

The philosophic paradigm as basis for early Christian doctrine of God's immanence

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Abstract: In philosophy of religion the term of Immanence is mostly applied to GOD in contrast to the divine Transcendence. This relation, as we will see here, it is not far from the truth since one cannot be without the other, however they are not to be put in contrast, but in conjunction. The one-sided insistence on the immanence of God, to the exclusion of His transcendence, leads to Pantheism, just as the one-sided insistence upon His transcendence, to the exclusion of His immanence, leads to Deism. These two can be separated, but the consequences are great for human knowledge and society; it is the two taken together that result in, and are necessary to Theism. But from the least complicated idea that even the name of God is a manifestation of His immanence contrasting with Deus absconditus, whose existence and name cannot be known or thought, theology and religion in general need to regard immanence of God as crucial for the acts of worship. What are the philosophical background for Christian theology to imply the immanence characteristic for God's existence related to His creation? – This is the main question the present work tries to answer as an overview.

Key words: *immanence, God, worldly, religion, pantheism, deism, theism, philosophy, indwelling, omnipresence, differentness, to pervade,*

I. INTRODUCTION ABOUT PHILOSOPHIC IDEAS ON IMMANENCE

Immanence? This is maybe the most interesting tool any religion would like to have at its reach and, moreover, all religious people would enjoy having ... Immanence would give them the confirmation of their belief; a worldly presence of God or anything from 'above' is totally the embodiment of religion main desideratum: God among His believers. Certainly this desideratum is a belief every religion has in its core doctrine, but unfortunately all these ideas about man cohabiting with his Creator are not aiming for this world, but for 'another' one. This cohabitation is mostly possible in the after-life, for numerous reasons, each highlighted by one religion or another; e.g. the world is unworthy of God's presence, man cannot see God and live, man-world are sinful, man has to become more than that, a spiritual, enlightened

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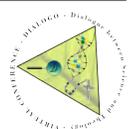
being in order to cohabitate with God, etc. Still, all these are maybe additional reasons besides what we can call as the main argument of all: God is transcending to this world and He cannot be incarcerated into any form of this world. 'God', as we all call the entity that have created heaven and earth, even if It is worshiped for this act of creation – and such act of devotion, gratitude and recognition is a normal one, found also to animals or plants – It is also a different, outa worldly being, one that stands against anything we know and can imagine in analogy with this universe. The crucial difference between God-the Creator and Its creation is that He cannot be as His creation, due to the fact that he makes everything in or out of him. Either way we cannot be as He is; being inside Him, makes Him larger – and we already know that quantum's laws differ from a superior level of existence to a lower one; being outside of Him, this also leave us existential different to what is out there. See, the problem in all these myriad of speeches and assumptions is that always HE is out of the world, indefeasible, peremptory, conclusively beyond everything our reach, mindly, physically or cognitively. What is more devastating for religious people is that philosophers assert that God has to be different in any kind from us, therefor even spiritual we cannot 'touch' His presence or understand His existence. But, in this case, religion became utterly superfluous: it has no sense in loving, talking and praying to a God that is so emphatically different from what we (can) know. Moreover, the moral itself stands on a thicker ground since a dialogue between man and his supposed Creator is in fact impossible. The morality without revelation is merely the man's projection of his thinking and imagination; there is no "way" of serving God and live after His Commandments if none is capable of communicating with the other: Neither God, nor man can talk, listen or feel the other one in any possible way. The sentiment of gratitude is the only, lastly reason for religion's existence, but it is not enough for making any discussion, debate or assumption that one religion is better than the other, since none has the ability and real possibility of making contact with the Creator.

And also, facing the plethora of religious acts of faithfulness cannot make this peremptory-different-God nothing else but an impuissant spectator – no guidance, no rewarding, and no communion. Furthermore, by the doctrine of divine immanence religion fashions "its terminus a quo—the doctrine which beholds God first of all present and active in the world, and sees in natural law not a possible substitute for Him, but the working of His" [1].

Through this blinded road of neglecting immanence as godly characteristic we are but doomed to a fortuitous, haphazard life – either believing or denying God (as principle of existence) without His indwelling into our world and life we cannot have a right way of living it . Immanence? – Indeed, religion would be utterly incomplete without it. On the other hand Christianity is a religion emerged at the edge of two influential culture, Judaism and Hellenism. Even if its system of thinking and expressing its belief was almost entirely influenced by philosophy, the core of it was directed by revelation and faith in Christ as Son of God, so we cannot ever assume that Christianity is just another system of philosophical thinking in combination with spiritual presumptions. What we can presume in this regard is that the Church Fathers have been influenced by philosophy of the moment in major parts and this makes a considerable philosophical background for the Christian creed. How do we see this 'philosophical background'? For sure this influence was not intended to make them believe in a certain god; in return they used the philosophical conceptions and system of thinking to structure the mental visualization of God they had already believed in. This is the aim of the present paper, showing the philosophical background of Christian early thinking of God's immanence.

II. PRELIMINAR REASONS FOR TAKING ON THIS TOPIC

In order to speak about God's immanence we should understand first few preliminary elements and the way in which they are accepted by the



philosophical thinking. While in modern world 'religion' is thought as „a detachable aspect of personal (and even of national) identity... as something largely personal or private” [2], a problem of if you believe or not, in antiquity religion was a structural, axiological function and the only question was who to believe in, show respect for and devotion to one deity or another. The choice of a certain deity was driven by the self-conceptualization of the world-mand deity relation, but the sentiment of worship was almost ontological to everyone; not-believing was an act of denying your-self as human and being. That is why denying other's belief was not a usual conduct in that world filled with gods, one for every particular side of life and worshipping a single god was also unacceptable. Only with Christianity spread came the Judaist pretention of a one, single-existent and absolute God, and the denial of any other conceived divinity. Started as a cult of ethnical designation, Christianity had the spirit of minority, casted and rejected group, and this had many things to say about their way of living, believing and worshipping their only existent God.

A rational reproof was made that theology – as a rational discourse on the nature of divinity – was not conceived “in temples or around altars, but within the ancient academy” [3], as a special branch of philosophy, and this give philosophers the right to treat theology as their doing and rightful activity, not to one of religious thinkers – “First Philosophy, Theology, or as we call it Metaphysics” [4]. “God” can be either a divinity to be worshiped or “a concept as a part of a larger, ideally coordinated and rational system” [5]. The difference – for as far as we are concerned – between these two ways of thinking God, while the later tends to be “radically stable and transcendent, immaterial, perceptible only through mind”, the first needs to be incorporated, necessarily immanent and sensibly touchable to become an object of worship. And, to be honest, there is no (concept of a) 'God' for philosophers that deserve to be worshiped, just as well as for believers there is no need for any conceptualization to believe and

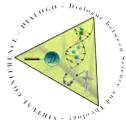
worship God.

III. PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUNDS OF EARLY CHRISTIAN THINKING OVER IMMANENCE

Historically speaking early Christianity may be described by a parallel series of influence. “The Roman world provided the outer circle – the governmental, legal, and economic context. The Greek world provided the cultural, educational, and philosophical context. The Jewish world was the matrix of early Christianity, providing the immediate religious context” [6], obviously the greatest dependence it ever had, and so on. From all these backgrounds I have chosen the cultural one, which conducted the Church Fathers to understand and express God as a being immanent to world-creation. Of course this is not enough to explain and defend the truth and validity of Christianity as a 'way of worship' Christ, and not aiming to transform it into a solid, rational and sober explanation of the concept of 'God'.

In order of explaining the terminology most important it is to find out how is actually understood the immanence in philosophy in order to see if this concept fits the conception of God of the Christian faith, biblical and patristic. Immanence, meaning “existing or remaining within” generally offers a relative opposition to transcendence, that which is beyond or outside.

Immanent (Latin *in manere*, to remain in) is the quality of any action which begins and ends within the agent. Thus, the vital action, as well in the physiological as in the intellectual and moral order, is called immanent, because it proceeds from that spontaneity which is essential to the living subject and has for its term the unfolding of the subject's constituent energies. It is initiated and is consummated in the interior of the same being, which may be considered as a closed system. [7] This understanding over our material world in general raises a set of legitimate questions, such as is this system so shut in as to be self-sufficient and incapable of receiving anything from without? — or can it



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enrich itself by taking up elements which its environment offers and which are at times even necessary, as nourishment is to the immanent activity of the body? This is the problem which the philosophies of immanence propose and attempt to solve, not only in respect to man considered as a particular being, but also in respect to the universe considered as a whole. It is, indeed, with reference to this latter aspect that the controversy arose in ancient times and it have never ended with a solid, proper and universal accepted solution since the answers came from metaphysics and theology, fields ambiguous and suspicious of subjectivity.

A. The term of "immanence" in various ancient philosophical views

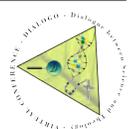
For the ancient philosophy everything stood under the sign of becoming and of the existential movement; for **Parmenides** (510- ... BC) "nothing is a unit and something in itself, you could never assign precisely something, in any way it would be... for there is never anything, but it always becomes" [8]. In this context the many questions raised by philosophers - e.g. There is something else than the world that becomes? There is something to be, i.e. which is always the same? If not, could we know something in-itself? and so on - have created all necessary conditions to postulate something's still, eternal, transcendent and yet remaining in all things. There is this something universal, equal to itself and immutable, which should be the benchmark both for a true and accurate knowledge (epistemology), as for the being itself and for the existence of everything budding (ontological).

Because things and phenomena in our world were perceived as both contradictory and opposing - especially to man - all these observations led to the conclusion that the world is led by a certain relativism, and the elements of the universe are in a constant battle. **Heraclitus** (535-480 BC) believes that all these opposites are necessary, in spite of the discordant forces between them, and that this fight is creative, being immanent to the universe.

He calls this balance the "invisible harmony of the universe", which it considers "stronger than the visible" one. Heraclitus opens understanding to transcendent compared and connected with the immanent world speaking of the One as divine and wise: "The One, the only wise, wants and does not want to be called by the name of Zeus." Divinity is the universal reason (Aoyog), the universal law immanent in all things that raises all things into an imitation, and causes permanent change in the universe according to universal law [9]. This conception of a universal ordinator-of-all Reason will appear in the system of Stoics' thinking, who borrowed ideas of their cosmology from Heraclitus. [10]

But before Heraclitus, **Thales** (625-545 BC) states that "all are full of gods", i.e. a plural, mobile divine, with contradictory manifestations, sublime or ridiculous, understood to be present everywhere, immanent to the world and its phenomena, boundlessness in their diversity. [11] No one will be able to detach from this assumption of divine omnipresence in things, beings and phenomena, since until Aristotle it had represented the being of which and in which all are made. The conception of the divine transcendence was not clear yet, so the remanence of the divine being in all things, designed for the moment to be conceived only in its immanence side, was considered as a pantheistic conception and philosophy that has conceived it as a naturalist-animist one.

Pythagoras (570-500 BC) moves the gravity center of the visible world on the shoulders of material elements - water, fire, earth - on a more harmonized element of the world, found in all the observable structures, more abstract even than apeiron, the number. Through this abstracting and replacement of the use of the "components for defining the physical universe (water, air, fire), or with indeterminate mixture of them (apeiron), but with quantitative abstraction par excellence - the number - associated with quantitative proportions corresponding to harmony" [12] a new dimension of the transcendence become visible.



Along with **Socrates** (470-399 BC) the immanent principles of the world gained more importance. In a dialogue with the priestess Diotima Socrates is challenged to show whether the sheer beauty belongs to the things or is only assigned by others? In other words is this beautiful, the absolute essence of beauty, an essence “separate” from things or not? Coming through the interpretation of Plato’s, the explanation assumes that this key-beautiful is not only a simple concept, but has objective reality [13]. But this debate gave birth to the coexistence of transcendent and immanent, in the way that the Beautiful itself or the beautiful absolute is “separate” as it is real, subsisting, not in the sense that there is a world of its own, spatially separated from things. Thus, according to the essence of Plato, beauty is a reality beyond the subjective reality of the abstract concept – a subsistent reality, genuine and independent from particular. But, according to the same theory, if the essence of platonic is real, it must be somewhere, but not it is within us – as a result of perception and contemplation of ours, because this reality does not disappear with our disappearance – it is in fact within the flower that exists outside us. In other words, it is both transcendent and immanent, inaccessible to senses, perceived only by the intellect.

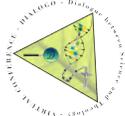
B. The debates between the two principles in „the problem of universals” [14]: The transcendent divinity and its immanent critic

When it comes to the Good as a principle of existence, **Plato** (428-348 BC) develops his realistic position about the subsisting essences, “separate” or transcendent. “We should not assume that Good exists as an object among objects, like the sun exists as an object among other objects.” On the other hand, because Plato states it clear that Good gives existence to the objects of knowledge and, as such, the unifying and all-inclusive principle of essential order - while he himself goes even beyond essential being in dignity and power - it is impossible to conclude that good it is a simple concept or even a non-existent purpose, a teleological principle,

however unreal, to that everything is tending: it is not only an epistemological principle, but also - in a sense somewhat unclear - an ontological principle, a principle of being. Therefore, it is real in itself and subsistence [15]. “This is the reason why Eastern Christians theologians have been seduced into platonic thinking more than the Aristotelian did, when they explained the presence and involvement of God in the created world (Sf. Gregory of Nyssa, Sf. Maxim the Confessor, Dionysius, Sf. Justin the Philosopher († 165), Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria († 215-216), the great Alexandrine theologian Origen († 254), Methodius of Olimp († 311)) [16].

