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APOCATASTASIS AND PREDESTINATION ONTOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF ORIGEN'S AND AUGUSTINE'S SOTERIOLOGIES

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Summary

As Augustine himself testifies, he did not know Origen's work so well. However, this does not mean that he was not acquainted with his key soteriological hypotheses, especially his teachings on apocatastasis. Although Augustine's doctrine of predestination has completely opposite consequences in comparison to Origen's teaching about apocatastasis, we believe that these teachings share the common ontological basis, which is the subject of this study. While Origen's Christology is often called into question, Augustine's Christology is considered correct. However, with both authors we find a certain marginalisation of Christology in the field of ontologically understood soteriology. Theological insights of these two authors influenced to a significant extent the development of theology of both the East and West, making their works significant up until today, both from the aspect of Christian self-understanding and from the aspect of ecumenical dialogue.

Keywords: *Augustine, Origen, apocatastasis, predestination, soteriology, ontology.*

Introduction

Soteriology of Origen and Augustine, at least in their final outcome, are fundamentally different, even conflicting. Origen believes that the whole creation will be saved through apocatastasis to the original condition, while Augustine teaches that only those chosen by God's grace will achieve salvation. How did these two great Christian philosophers come to such different answers to the question of salvation? Are there among them only differences, or are there similarities as well? What ontological assumptions could be found behind these two soteriologies? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to examine the position and the meaning of the Incarnation and the whole Christology in the context of their soteriologies.

1. Augustine's Acquaintance with Origen's Works and Their Soteriologies

In the beginning it is necessary to determine whether, in which way, and to what extent Origen influenced Augustine in the area of ontology. According to the testimony of Augustine himself, he did not know the works of Origen so well.¹ He was familiar with some of them, but mainly with those in Latin, in translations of Rufinus and Jerome, since, as he himself said, he did not know Greek so well.² Probably he never read all that could be found in Latin translation. He got acquainted with Origen mostly through reports of his opponents,³ as well as of those of his admirers, since Origen influenced Ambrose, Hilary of Pictavia and Victorine, whom Augustine appreciated and read.⁴ We cannot be sure with which works of Origen he was familiar. Most likely he read *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*,⁵ and according to the testimony that we find in *The Divjak Letter 27*, he owned copies of some other works of Origen.⁶

¹ Cf. Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *Epistolae*, in: Jacques Paul MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, Paris, 1844–1855, 32, 286 (forward: PL).

² Cf. Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *De Trinitate*, 3, 1, in: PL 42, 867. Later he learned Greek better, as we may see from *Contra Iulianum*, I, 6, 21.

³ Cf. Brian DALEY, *Word, Soul, and Flesh: Origen and Augustine on the Person of Christ*, in: *Augustinian Studies*, 36 (2005) 2, 306.

⁴ Cf. Ilaria RAMELLI, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena*, Leiden – Boston, 2013, 660.

⁵ Cf. Dominic KEECH, *The Anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo 396–430*, Oxford, 2013, 106–141.

⁶ Cf. AUGUSTINE, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, Letters 211–270, 1*–29**, II/4, New York, 2005, 328–329.

Heidl set up the thesis according to which young Augustine, in the period after the baptism, got familiar with Origen's mystical interpretation of *The Song of Songs* in Jerome's translation. According to Heidl, this Origen's work was part of *libri pleni* which Augustine mentions.⁷ On the basis of these and other assumptions, he was trying to prove Origen's exceptional influence on the young Augustine. Although his claims arouse certain attention, they still have not become *communis opinio* among researchers.⁸ Augustine's exegetical methods, especially those he used in his mature period, were quite different from Origen's,⁹ which might not be a proof that he did not know the methodology of his exegesis, but that Augustine was an independent philosopher who developed his own theological and exegetical approach. This is supported by some researchers, who, in his earlier works, find some influence of Origen on Augustine's interpretation of the original sin.¹⁰ However, some analysts have also found other parallels in the exegesis of certain parts and the presentation of particular theological theologumena,¹¹ which indicate that Augustine used Origen's works. All this, in turn, leaves open the question whether it is the matter of direct use or indirect reception. Origen's work *De principiis* is especially important for our issue. If Augustine read it, he read it in the translation of Rufinus, which was rightfully called into question, both by older authors, such as Jerome of Stridonium, and by contemporary researchers.¹² On the other hand, since many works of Origen were not preserved, it is impossible to state definitely whether Augustine was acquainted with Origen's views, and, which is more important, this complicates the understanding of Origen and the accurate interpretation of his key soteriological views.

