alive. Gregory combines the first two of these three

¹³⁵ A Stoic understanding of mixture could, in theory, be conducive to a similar conception of the effect of the active principle on the passive principle. To take a classic Stoic example, when iron is pervaded by fire, the iron becomes hot in virtue of the fire present within it. Yet Stoic authors deny that either element—active or passive—undergoes change (μεταβολή) when blended together. As Cross puts it, 'In the case of a krasis of iron and fire, it is not properly speaking the case that the iron itself gains the attribute of heat, or that the fire gains an ability to cut. What both heats and cuts is the krasis of iron and fire, the composite whole that includes these two components. What heats is the fire, and what cuts is the iron.' Cross, 'Perichoresis, Deification, and Christological Predication in John of Damascus', p. 90. Strictly understood, then, Stoic mixture does not allow for any *communicatio idiomatum* to occur between the natures which have been blended together. Rather, there is a *communicatio idiomatum* on the level of the blend as a whole—each nature communicates its properties to the overall mixture, but not to each other.

principles in his remarks on the deification of Christ's humanity in *Or.* 29.19,¹³⁶ where Gregory attributes the deification of Christ's humanity to the fact that 'the dominant part prevailed' (τοῦ κρείττονος ἐκνικήσαντος), uniting the humanity with himself and causing it to become God. The third principle is echoed in Gregory's remarks on the deification of Christ's humanity in *Or.* 30.21:

He is 'Christ' because of the divinity, for this anoints the humanity. He is not sanctified by activity (ἐνεργεία) as in the case of all other anointed persons, but by the full presence (παρουσία . . . ὅλου) of the anointer. The result of this is that the anointer is understood to be human, while he makes the anointed God (ποιῆσαι θεὸν τὸ χρίόμενον).¹³⁷

For Gregory, the Christological title *Χριστός* denotes the fact that, in the Christological union, Christ's humanity is anointed by his divinity. This anointing is marked by two features. First, it occurs by means of the 'full presence' (παρουσία . . . ὅλου) of the divinity in the humanity—it is anointing by presence rather than by activity. Second, this anointing causes Christ's humanity to be deified. For Gregory, then, it is the presence of Christ's divinity in his humanity that causes it to become divine itself.

Recognition of a Neoplatonic background to Gregory's conception of the deification of Christ's humanity, as opposed to Aristotelian predominance, yields a significantly different understanding of what Gregory means by 'deification' in this context. Christ's humanity is not deified by being converted into divinity, such that he ceases to be properly human. Rather, Christ's humanity is deified in virtue of the presence of his divinity, which shares its own properties with this humanity without causing the humanity to lose its own distinctive properties, just as the body receives life from the soul without thereby ceasing to be a body. While Christ's humanity is truly deified, inasmuch as it truly shares in the properties of the divinity, it does not possess these properties in its own right, but only insofar as divinity is present within it. Such an understanding of deification fits with Gregory's insistence that Christ's humanity is preserved in the Christological mixture, while also concurring with Gregory's explicit endorsement

¹³⁶ Quoted above, p. 22.

¹³⁷ *Or.* 30.21.

of Neoplatonic mixture theory as a model for the Christological union in *Ep.* 101.37–45. Given this, there is no need to conclude, as Hofer does, that Gregory's conception of the Christological mixture fits 'no single model'. For a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture can explain both the preservation of Christ's humanity within the Christological mixture, and its deification.

CONCLUSION

Gregory's account of the Christological union becomes clear once we recognize the philosophical theory upon which it draws. As we have seen, Gregory conceives of the Christological union in terms of Neoplatonic theories of mixture. For Gregory, Christ's humanity and divinity are united by means of mutual interpenetration. As a result of their mutual interpenetration, Christ's humanity and divinity are truly united so as to be 'one thing' (ἓν).¹³⁸ At the same time, a Neoplatonic understanding of mixture accounts for the persistence of Christ's humanity and divinity in the Christological union, since according to Neoplatonic mixture theory immaterial natures can interpenetrate both material and other immaterial natures without causing themselves or that to which they are united to undergo change, division, or destruction. This conception of the Christological union in turn supports Gregory's approach to Christological exegesis, since it is the preservation of each nature in the union that enables the exegete to distinguish those scriptural 'names' which refer to Christ's humanity from those which refer to his divinity, while nevertheless referring these back to a single subject of predication. Finally, Neoplatonic mixture theory helps explain how Christ's humanity is deified by the presence of his divinity without thereby being destroyed. Christ's humanity is deified by the presence of his divinity, which, as the dominant principle in the Christological union, imparts its own properties to the humanity, just as the soul imparts life to the body. By explaining how Christ's humanity and divinity can be both truly united and distinct—since they interpenetrate each other intact—while also allowing for the deification of Christ's humanity, Neoplatonic mixture theory supplies the fundamental logic for Gregory's conception of the Christological union.