In the debate on (1) the link between being (general) and things (concrete) and (2) the (final) form of a thing, both these two great philosophers came with an own theory by which they were made familiar and remained noted in the history of philosophy. The One, the Good and the Beautiful are essentially identical for Plato, and the intelligible world of forms owe their being somehow to the One. The One itself, though immanent to the forms, is transcendent in that it cannot simply be identified only with forms, for it was „the Platonic belief in preexistence of Forms and παραδειγματα the basis of which the particular things of the empirical universe had been fashioned, together with the biblical belief, at any rate concerning the fashioning of humanity, that God made man in accordance with his own image and likeness” [17].

Here is born this idea of universal (forms) which, although they intellectually have as support for knowledge the contact, sensitive items, they do not reside in them, but over-exist or they have subsistence for themselves. Between the two “worlds”, separate existences, there are an inseparable link, at least in regard of the sensitive objects participating through imitation to the world of ideas. Thus arose Plato’s theory of Forms, but it has placed them, which are the cause of the essence of things (and, in a way, the very cause), outside the things whose essences are [18]. Through the use of terms like “imitation” and “participation”,



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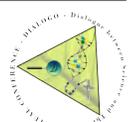
namely Plato clearly suggests the existence of a certain formal immanent element, a principle of relative stability in the material things [19]. Contrariwise, Aristotle disagrees with his teacher on these forms that are not fully explained in the Platonic theory regarding their relationship with the things themselves. Moreover, Platon by *chorismos* (Greek = separation), avoided to point the realization of the form or essence immanent of the Good as the final cause of material substance. Therefore, along with Aristotle we have before a deeper understanding of the wealth and merits of the material world, because, through his doctrine of substantially immanent, he is trying to achieve a synthesis of the realities of the One and the Multiple – to a multiplicity of elements within a species being found its unity in the possession of a specific similar form, although this ID is not a numerical one. [20]

Disagreeing with this separation – between the beautiful thing, concrete, individual and absolutely beautiful, seen by Plato as a true subsistence – **Aristotle** (384-322 BC.) presents the essence (form) as immanent to things. Noting the paradox of understanding and life – that science has as its object the universal, but nature is, effecting immediately and directly, made up of individual things or individuals: e.g. the medical science considers the "generic man", but the one who actually suffers and should be cured it is not the "Man" but only Socrates or Callias or Maria [21] – in essence Aristotle definitively links the essence and the forms of being with the substance of things.

The Being (οὐσία) is what the thing is in himself, is the 'what-is-it' of the think, instead the form (εἶδος) is both the configuration of the thing, and also its teleological cause, the purpose toward which it aims and is made for [22]. This way the (final) form of the thing is immanent to it because this is the ontological goal toward which aims and by whom is attracted for the fulfillment of the purpose of which it was created (e.g. the pupa of a butterfly has the potency to fly). It is true that there may be a lot of accidental factors that disrupt or stop the thing to reach its

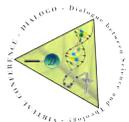
final form, but that does not mean he was not attracted to it, so Aristotle believes that this form is included as virtuality (δύναμις) or potency in each individual's matter, and the force with which it is drawn toward the fulfillment of its purpose, to the update of the latent potencies (ἐνέργεια) is just the need of the thing to attain its immanent perfection (εντελέχεια). „Only in the act itself (en energeia) is the thing perfect. The goal toward which the activity moves is the entelechy (complete reality) of the thing.” [23] Thus the attraction towards perfection is kept together with countless cases of unexpressivity of the update virtuality: “Each thing seeks its destiny, achieves its purpose, becomes what it is, and, to some extent, achieve its full form.” [24] There is a goal toward which everything is moving – for example an acorn to become an oak.

Nevertheless Aristotle foresees the Being - inseparable from matter - as having the quality of being transcendent (χωριστόν), to be separate, to become autonomous from the rest – free from accidental individualized agents – of matter. The Matter, in Aristotle's conception, is a full virtuality, because it can become anything, without being in a determined way, nothing. Ontologically speaking, matter can exist separate from properties, forms and updates; epistemologically though, it cannot be perceived or known detached from any form due to its indeterminacy. Only in union with a form (σύνολον, the individual compound) may matter be the subject for knowledge, but even this knowledge is not complete, because, out of the final perfect shape updated, the intermediate steps are not the essence of Being, but what it can be known under the incidence of present and sensation. But these contextual knowledge do not define the individual, but they lead it to the fulfillment of its ultimate, immanent form; the contextual steps are not essentially immanent, but accidental, external, circumstantial. Το τι ην ειναι („ce-este-lucrul-în-sine“, the essence, quod quid erat esse, what a thing was to be) will bring serious and fervent discussions on a certain aspect of theology, later



so controversial and almost impossible to reach with mind: how could the divinity (transcendent, or at least different) “mix” (blend) with the material, contingent and perishable world? How could (divine) things that exists outside the sensitive and even ration, mingle with them? What bond may exist between them? Plato tried to explain using terms like “participation” or “imitation”, but Aristotle replies that “to declare the forms as models <παραδείγματα> and say that other things participate in them means utter empty words and to call for poetic metaphors” [25]. The answer is not of simple type because the consequences are equally demanding in both cases. Whether we accept the Aristotelian assumption and say that forms (beings things) are not separate from things or the Platonic idea that forms are models of sensory things, we will end up either taking pantheism or deism. The compromise conclusion would be to find / postulate an agent to trigger the movement of things participating to the eternal forms. Without the existence of such agent things participating to the eternal forms remain void of becoming. Lucretius (Lucretius, 99-55 i.Hr), for example, would consider that Nature had provided her own immanent “model for creation”, so that the “pattern for making things” was not to be attributed any longer to divine agency of some sort, much less to what Ovid called “the providence of God” [cura dei], even if this phrase is taken as an “almost impersonal conception of the ‘Creator of the world.’” [26] For Aristotle, however, this agent is the νους (ποιητικός) or the “active intellect”; it, although belonging to the divine, is equal transcendent (it has to think about itself, or it would not be perfect), as well as immanent to creation, helping it to consciously strive towards an ideal benchmark [27]. Another idea, adjacent to this one, is that “the Divinity of nous is not a melancholy evocation of an immemorial past, when man had lived in familiarity with gods (cf. Plato, Philebus. 16 c), but instead (is) his effort to find his lost origin, in other words the future of man always open, consisting of mimic the divinity, perfecting himself and the world around them” [28]. However, it extends in a pantheistic