⁷ Cf. Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *Contra Academicos*, 2.2.5, in: PL 32, 908.

⁸ Cf. Joseph TRIGG, Origen's Influence on the Young Augustine: A Chapter in the History of Origenism, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12 (2004.) 3, 364–366.

⁹ Cf. Joseph LIENHARD, Origen and Augustine: Preaching on John the Baptist, in: *Augustinian Studies*, 26 (1995.) 1, 43.

¹⁰ Cf. György HEIDL, *The Influence of Origen on the Young Augustine. A Chapter of the History of Origenism*, Piscataway, 2009, 151–163.

¹¹ Cf. Alfons FÜRST, *Von Origenes und Hieronymus zu Augustinus: Studien zur antiken Theologie geschichte*, Berlin – Boston, 2011, 489; Joseph S. O'LEARY, The Invisible Mission of the Son in Origen and Augustine, in: *Origeniana*, 7 (1999), 605–622.

¹² Referring to the research of Rist and Crouzel (cf. Henri CROUZEL, Comparaisons précises entre les fragments du Peri Archon selon la Philocalie et la traduction de Rufin, in: *Origeniana*, 1 [1975], 121; John Michael RIST, The Greek and Latin texts of the discussion on free will in *De Principiis*, Book III, in: *Origeniana*, 1 [1975], 111), Rombs thinks that they, using the extensive comparison of the Latin translation and the Greek text saved in Philocalia, proved that Rufinus never deliberately corrupted Origen's text, although he changed it in some places. Cf. Ronnie ROMBS, A Note on the Status of Origen's »De Principiis« in English, in: *Vigiliae Christianae*, 61 (2007) 1, 23.

As we have already indicated, the importance of the work *De principiis* (Περὶ ἀρχῶν) for the understanding of Origen's thought is indisputable. This work was the basis for the early Church to condemn Origen. The fact that the Greek original is unavailable necessarily leaves unresolved the question to which extent the translation is faithful to the original, i.e., whether the Greek terms were successfully translated into Latin or deliberately corrupted. Rufinus pointed out that Origen himself complained that his texts endured malicious interpolation and corruptions.¹³ As Bolotov indicated, it is hard to believe that there were significant corruptions of the text and that they could spread and suppress regular texts.¹⁴ On the other hand, we know that Rufinus censored *De principiis* in the process of translation and it seems considerably; which follows from his polemics with Jerome. Although we know that Rufinus did it with the intention of presenting Origen as orthodox in the terms of Nicene Orthodoxy,¹⁵ we cannot be certain to which degree he succeeded in doing so. There is a possibility that, contrary to his intention, in correcting Origen, he presented some of his teachings in a wrong way.¹⁶ However, it would be exaggerated to claim that the translation of Rufinus is completely unusable and cannot be of any help in understanding Origen's thought. This is confirmed by the fact that many teachings presented in this work have their parallels in his other works that have been preserved in Greek. In the analysis, we must not forget the fact that the thought of Origen, as well as that of Augustine, had its own way of development. Speaking of Origen, we also ought

¹³ Cf. RUFINUS, *De adulteratione*, in: *Corpus christianorum. Series Latina*, Turnhout, 1953–, 20, 9; 20, 10; 20, 10. Cf. Elizabeth A. CLARK, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate*, Princeton, 1992, 164.

¹⁴ Cf. Василије БОЛОТОВ, *Учение Оригена о Святой Троице*, Санкт-Петербург, 1879, 150–151 (Vasilije BOLOTOV, *Uchenije Origena o Svyatoi Troice*, Sankt-Peterburg, 1879, 150–151). In his *Letter 84*, 10 Jerome says that Origen did not defend himself before Roman Bishop Fabianus against the charges of heresy claiming that his books were counterfeited, but that many of them were published by Ambrose: »Ipse Origenes in epistola, quam scribit ad Fabianum Romanae urbis Episcopum, poenitentiam agit, cur talia scripserit, et causas temeritatis in Ambrosium refert, quod secreto edita, in publicum protulerit.«

¹⁵ For this purpose Rufinus often used scholia of Didymus and his own explanations (cf. Vasilije BOLOTOV, *Uchenije Origena o Svyatoi Troice*, 165). Jerome made harsh accusations on the interventions by Rufinus (cf. Hieronymus STRIDONENSIS, *Apologia adversus libros Rufini, Liber Secundus*, in: Jacques Paul MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologia cursus completus. Series Graeca*, Paris, 1857–1866, 23, 434C–535C (forward: PG).