The distinctiveness of Gregory's approach to the Christological union is best appreciated through comparison with other early

¹³⁸ *Or.* 30.8.

Christologies. Gregory was not alone in deploying philosophical conceptions of mixture to explain the Christological union. Indeed, Christologies of mixture appear to have been commonplace in the third and fourth centuries, with figures including Irenaeus, Origen, Apollinarius, and Gregory of Nyssa all speaking of the Christological union as being a 'mixture' or 'blend'.¹³⁹ Unlike Gregory, however, these authors depended primarily on Stoic mixture theory to explain the Christological union.¹⁴⁰ Gregory's utilization of Neoplatonic mixture theory, then, renders his account of the Christological union distinctive amongst early Christologies of mixture.

When compared with Christologies of mixture which utilized Stoic mixture theory, Gregory's utilization of Neoplatonic mixture theory possesses certain advantages. First, Neoplatonic

¹³⁹ See, for instance, Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.4; Origen, *Princ.* 2.6.3; Apollinarius, frs. 127–8; Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* 3.3.

¹⁴⁰ On Irenaeus' mixture Christology, and its indebtedness to Stoic mixture theory, see Briggman, 'Irenaeus' Christology of Mixture', along with his expanded treatment of the subject in *God and Christ in Irenaeus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), ch. 4. On Origen's utilization of Stoic mixture theory to explain the Christological union, see Henry Chadwick, 'Origen, Celsus, and the Stoa' *JTS*, os 48 (1947), pp. 34–49, at pp. 39–40. Wolfson argues that both Apollinarius and Gregory of Nyssa conceive of the Christological mixture as a 'union of predominance'; Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, pp. 397–9, 433–44. I find Wolfson's treatment of these two figures to be unconvincing for the same reasons that render his treatment of Gregory Nazianzen untenable, given that his treatment of all three rests on his defective account of so-called 'unions of predominance'. R. A. Norris has suggested that Apollinarius' understanding of mixture may have been partially influenced by Neoplatonic mixture theory, citing as evidence Apollinarius' claim that part of the soul remains 'unmixed' in its union with the body; R. A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 106–7. At the same time, Stoic mixture theory appears to have been the primary influence on his conception of the Christological union, as may be seen in his use of the Stoic analogies of the union of iron and fire and the mixture of water and wine to illustrate his conception of the Christological union as one in which Christ's humanity and divinity retain their own 'qualities' (ποιότητες); see Apollinarius, frs. 127–8 (Lietzmann, p. 238); compare the use of these analogies in Arius Didymus, fr. 28, ap. Stobaeum, *Eclogae* 1.17.4. Likewise, Gregory of Nyssa's insistence that the 'distinctive qualities' (ιδιώματα) of Christ's humanity and divinity are preserved in the Christological mixture and his use of the Stoic analogy of a drop of vinegar mixing with the water of an ocean suggest his reliance on a Stoic understanding of mixture; see Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* 3.3.62–63, 68; cf. Anthony Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa* (The Early Church Fathers; London: Routledge, 2009), p. 48, with p. 147, n. 43; Morwenna Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa: Ancient and (Post)Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 98 ff. For the Stoic analogy of a drop of vinegar in the ocean, see Plutarch, *Com. Not.* 1078D–E.

mixture theory pertains to the union of immaterial, intelligible natures with material natures or with other intelligibles and so provides a more appropriate model for understanding the incarnation, in which the immaterial divine nature is united to a material human body and an immaterial human mind. Second, by framing his account in terms of Neoplatonic mixture theory, Gregory is able to avoid some of the more controversial metaphysical commitments entailed by Stoic mixture theory—most notably, the contentious claim that two material bodies can occupy the same place at the same time. Given these considerations, I suggest that Gregory's Christology represents one of the most sophisticated of the early Christian attempts to articulate the Christological union as a kind of 'mixture'. At any rate, Gregory's distinctive approach to the notion of Christological mixture marks him out as a skilful adaptor of theological tradition, capable of using the insights of contemporary philosophy to reconfigure—and arguably improve upon—traditional theological models.