evaluation as shown by the religious method of contemplation. “Contemplation, the perfect expression of life and human happiness, by which man reaches divine heights, is not hence, in Aristotle’s ethics, an activity projected in a world of transcendence”, but the act exclusively rational, which, realizing the coincidence with his intellect, man access to his full humanity, “even if, paradoxically, being truly human is to update what is divine in him” [29]. Aristotle’s conception of a ‘God’ was affected by his understanding over universe. While the universe is perfect, everlasting and human centered, his „God” was a part of the structure of reality, at its pinnacle to be sure, but not outside it or its cause, not a Creator in the biblical meaning, and definitely not a person exercising providence or revealing his will [30]. The only idea connecting Aristotle’s think of a God with Christians’ is the related prime mover, relation sometimes overstressed and we have to know why that is. This First Cause that has produced the first everlasting circular motion is the „Unmoved Mover, an eternal substance, purely actual, with no possibility of change or motion, purely immaterial, since matter is potency... capable of causing motion (which Plato’s Forms, Aristotle says, were not)” [31]. If this is unchanging, immaterial and fully actual, Aristotle posits it can only be one kind of thing, a Mind. It is self-sufficient, for it didn’t needed any external object to be the object of its thought; „its thought must be intuitive, immanent, directed entirely to an object within itself... in fact, the only object which it can have is its own thinking” [32]. Upon this pattern of thinking the eternal Mind, one final conclusion can be postulated “that the Divine Mind has no knowledge of anything outside itself” so it cannot think of anything else and also it cannot move, as an active movement, nothing, even the first universal motion. And here Aristotle has introduced the notion of entelechy, for Divinity is the object of love and desire for all things and they headed towards the Unmoved Mover in a desire of imitating its perfection, in striving to acquire the most perfect possible actuality and complete realization of their form. Therefore, the Divine Mind is immanent for itself and



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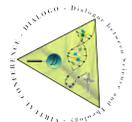
transcendent to everything else, but the need for realization of form is a condition immanent to matter and all its objects. This statement of Aristotle's doctrine of causality and perfection of God will be retrieved later on in Christian thought for it led to several attributes of 'God', such as singularity for movement center (in despite of the other 55 Unmoved Movers or Intelligences invented in *Metaphysics*), auto-sufficiency, impassible and so on.

The links between sensible things do not simply reduce only to mechanics or chemistry; they are much deeper and get to combine even internal forces, substantial [33], these links are designed to create movement, the Aristotelian metaphysics core. "Everything that is subject to change (μεταβολή) is in a state of transition, of passing in time from the potency to the appropriate entelechy; once completed, the movement (κινεσις, cease its existence, making room for rest and to the form finally achieved." [34] As it regards to humans, he moves according to the overall Aristotelian teleology, in a threefold aspect [35]: circumscribed to the contingent world with an immanent finality; circumscribed to the political world (polis) for the collective good; and, as a rational being, he tends toward the supreme landmark, toward divinity, to complete its own fulfillment. Unlike the platonic Good, with self-existence, abstract and transcendent, the good professed by Aristotle is established as the absolute goal, toward which everything strives, but also immanent in all things and beings [36]. We have to consider this debate between the two great philosophers as an existential one, as well as an ontological and eschatological one. From the Latin word principium and its Greek counterpart αρχη could mean either "beginning" in the chronological sense, "first principle" in the epistemological sense, or "ground of being" in the metaphysical sense [37].

Another limitation of Aristotelian understanding is the finitude with which the immanent existence self-surrounds. Having nothing outside their existence, the material things doesn't last forever, and where there is

generation and movement, there is necessary a limit [38]. But this limit is thus at the same time a step forward compared to his precursor, Aristotle managed to establish the reality of the sensible world on a more solid base, by the immanent teleology doctrine, that of the movement of all concrete, sensitive things to the full use of their potentials [39].

Regarding knowledge it is done only on the universality of things, for no one, though studying individuals, does not state general truths upon the individual, but the species. Therefore Aristotle accepts the Platonic position of the universal existence in individuals, but not as an existence itself. This universal element is identified as sensitive and vital immanence of thing which, together with its material, forms that thing and is the intelligible principle of that object [40]. We cannot conceive the universal than through individual, the one and only true existence, but the individual is truly a substance of some kind, because its "universal element, the form of thing, that the mind abstract it and conceives as the formal universality" [41]. Because this universal from things is the divine pattern upon they have been made, especially because thinking is made upon the universal, Aristotle supports Plato's conclusion that the mind-intellect (νοῦς) is divine, immanent and active in the world. She perceives the Being - therefore the individual is not the Being, but the universal is. While the individual changes, gets destroyed, the universal is immutable - the specie remains when the individual is no longer. From this stems both that the Absolute Being is the model cause of essences, and also that it is intelligible, perceptible and identifiable for the human reason. By entelechy's theory, of immanent, substantial form, he brings a substantial contribution to the philosophy of nature that he sees as a hierarchy of species, and also corrects Plato's conception of the idea that "immaterial form is intelligible, that the absolute act is an absolute intellect" [42]. We know that Plato's thought had a revival about the beginning of the Christian era [43], but Aristotle's thinking had a great influence over the Arab philosophers,



and the Christian theology from the end of XII century, especially through Tomas Aquino work and his successors, spent a lot of time trying to adapt the Christian thinking to correspond with Aristotle's theories.

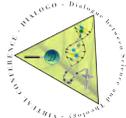
C. Other profound influence on Christian thought

Another source of inspiration for Fathers and Christian writers was the thinking and writings of **Stoicism** (301 BC - 150 AD), according to which the world is based on material discernible principles, but with fire as stimulating element and divine reason (logos) – a visible influence from Heraclitus of Ephesus' ideas. Appeared in the early Hellenistic period (late fourth century BC), Stoicism was extended to the imperial age of ancient Rome (III century AD) [44]. It was the first source of absolute immanence. The Destiny was the form of world's organization and of each thing or event; even if this understanding led to fatalism, it justified through an acknowledgment of the existence of an invincible power, that "orders and governs everything in the universe", by being the "world reason or the law of all things". This implacable fatalism overcomes the chance and chaos of previous thinking and, even if leaves no room for human free will, he demonstrates the immutable lawfulness standing in the nature of things over which there is no other control than the law itself and the *raison d'être* of the thing. The Stoics rejected not only the Platonic doctrine of the transcendent universal, but also the immanent universal from Aristotle's theory. For them there is only the particular and our knowledge is a knowledge of particular things objectively existing. What enchained the particular objects and actions was the Destiny, an irresistible power, implacable designed as a chain of causes and effects, that "orders and governs everything in the universe", the "world reason or the law of all things" [45].