¹⁶ The proof of this thesis is the fact that the comparison of the saved fragments of Greek texts with other Rufinus' translations of Origen, which shows his great freedom in translating, wherein translation is confused with interpretation. Tzamalikos does not completely reject the value of *De principiis* as a source, but considers that this work should be interpreted in the light of other Origen's works, and should not be a means for interpretation of Origen (cf. Panayiotis TZAMALIKOS, *Origen: Philosophy of History and Eshatology*, Leiden – Boston, 2007, 13).

not to forget that his works were rarely written, but more frequently uttered, in different circumstances and before different audiences, which was quite important in his case.¹⁷ Thus, his polemical works, directed against the Gnostics and pagans, reveal philosophical and theological reflections and arguments different from those found in his exegetical works. His exegetical works also differ among themselves. Some of them are simple sermons uttered primarily for a didactic purpose,¹⁸ some are more detailed interpretations and presentations, while others were scientific papers for experts, pneumatics or »Gnostics«, i.e., for those who were familiar with the subtleties of theology, and in which Origen allowed himself the highest speculative freedom.¹⁹ He believed that the Scripture often used »parables and riddles« (διὰ παραβολῶν και προβλημάτων), which had two purposes: to hide the truth from the impious, and also as a brain exercise.²⁰ Finally, Origen chose not to speak on some issues, which would be presumably very interesting for us, because their meaning could not be adequately expressed by the use of words of any human language.²¹

However, the details of Origen's influence on Augustine are not essential for our paper. On the basis of the previous studies, it is important to note that the influence existed. In the area of ontology, the more relevant is the fact that both authors abundantly used Hellenistic legacy, mostly in the Neoplatonic synthesis. Augustine, as well as Origen, in a Neoplatonic anagoge²² also sees Christ as an indisputable intermediary. It certainly is a significant re-articulation²³ of the Neoplatonic conception, but its ontological foundation remains intact. However, Christ's role here is not related to the problem of existence but to question of the quality of that existence.²⁴ The Incarnate Logos is neither »to be nor not be« of the creation, nor a crossroads between being and nonbeing,

¹⁷ In defending Origen Athanasius the Great also pointed to this, and while calling him diligent (labour-loving – philoponus), stated: »For what he has written as if inquiring and by way of exercise, that let no one take as expressive of his own sentiments«, since he wrote it in the dispute with heretics, Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *De decretis*, in: PG 25, 465B, 5–7.

¹⁸ Cf. ORIGENES, *De principiis*, III, 1, 17, in: PG 11, 288A

¹⁹ Cf. Vasilije BOLOTOV, *Uchenije Origena o Svyatoi Troice*, 145.

²⁰ Cf. Виктор БИЧКОВ, *Естетика Отаца Цркве. Апологете. Блажени Августин*, Београд, 2010, 306 (Viktor BIČKOV, *Estetika Otaca Crkve. Apologete. Blaženi Avgustin*, Beograd, 2010, 306).

²¹ Cf. ORIGENES, *De principiis*, IV, 3, 15, in: PG 11, 373B.

²² Cf. John CAVADINI, The Structure and Intention of Augustine's *De trinitate*, in: *Augustinian Studies*, 23 (1992), 103–123.

²³ Cf. Travis ABLES, *Incarnational Realism: Trinity and the Spirit in Augustine and Barth*, London, 2013, 164.

²⁴ We emphasise that we are talking about the soteriological aspect and about the mediation of Christ in this regard. Both Origen and Augustine accepted biblical and patristic

between existence and nonexistence, but the intermediary in gaining certain qualities of the being. With Origen this dimension of Christology is moved toward the beginning, toward ἀρχή that will come again in the end that is at the same time τέλος of the creation as well. The Incarnation is here of less importance and does not constitute the prime ontological event.

Neither Augustine nor Origen questioned the importance of the Incarnation. Moreover, they always emphasised and stressed it. There is no doubt that they both inherited the same biblical heritage which they faithfully followed, as well as the Platonic conceptions that formed the referential frame of their theological thought. Augustine himself testifies that he, with the help of *libri Platoniorum*,²⁵ overcame the temptation of scepticism,²⁶ as well as the materialistic conceptions of God which prevented him from believing in the Incarnation.²⁷ Origen's connection with Hellenistic philosophical legacy is indisputable, although some of his most important and most controversial works have been preserved only in Latin translations. This primarily refers to the already mentioned work *De principiis* that contains the most important elements of Origen's Christology and soteriology which are the basis of his ontological position.

2. Apocatastasis

Origen is most famous for his teaching about apocatastasis (ἀποκατάστασις).²⁸ If the content preserved in the book *De principiis*²⁹ represents Origen's authentic thought, then there is no doubt that etymologically it reflects his teaching very accurately. Basically, ἀποκατάστασις means the restoration to the primordial condition. In Aristotle's works, this term marks the transition from the un-

conception of creation, according to which the Logos may also be referred to as an intermediary, but we are not dealing with it here.

²⁵ In fact, it is about a few Neoplatonic writings, among which were a part of Enneads of Plotinus, in the translation of Marius Victorinus, which was »his first, but crucial meeting with metaphysics« (Étienne GILSON, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Toronto, 1955, 105).

²⁶ Cf. Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *Confessionum*, 7, 9, 16, in: PL 32, 742.

²⁷ Cf. Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *Confessionum*, 5, 10, 20, in: PL 32, 715.

²⁸ Some forms of this teaching can be found in Christian authors before Origen, for example in CLEMENT of Alexandria's work *Stromata*, VI, 6, 47, in: PG 9, 269A.

²⁹ A key description of apocatastasis may be found in *De principiis*, III, 6, 5, in: PG 11, 337BC. »propterea namque etiam novissimus inimicus, qui mors appellatur, destruidicitur, ut neque ultra triste sit aliquid, ubi mors non est, neque diversum sit, ubi non est inimicus. Destruere sane novissimus inimicus ita intellegendus est, non ut substantia eius quae a deo facta est pereat, sed ut propositum et voluntas inimica, quae non a deo sed ab ipso processit, intereat. Destruetur ergo, non ut non sit, sed ut inimicus et mors non sit.«

natural to the natural condition. Apart from this, apocatastasis in astronomy meant the return of the stars to their previous position, while for Epicurus it meant the return of atoms to the state before their collision. In Proclus it indicates that »every period of circular things is apocatastaic«³⁰, which provides an analogy with Origen's conception of the return to the original spiritual state. According to Origen, in the beginning God created the world of spirits. In this world there was a movement that caused the saturation, which resulted in the creation of the material world. The material world is the consequence of sin. Florovsky rightfully notes that for Origen, all the people are angels in a greater or lesser degree.³¹ Origen's cosmological theory³² had strong consequences on his whole theological construction, especially on soteriology.

Origen's soteriology was influenced by his Neoplatonic cosmology³³ that defined his Christology and his whole theological discourse. Origen accepted the Platonic conception according to which it is possible to realise, primarily through intellect and contemplation, the unity with God, who is identified with the mind. The role of the Incarnate Logos of God was primarily to enable this intellectual contemplation. The Incarnate Logos has the role of a mediator in the work of salvation. It would be wrong to attribute to Origen the teaching according to which Christ was simply the teacher of wisdom.³⁴ However, his work of salvation was not based on the teachings of overcoming the ontological difference between God and man in His person, but on the fact that his work of salvation allowed achieving the saving unity with God through *gnosis*. Therefore Florovsky accurately notes that »his system is more comprehensible without historical Christ«³⁵. Thus, we can understand why for Origen the Eucharist

³⁰ PROCLUS Diadochus, *Institutio Theologica*, 199, in: Eric R. DODDS (ed.), *The Elements of Theology*, Oxford, 1963, 174.

³¹ Георгий ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, Противоречия оригенизма, in: *Путь* 18 (1929), 110. (Georges VASILIEVICH FLOROVSKY, Protivrečija origenizma, in: *Put*, 18 [1929], 110).