The active principle is the divine intellect or divinity, which, in his providence, has done everything for the good of man. And because the whole - nature - cannot be more imperfect

than one of its part - man - nature itself receives conscience, God being the world's conscience, a conscience that is also material as its substrate. „The universe is like a giant body with its own leading part. All parts of the universe are connected; thus, what happens in one place is affected by what happens elsewhere.” [46] All the elements of which the material world appeared from proceed from divinity and, at some point, dissolve back into it; the Divinity's body is matter, subtler and denser, but that from which it is made also the world. [47] “The matter is impregnated, infused with the universal rationality, called Destiny by some, immanent into it like the seminal virtue in a seed.” [48] Thus Stoicism is positioned transversely to the spiritual doctrine of a transcendent God, completely different from the created world and positioned accordingly beyond it. For philosophers like Zeno of Cittiium or Epicur God is always immanent, equaling God with the totality of the universe, deeply contrary with Christianity. This is also the principal difference between the Platonic demiurge and the Stoic god, his immanence: „he exerts his providential activity from within the matter it molds and manipulates” [49], being the material, formal, productive, and final cause of everything, its "seminal logos" (gr. *λογοι σπερματικοι* or *logoi spermatikoi*). The idea of these rationes seminales will be further developed to Neoplatonism and incorporated into Christian thought through writers like Athenagoras of Athens, Tertullian, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine of Hippo, Bonaventure, and Albertus Magnus. After Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, absolute immanence regains its strength through stoics, especially **Zeno of Cittiium** (333-262 BC), who gives it its clearest expression, matched only by the philosophy of Spinoza, called the "prince of philosophers" by G. Deleuze for his theory of immanence.

Anyways, the rejection of stoicism and epicureans was a constant for Christian writers at that time and for that particular reason. Still it provided strong concepts for Christian theology, such as Logos, Spirit, and conscience. [50] For



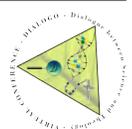
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example, Clement of Alexandria, a consequent follower of the Platonic ideas, refines the concept of Logos, the principle of true Christian gnosis, and condemns the immanence of God the way stoics saw it, teaching of a transcendent God, self-sufficient and abstract, unable to be thought, impossible for human power of expressing God [51]. Yet, besides the general rejection of stoic's idea of a god, the conception of his immanence was preserve in bigger part in the Christian cataphatic theology, especially when Neoplatonism resume the ancient debate of universals later on. For example, Origen will retrieve the Stoic expression of *logoi spermatikoi*, unfold their materiality and use it as 'ideas within the mind of God' and 'powers of the Logos' that are immanent in the world [52].

*D. Questions and limits for God's immanency.
The ,Body' of God*

Given the immanence of God in Matter, the first question arises of how God is to be distinguished from matter? This question requires a special look into the physical mechanism by which God is present in matter. For Epicureans and Stoics "God crosses over the whole matter" [53] and the nature is absorbed by divinity since god has a material body, and his spirit indwells in the whole universe [54]. This is the particular aspect of the Stoic's idea of immanence that must be highlighted here. It is possible that it hasn't been understood like that at the time Christian thinkers got in contact with it. In general, the Stoic god was bound to be material and to proceed from the matter, but "this reductive materialist view does not coincide with what the Stoics actually claim or with anything they are logically committed to. On their view, which is anti-materialist, both god and matter are bodies (*σώματα*, n.n.), but nevertheless they form an irreducible pair." [55] In conclusion, their particular view is neither a materialist monism – god one with the matter-nature –, nor a strict dualism, distinguishing god from matter as two different realms as in Platonism. The point is that corporeality and immanence in matter are features of the Stoic

'god' that have no clear trace in earlier Platonism. Having bodies (*σώματα*), and not that that they are 'incorporeal', (*ἀσωματός*) is a case for distinguishing between principles and elements, where it is clear that the elements are bodies with a form, and the principles being devoid of any form [56]. In this regard Zeno argued that 'that which is devoid of body . . . cannot act or be acted upon' (Cicero, *Ac. Post.* 1. 39) as another reaction, this time to god's impassivity and self-sufficiency projected by the Aristotle's Mind-Cause. This extra argue has to be assumed since Stoics made a distinction between 'solid bodies' (three-dimensional, geometrical entities) and 'incorporeal entities', a body 'that which acts or is acted upon'. In the latter category there are also god or reason as 'efficient body' or active (involving 'power', *δυναμς*), and matter as 'passive one', along with other incorporeal bodies, e.g. void and place. This is also a logical reaction to Platonic incorporeal entities, which says that the capacity of acting or being acted upon is a capacity of the being in general, not of bodies. "I suggest that everything which has a power of any kind, either to produce a change (*ποιειν*) in anything of any nature or to be affected (*παθειν*), even in the least degree by the slightest cause, though it be only on one occasion, has real existence (*οντως ειναι*)" [57]. The bottom line is that the world (*Kosmos*) is a coherent organism, interpenetrated by Nature (phisics) and God – a pattern of meaning that is like a 'designing fire' or light, giving rise to the concepts of divinity immanent in the universe and cosmic order conducted by It moreover since Stoic god hasn't two parts, a body and a spirit. In their thinking god's body is spiritual, with ethereal constitution, for god is spirit, incorporeal and it indwells the material body of universe. This also makes the particular conception of Stoics over human soul, conception also drawn from them by Christian thinkers. "The human soul is in some degree derived and drawn from a source exterior to itself. Hence we understand that outside the human soul there is a divine soul from which the human soul is sprung" [58]. But this is not the best part of the conception on human soul, instead they figured that it is a body it-self that



pervades the mortal body. The human souls are made of the heavenly substance, aether (air and fire), making it a bodily (corporeal) substance, which was believed to be a hot, fiery breath [59] [pneuma] that infused the physical body. This was a crucial concept of Stoic both physics and psychology, took as it was by Christians. Unlike atomists that fragmented the universe and its matter into tiny pieces spread in the void, the Stoics 'argued for a continuum theory which denied the existence of void in the cosmos. The cosmos was seen as a single continuum of pneuma-charged substance' [60]. So the soul-body assures the life, the energy and keeping-together the material body, as Pnevma-god is doing for the body of the universe. The immanence of both soul for human body and god for universe was in fact the only logical conclusion drawn from the observation that everything is kept together. Also the qualitative difference between individual substances, such as between a rock and a pool of water, is determined by the degree of the tensional motion of the pneuma pervading the substance. Understanding this immanence of god and soul into matter and body will make us easier to comprehend the way Christian Fathers like Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) when formulate the central principle of Eastern Orthodox theology, the real distinction between the essence (ousia) and the energies (energeia) of God and how these energies pervade the creation. We know that this Christian teaching of God's immanence unto the whole creation was a case of heretical and unacceptable division in the Trinity and suggestive of polytheism on behalf of Aristotelian Western scholastic, Barlaam of Calabria (1290–1348) in The Hesychast controversy.

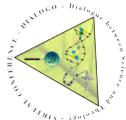
It was precisely for this specific type of God's immanent formative principle of Stoics that forbid the cosmic god to be eo ipso an impersonal god. As Zeno put it, He is "not just 'craftsmanlike', but actually 'a craftsman', or even a 'father' [61], and for this particular quality is recommended by his rationality – drawn from the rationality of the cosmos - and providential

governing principle could be viewed as a 'person' with purposes and intentions: providence could be identified as 'the will of Zeus' [62].