³² Form or details about his basic teaching of Origen: Александар ЂАКОВАЦ, Апокатастаза и онтологија, in: *Богословље*, 2 (2014), 156–167. (Aleksandar ĐAKOVAC, Apokatastaza i ontologija, in: *Bogoslovlje*, 2 [2014], 156–167).

³³ Cf. Stephen GERSH, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: an investigation of the prehistory and evolution of the pseudo-Dionysian tradition*, Leiden, 1978, 219.

³⁴ Even Origen's subordinationism, which in recent times has again been questioned (cf. Ilaria RAMELLI, Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line, in: *Vigiliae Christianae*, 65 [2011] 1, 21–49), can hardly place him as an undisputed forerunner of Arianism (cf. Thomas Evan POLLARD, The Origins of Arianism, in: *Journal of Theological Studies*, 9 [1958] 1, 103–111). The fact that among the supporters of Arius there were Origen's supporters as well, may not be of crucial importance, since the reference to Origen as an authority does not necessarily mean that their interpretation was correct, or at least the only one possible.

³⁵ Georges VASILIEVICH FLOROVSKY, *Protivrečija origenizma*, 107.

represented only an aid, while the truth of the Church was manifested not in a particular liturgical assembly, but in the Church as a spiritual community.³⁶

Origen held that apocatastasis was necessary for two reasons. The first one is moral, because it is impossible to believe that God would ever permit the eternal torment. The second and more important one had to do with his cosmology. He believed that the world, although created, still had a dimension of eternity, and that, at least as a concept, it always existed in God, who could never become the creator without being one from eternity. Thus, the return of the whole creation to the primordial condition was inevitable, which also entailed the salvation of all that was created.³⁷ Thus we come to Origen's teachings about the salvation of the devil,³⁸ which he denied, but which followed from his ontology. His ontology is static; its beginning and its final goal is inaction, while the movement, subsequently associated with the creation, is designated as the Fall³⁹ that occurs due to the saturation (κοούρος).⁴⁰

³⁶ In this way Origen viewed Church services, and for him a true bishop's only the one who is Gnostic well. Cf. Свилен ТУТЕКОВ, *Личност, общност, другост; Студии по християнска антропология и етика*, Велико Трново, 2009, 120–121 (Svilen TUTEKOV, *Ličnost, obščnost, drugost: Studiji po hristijanskaja antropologija i etika*, Veliko Trnovo, 2009, 120–121). This does not mean that Origen did not recognize the historicity of revelation. He says that in the Bible there is much more that can be understood as historical truth than what can be spiritually interpreted. Origen accepted the historicity of revelation, but for him the history was devoid of truth. The fact that for him the biblical narrative is a mixture of historical and unhistorical (cf. ORIGENES, *Contra Celsum*, I, 42, in: PG 11, 758BC), does not only mean that he finds a higher meaning in history, but that the truth of existence transcends and leaves behind the historical existence. Thus, Fürst's thesis of Origen as a theologian of history is not sustainable (cf. Alfons FÜRST, *Von Origenes und Hieronymus zu Augustinus: Studien zur antiken Theologiegeschichte*, 125–162). Despite the clarifications about the origin and meaning of Origen's exegesis given by different experts (Richard HANSON, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture*, Westminster, 2003; Henri de LUBAC, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture According to Origen*, San Francisco, 2007), it is undeniable that for Origen history, although he does not explicitly deny it, does not have fundamental ontological status.

³⁷ ORIGENES, *De principiis*, I, 6, 2, in: PG 11, 166B–168C.

³⁸ Augustine clearly rejected Origen's teaching that the devil will be saved as well. Cf. Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *De Civitate Dei*, 22, 17, in: PL 41, 778–779.

³⁹ Therefore, Maximus the Confessor will later turn this triad of Origen στάσις, κίνησις, γένεσις into γένεσις, κίνησις, στάσις (cf. Maximus CONFESSOR, *Ambigua*, 7, in: PG 91, 1072A; Polycarp SHERWOOD, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism*, Rome, 1955, 92–93). He changed it because he understood the ontology in a dynamic way, where στάσις is not considered as inaction but as a special form of movement. However, although he denied the cosmological reason of Origen's teaching about apokatastasis, Maximus failed to deal with the issue of general salvation and to resolve it in accordance with his own ontological and Christological position, but he rather chose to leave this question open.

⁴⁰ Cf. ORIGENES, *De principiis*, I, 3, 8, in: PG 11, 154C. The objection that Origen's teaching

This concept has two important consequences. On the anthropological level, human freedom has been called into question. Whatever a human being does, he/she will eventually be saved by ontological necessity. The salvation does not concern his/her will, which, in the final account, does not exist or cannot produce consequences, at least on the level of ontology. On the Christological plan, this cosmology led to the marginalisation of Christology in the ontological sense. Of course, the tradition of the Church, which Origen tended to follow, insisted on the central importance of Christ. Origen sought to uphold this, but he did not realize that his cosmological conception is self-sufficient, and that Christ could only artificially occupy a central place in it.

3. Predestination

Augustine did not treat cosmology in this way. While with Origen the cosmological assumptions conditioned responses to different theological questions, with Augustine the process was opposite. Theological problems and concrete ecclesial circumstances made him offer solutions that had important implications for cosmology. In his youth Augustine joined Manicheans because they stated they could provide a rational approach to religion. After his conversion, the doctrine of grace became most important to him. The conflict with Pelagians that lasted for twenty years also produced enduring consequences, because the heated discussion inevitably led to conflicts of attitudes.⁴¹

According to Augustine, the human being had a free will (*liberum arbitrium*) which enabled him/her to sin. But, once he/she sinned and fell, his/her nature became corrupted.⁴² He/she could not but sin, except by the grace of God. Thus, Augustine came to the teaching on predestination. He argues that free will still exists, but that it is not sufficient. The human being is not deprived of free will, but it is subordinated to sin: »*Liberum voluntatis arbitri-*

can hardly answer is that there is nothing that could prevent the »saturation« to appear again, in order to prevent the eternal recurrence of the same.

⁴¹ Historically, Pelagianism did not begin with Pelagius but with Rufinus the Syrian, who lived in the monastery of St. Jerome in Bethlehem, and who believed that teaching about the inheritance of Adam's sin was actually a part of Origen's teaching about the pre-existence of the soul. Cf. John RIST, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, Cambridge, 1996, 18.

⁴² As Karfíková notes (cf. Lenka KARFÍKOVÁ, *Grace and the Will According to Augustine*, Boston – Leiden, 2012, 313): »Augustine maintains as well that God is a good creator of good human nature; however, this nature committed sin in the first men. Thus nature itself (*natura*), not only the first men, became guilty because the guilt of the first men spreads like a contagion in the whole human race (*minores maiorum contagione sunt rei*).«

um plurimum valet, immo vero est quidem, sed in venundatis sub peccato, quid valet?»⁴³ It is one thing to wish, and another to be able to. But the volition itself depends on grace. Due to the Fall and corruption of nature, it is only the grace of God that can move the will towards good. And he/she could do good only by grace. Therefore, salvation is reserved only for those whom God, for some unfathomable reasons, predestined to be saved. Due to the grace, the elected willingly want to do good and do it. Others, who do not receive grace, can neither want nor do good. Even when they appear to do good, they actually do evil.

To the moral objections that such a treatment of God is unfair, Augustine replies that all people are justly condemned. He refers to the translation of the Vulgate, which states that all have sinned in Adam.⁴⁴ Since all are guilty, they all deserve punishment. God wants to spare some of them of the righteous condemnation, and bestows grace upon them so that they want and do good, and are thus saved. Therefore, the downfall of those who do not receive grace is not unfair, and it is impossible for a human being to comprehend the reasons why God chooses some and not the others. Although Augustine's teaching won over Pelagianism, it has never been fully accepted. It is a historical paradox that this doctrine was accepted by Protestants (Kalvin),⁴⁵ while in conflict with the Jansenists it was rejected by Rome, although Augustine, of course, was not mentioned.