E. Neoplatonism and God's immanency

Neoplatonism is a modern term used to designate a tradition of philosophy that arose in the 3rd century AD. Typical for a period of Even if Neoplatonists were heavily influenced by Plato, they had also been influenced by Christian thought as well as other philosophical system of thinking, it is difficult to reduce the school of thought to a concise set of ideas, making it a complex and syncretic current. As its predecessors, Neoplatonism stressed on transcendence, still the concept of immanence is also present in this syncretic thinking. Major role was played by its founders, Ammonius Saccas and **Plotinus** (204-270 CCE), Porphyry, Proclus, notable thinkers in Muslims such as al-Farabi, Avicenna and Moses Maimonides; Pico della Mirandola, Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages et. ot., but we cannot make a foray on each these important thinkers. Instead we will appoint some general lines on immanence from Neoplatonism. For instance at the foundation of Plotinus' theory about nature stands the idea of universal animation: "the world is made out of matter due to its penetration by divinity through emanation... everything moves around because of the eternal activity of the 'universal soul' " [63].

Alexandria was the main metropole of philosophy and the middle-point between Orient and Occident, a true center of Judeo-Hellenistic philosophy, culminating with **Philo of Alexandria** (c. 25 BC – c. 50 AD). Philo bases his doctrines on the Old Testament, which he considers as the source and standard not only of religious truth but in general of all human truth too. Considering the present topic Philo has persuaded a different path, starting from this Judaic legacy he had inherited from a long and immutable tradition. To shorten it, we have to know that the main attribute Jews were boast much about it was the 'election of God' over all the others. Starting



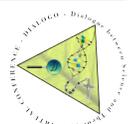
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from patriarchs, then prophets and until present time, Judaism is nothing more proud of but their state of 'elected people', through the fact that God chose Abraham and his kin to bear God's teaching on Earth. This is a strong and long-lasting feeling that I will develop more on the second presentation at this conference, that about Abraham's revelation of God.

Considering this Judaic remanence, Philo understood the highest God's implication into creation as His providence and taking care over his election. "The power to combine the teachings of the various opposites and even schools teaching was the main characteristic of Philo" [64]. Therefore, he has combined the idea of the 'God in the highest' with the platonic conception on matter, and so he ended up in a gnostic mixture. "Consequently, his teachings on relations between God and the world are different from those of the Old Testament essential. The Material Creation is not the work of the Supreme Being; it would be dirty if it came into contact with it" [65]. From this platonic point of view the immanence in the sense of indwelling did nothing of the kind. But the God's care for Jews was not a thought that could easily left apart from cosmology and his conception on God. So he turns unto another possible aspect of God's immanence, the providence into a unified doctrine [66]. His doctrine tries to reconcile the transcendence of God with His providence by asking the questions why the transcendent God would exercise his providence for the world, and how can it be done. While to first he answers with God's inherent goodness and graciousness, for the second relates to Philo's doctrine of the Logos and the divine powers [67]. The reconciliation with Platonic view can be seen in the concept of Logos; in Philo's thinking "in its transcendent aspect, the Logos is related to God's nature as the mind of God, and in its immanent aspect, the Logos administers the work of the divine powers in the created world" [68], an idea developed further by Ariens. But he does not fall into this mistake yet for he thinks about God and Logos as a unity, not separately, since God is, in essence, One; he did not fall into

gnosis trap of two biblical gods. "God and Logos are only conceptually, not actually separated". [69] Philo does not put transcendence and immanence into contradiction, instead he suggests that "God is simultaneously wholly transcendent (as the οὐρανός) and wholly immanent in the world (in the form of an angel)" [70] that reveled at the burning bush to Moses (Exodus 3). 'God is not either transcendent or immanent; he is both transcendent and immanent'. That way he combine these two attribute of God, keeping transcendence for God's existence-essence, and immanence for His known attributes, e.g. goodness. Regarding the specific role of Logos that Philo ascribes it, as 'mediator and arbitrator' [71], between transcendence and immanence, between creator and creation, via its attendant powers. This is a response to Aristotle's impassible Mind, unable to feel goodness or care for the creation. In conclusion, the key-theory on the conjunction between God's transcendence and immanence is based on the Old Testament God's way of self-reveling, the οὐρανός (Exodus 3.14), "He who IS", 'is at once the utterly transcendent and the one who is immanent involved in the well-being of his people' [72].

This conjunction will became the emblem of Neoplatonism and it will also be transmitted to the Early Christian writers as it is. For Plotinus, 'the greatest thinker between Aristotle and Spinoza', the highest principle is wholly transcendent, the One, an immaterial and impersonal force that is the ground of all existence and source of all values. [73] From this, Dionysius will conclude that God "is immanent in that he is immediately present in all things as all their constitutive determinations; as Dionysius says, the being of all things is the divinity beyond being" [74]. On the other hand Proclus of Athens (412-485 CCE), 'the culminating point of the Neo-Platonic philosophy' (Hegel), was eager to demonstrate the harmony of the ancient religious revelations with the philosophical tradition of Pythagoras and Plato [75]. He takes the Plato's concept of 'participated' (μετεχομενα), an individual property, and conjuncts it with a new one, the 'unparticipated' term (αμετεκτον), the



universal that is numerically one for all the instances and hence does not belong to any of them. All that is unparticipated produces from itself the participated, things capable of being participated. [76] The particular thing with Proclus' concept of 'unparticipated' is that it "will give something of itself" in which the recipient participates, and this "something of itself" is none other than the participated term [77]. Fascinated by Proclus, Dionysius the Areopagite describes God as the "pre-existent Cause of all life and being through Its bounty which both brings them into existence and maintains them" [78]. He denies the immanent characteristics Stoics promoted for the Logos, so it does not possess outward shape, body or intelligible form but still it has another relation in shaping the doctrine of immanence. Through the relation of the triad immanence, procession and reversion (monê-prohodos-epistrophê), called the "triad of triads", Proclus underlines that "Every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it" [79] for God is present to all things as the constitutive determination by which each is itself and so is [80].

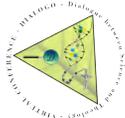
IV. THE „IMMANENCE" PER SE

Until now we saw the main philosophical ideas around god's immanence that were thought and might have been an influence for early Christian Fathers and writers. All in all these ideas and many other that came further gravitate around the same principles of immanence and inhabiting the universe by God or his energies. Could it be possible to find something more, any different theory that could help us understand even more the concept?

After centuries in which the resident conception of God was entrusted in philosophy to transcendence (by Descartes or Kant), another philosopher, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) dedicated his thinking to restore immanence, but it was in the same direction –he was called 'the prince of philosophy' for his theory of immanence by G. Deleuze. His influence made a good impact over Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995)

[81] that came up with a different concept and proposal for immanence. „Philosophy begins from an image of what it is to think, whether that be the grasp of ideal forms, the orderly reception of sense impressions, or the social construction of the world through language. The concepts of a philosophy both build, and build upon, that image. But if the history of philosophy is a gallery of such images of thought – from the conversing Socrates and mathematical Plato, to the doubting Descartes and logical Russell – some philosophers have done more than stroll through this gallery to add their own image." [82] The Deleuzian new concept, named the 'plane of immanence', rejects the idea that life and creation are opposed to death and non-creation.

The Deleuzian interesting element is that, while almost everyone before him has addressed the philosophical notion of immanence in contact and in opposition to the transcendence, Deleuze eliminates this opposition designs a plane of existence where immanence has no equal or opponent; this plane is a pure immanence an unqualified immersion or embeddedness, an immanence which denies transcendence as a real distinction, Cartesian or otherwise. Pure immanence is thus often referred to as a pure plane, an infinite field or smooth space without substantial or constitutive division. In his final essay entitled 'Immanence: A Life', Deleuze writes: "It is only when immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence." [83] Due to this there is certainly a first separations mental block, namely the inability to understand what is immanent and nail, because, in a metaphysics consistent with Spinoza's single substance (God or Nature), immanence is not immanent to substance but rather that immanence is substance, that is, immanent to itself. Pure immanence therefore will have consequences not only for the validity of a philosophical reliance on transcendence, but simultaneously for dualism and idealism. In this system of reality nothing meta-physics will ever be or be thought (dualism), nor as



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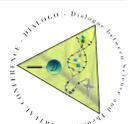
the primary condition of unilateral subjective mediation of external objects or events (idealism). Thus all real distinctions (mind and body, God and matter, interiority and exteriority, etc.) are collapsed or flattened into an even consistency or plane, namely immanence itself, that is, immanence without opposition [84]. In that plan of immanence even immanence cannot be thought, explained or conceived, since there is nothing else but it. When there is solely you, you cannot define yourself as being or existence, and it is most likely to 'become' unaware of yourself; your conscience will literally become unconscious in a non-personal existence. Pure self-existence equals with non-existence, therefore pure immanence denies immanence per se. So, pentru a nu mai vorba, the ontological argument can be apply here to understand that immanence exists just because we can speak about it, and therefore it is not the only reality that exists. In other words, we can speak of a 'plan of immanence' only if we admit 'plane of transcendence'; only in this couple of realities we can conceive how brain imagines, relates to, represents and what life is in itself. Otherwise we would only do these acts – reasoning, imagining, relate to others of live – but never become aware of the act itself as another reality, or better to say as Platon implied that beyond every act is the idea that make the act possible. It is however paradoxical to base this theory in comparison with Platonism, that, on the contrary, was trying to potentiate the sovereignty of transcendence.

Usually, the dualism transcendent-immanent does not count as a cohabitation of those two realities, but as the imposing of one of them over the other; whether the world beyond is the true one (realism), or that it is the only one that matters (idealism), no system of philosophical thought does not seem to succeed cohabitating them in the way that both are equally real and can hold non-confrontational realities. The recognized Deleuze's merit is the removal of these cognitive preconceptions, and "one of the central accomplishments of Daniel Colucciello Barber, 'Deleuze and the Naming of God: Post-

Secularism and the Future of Immanence', is decisively for decoupling any such association between immanence and secularism. It does this precisely by articulating immanence as a third and occluded possibility that troubles the very coordinates around which such debates are constructed. Indeed, by insisting that immanence is not simply something that supersedes the religious and delineates the secular, but constitutes a break with a dominant form of secularism itself, Barber forces us to rethink some of the basic concepts operative in contemporary theology, religious studies, and philosophy of religion" [85].

For this particular point of view on immanence everything Christian theologians thought about it is different. From the impossibility of transcendence to the new acceptance of the term of 'becoming' [86], everything stays inside this world, every development, cycle of production or of life, for he use as start the Nietzsche's concept of 'eternal return'. 'Becoming' is drawn from Deleuze's opposition to existentialism and 'being', his opposition to psychoanalysis, and his interest in the vitalism of the universe – indeed, it forms the basis for much of Deleuze's philosophy. [87], Taking his lead from Friedrich Nietzsche's early notes, Deleuze uses the term 'becoming' (devenir) to describe the continual production (or 'return') of difference immanent within the constitution of events, whether physical or otherwise. Becoming is the pure movement evident in changes between particular events. This is not to say that becoming represents a phase between two states, or a range of terms or states through which something might pass on its journey to another state. Rather than a product, final or interim, becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending towards no particular goal or end-state." [88]

There were certainly Christian writers who, under the influence of various philosophical currents, denied the relevance of divine immanence. Philon i.e. do not conceive that the Divine Logos was made flesh (for if He would



receive the body as any sensitive material thing, he would cease to be a noetic, intelligible reality). “The divine Logos... did not come in a visible form, having nothing in common with sensible things, but he is the very image of God, and the oldest of all intelligible things, which is the closest to the One and inseparable from Him by a space” [89]. But there are no evident traces in the Christian dogma for influences regarding Deleuze point of reference, namely to imply that immanence is the only possible reality, God included.

IN CONCLUSION

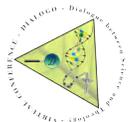
Putting into discussion all these philosophical ideas that must have been the start for some early Christian thinkers to obtain a logical ground for their image of God, prove only one thing: that none was so capable to express the Christian creed and, more than that, they could never replace or overcome the content of Revelation of Christ. The joy felt by Apostles after Resurrection of Christ, the peace within the martyrs at the time of their punishment and the urge of every Christian true believer to become as Christ are not feelings possibly given by any ideology or thinking, but from a living, immanent indwelling Christ-The God must had in them. Even just as philosophers claim, the word “God”, when is imply or specifically mentioned, is not at all like anything we mean by that in the process of religious worshiping, for philosophic thinking of Supreme being was never intended to aim for a relationship or a axiological behavior, but merely for a self-projection. That also must be the target of several attacks by atheists who believe that ‘gods’ of philosophy are anthropomorphic, by the image of the thinker, while for the Christians man is made in the image of God’s Image, Christ.

The starting point of the doctrine of God’s immanence in Christianity was for sure not in one or other philosophy of that era, but in the incarnation of Christ-Son of God. Based on the biblical image of a god descended unto His creation as a part of it in order to redeem it, his Apostles taught about the triune God

immanency from the beginning. “The Word became human (flesh) and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1.4). The Holy Spirit is also expressed as an immanence of God. “And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (Luke 3.33) So the immanence of the triune God is celebrated in the Christian traditional Churches during the liturgical calendar feast as the Theophany of God, as a real, unbeatable and without precedent event in human history when God has made His indwelling into the creation more vivid than any other moment. In the biblical context of considering God’s indwelling with His creation there are two different kinds of immanency, one of His providence and the other one of His existence among which the moment of Incarnation made eternal through the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ is the most obvious one – but this is the subject for another paper as follows in this conference.

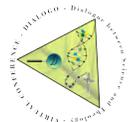
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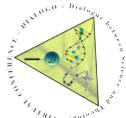


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- [19] Ibidem, 272.
- [20] Ibidem, 43.
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- [22] We mention here the example of the acorn which encompasses the final pattern of the tree, because the individual belonging to a species naturally tends to embody that specific form as precise as possible. For acorn, the oak is also its formal and final cause toward which it aims. This natural tendency toward form denotes that often the final, formal and effective causes are identical. Cf. Copleston. *Istoria filosofiei*, vl. 1, 282.
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- [26] Pelikan, *What Has Athens...*, 14.
- [27] Aristotel, *Etica Nicomahică*, București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988, III.
- [28] Ibidem, XVI.
- [29] Ibidem.
- [30] Ferguson Everett, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 341.
- [31] A.H. Armstrong, *An Introduction*, 88.
- [32] Ibidem.
- [33] These are seen as immutable; for example the connections between mathematical names, between knowledge and the object of knowledge, between the epistemological and ontological relativism, or between things and forms. Cf. *Metafizica*, 1093 a.
- [34] Aristotel, *Etica Nicomahică*, X, nota 47.
- [35] Ibidem, Intro, nota 12.
- [36] Ibidem, X, 1172 b, 10.
- [37] Pelikan, *What Has Athens...*, 15.
- [38] Aristotel, *Metafizica*, III, 999 b.
- [39] Copleston. *Istoria filosofiei*, vl. 1, 282.
- [40] Ibidem, 335.
- [41] Ibidem, 274.
- [42] Ibidem, 337.
- [43] Ferguson Everett, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 342.
- [44] Romulus Chiriță, *Prelegeri de Istoria Filosofiei Antice Grecești*. 69.
- [45] Ibidem, 70.
- [46] Ferguson Everett, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 357.
- [47] Copleston, *Istoria filosofiei*, vl. 1, 348.
- [48] Maria Bulgaru, *Din istoria gindirii filosofice (eng. From the history of philosophic thought)*, part I. Chisinau: Universitatea de Stat din Moldova, 1999, 130.
- [49] Ricardo Salles, *God and Cosmos in Stoicism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, 5.
- [50] Ferguson Everett, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 368.
- [51] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*. V, XII, 3084.
- [52] Dr. Mihai D. Vasile, *Logos' life, from Plato to the teachings of early Christian doctrine*, in „Cogito”, Open Access Journal, 2.2/2010, 10. http://cogito.ucdc.ro/nr_2v2/LOGOS%60%20LIFEeroen.pdf
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- [54] Al. Boboc (coord.), *Studies on the History of World Philosophy*, XIX. Bucuresti: ed. Academiei Romane, 2011, 71.
- [55] Ricardo Salles, *God and Cosmos in Stoicism*, 6.
- [56] Ibidem, 55.
- [57] Plato, *Sophist* 247d. From the online project „Perseus Hopper” at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=plat.+soph.+247d>.
- [58] Ricardo Salles, *God and Cosmos in Stoicism*, 149-150.
- [59] <http://www.iep.utm.edu/stoicmind/>.
- [60] Ibidem.
- [61] Theodore Scaltsas, Andrew S. Mason, *The Philosophy of Epictetus*. NY.: the Oxford University Press, 2007, 255.
- [62] Ricardo Salles, *God and Cosmos in Stoicism*, 244.
- [63] M. Bulgaru, *Din istoria gindirii filosofice*, 140.
- [64] Ciocan Tudor Cosmin, *Jesus Christ - the fulfillment of God's revelation*, in “Philosophy of religion” Collection, Sibiu: ed. Astra Museum, 2011, 59.
- [65] Ibidem.
- [66] *From a Neoplatonist perspective*, Plotinus, *Enneads* 3.5:15, speaks explicitly of one providence (προνοια μια) which he characterizes as alone being on a high level (υπερανω); on a lower level providence is fate (εμπαμνη). Peter Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999, 57, Note 2.
- [67] Peter Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo*, 59.
- [68] Ibidem.
- [69] David Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 443.
- [70] Ibidem.
- [71] In addition, Philo describes Logos as “the first principle, the archetypal idea (αρχετυπος ιδεα), the pre-measurer (προμετρητης) of all things”. Peter Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo*, 75.
- [72] Ibidem, 56.
- [73] Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 391.
- [74] Eric D. Perl, *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, State University of New York Press, 2007, 29.
- [75] Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ‘Proclus’. Online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/proclus/>
- [76] E. Perl, *Theophany*, 22-23.
- [77] Ibidem.
- [78] Clarence E. Rolt, *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology*, New York: Cosimo, 56, 96.
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- [80] E. Perl, *Theophany*, 28.
- [81] Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed*. A&C Black, 2006.
- [82] Adrian Parr (edit.), *The Deleuze Dictionary. Revised Edition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p. 2.
- [83] Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*. New York: Zone Books, 2001, p. 27.
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- [85] Alex Dubilet, Daniel Colucciello Barber, *Deleuze and the Naming of God: post-secularism and the future of immanence* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014). In „Parrhesia”, 20/2014, 116.
- [86] For Deleuze ‘becoming’ is not anymore the differences between a start- point and end- point, as Parmenides explained it, but another static state. For him, becoming is neither merely an attribute of, nor an intermediary between events, but a characteristic of the very production of events. It is not that the time of change exists between one event and another, but that every event is but a unique instant of production in a continual flow of changes evident in the cosmos. The only thing ‘shared’ by events is their having become different in the course of their production.
- [87] Damian Sutton & David Martin-Jones, *Deleuze Reframed*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2013, 18.
- [88] Adrian Parr (edit.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, 26.
- [89] Philon din Alexandria, *Comentariu alegoric al Legilor Sfinte după lucrarea de șase zile*.



the Dialogue between Philosophy and Theology

București: Herald, 2006, 34.

BIOGRAPHY

Ciocan Tudor Cosmin, born in Constanta/Romania in 1977, I have attended several theological and psychological schools (BA, MB, PhD), obtained my PhD in Missiology and Doctrinal Theology in 2010. I was ordained as orthodox priest in 2002. High-school teacher from 1998, then Professor assistant and Lecturer from 2012, I have written more than 30 papers on theology and psychology, along with 4 single author books in the past two decades.

In 2013 started a multidisciplinary program aiming to engage scholars from different files into friendly and academic debates with theology and in the same year a Research Center was founded in Ovidius University with researchers from 11 fields. In last then 1 year I manage to gather people from around the globe around this idea and so we have started Dialogo Conferences project. In 2014 I received a Fulbright scholarship and I spent the summer California and 4 other States in USA, gathering data and understanding how *religious pluralism* is possible at a high level of involvement; in the same time I made friends from many different countries and religions that are now involved in this project or another, helping in his endeavor.