From the point of Christology, Augustine found himself in a position which resembled Origen's. He remained faithful to the Church tradition emphasising and stressing the central role of Christ in the economy of salvation. Augustine situated Him in the centre by presenting Him as a mediator.⁴⁶ According to him, the mediator between God and the human being could be only the one who has both divine and human characteristics,⁴⁷ who is both di-

⁴³ Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *Ad Simplicianum*, 1, 2, 21, in: PL 40, 126. Augustine tried to resolve the logical exclusion of predestination and free will by introducing the difference between the enslaved free will (*liberum arbitrium captivatum*) and free will liberated by God. Cf. Aleksandar ĐAKOVAĆ, *Christus Medicus – Christus Mediator – Christus Totus*. Aspekti Avgustinove Hristologije, in: *Bogoslovlje*, 2 (2015), 40 (Aleksandar ĐAKOVAĆ, *Christus Medicus – Christus Mediator – Christus Totus*. Aspekti Avgustinove Hristologije, in: *Bogoslovlje*, 2 [2015], 40).

⁴⁴ Romans 5:12: *in quo omnes peccaverunt*.

⁴⁵ Of course, in his own interpretation that includes elements that are not found in Augustine.

⁴⁶ For detailed analysis of references see: Ronnie ROMBS, Augustine on Christ, in: *The T&T Clark Companion to Augustine and Modern Theology*, London, 2013, 41–45.

⁴⁷ Cf. Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *De Civitate Dei*, 10, 32, 2, in: PL 41, 313–314.

vinely just and humanly mortal.⁴⁸ As such, he is the mediator of freedom, life and salvation for all people and that is the only way of human salvation.⁴⁹ The uniqueness of Christ's soteriological position is well established here, since he, as a mediator, is essential for salvation. He is the one that allows the divine grace to work. It is only through Him that the elected can be saved. Augustine constituted ecclesiology on the basis of such Christology. The Church here appears as a path or the way of participation in Christ's redemption.⁵⁰ What is missing in Augustine's Christology in the context of his soteriology is its ontological foundation. Augustine takes Christ's role as a Redeemer as a given fact. He unquestionably accepts and defends this fact. For him, Christ is really both the Saviour and the Redeemer, but the ontological reasons for this cannot be determined. This is simply a way of salvation appointed by God. What remains a problem is the lack of ontological grounds of the *reason* of the incarnation as a condition of salvation. As with Origen, his soteriological conception would have functioned quite well without Christ as the Redeemer. In the area of ontology, the key ontological significance of the Incarnation for the salvation of the world and the human being cannot be found either with Origen or with Augustine.

Although it has caused many disputes in the past and present time. Origen's Christology is not in accordance with the Nicene faith.⁵¹ But since Origen lived in the time before the definite Trinitarian and Christological terminology was established, these charges against him are not so serious.⁵² Augustine's Christology – although partly disputable – is correct in the formal sense, even though his personal development as a theologian is a kind of recapitulation of the earlier Christological debates.⁵³ The irregularities and ambiguities of Origen's Christology (and Trinitarian theology) could be correctly explained by the historical context and the same can be said of Augustine. The

⁴⁸ Cf. Aurelius AUGUSTINUS, *Confessionum*, 10, 42, 67, in: PL 32, 807.

⁴⁹ Johannes QUASTEN, *Patrology. The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature. From the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon*, Allen, 1983, 434.

⁵⁰ Aleksandar ĐAKOVAC, *Christus Medicus – Christus Mediator – Christus Totus. Aspekti Avgustinove Hristologije*, 39–40.

⁵¹ For details see: Александар ЂАКОВАЦ, Проблеми Оригенове Христологије, in: *Теолошки погледи*, 2 (2015), 237–256 (Aleksandar ĐAKOVAC, Problemi Origenove Hristologije, in: *Teološki pogledi*, 2 [2015], 237–256).

⁵² Moreover, even the mistakes attributed to him were found in other authors of his time, but they were not condemned.

⁵³ Cf. Aloys GRILLMEIER, *Christ in Christian Tradition. From the Apostolic age to Chalcedon (451)*, Atlanta, 1975, 407.

problem lies at the very basis of their theological thought, in their understanding of ontology.

Conclusion

What both of them lack is the ontological foundation of Christology. Neither of the two cosmological conceptions could explain the Incarnation of Christ so that it could take a central place in solving the problem of existence. Under the pressure of tradition⁵⁴ both of them sought to emphasise that position as central, but without success. The reasons for this failure are different. With Origen the Neoplatonic cosmology led to the development of theological system in which the God Incarnate could not occupy the central place. The final reality was understood as a static fact. Therefore, the history, the central moment of which was the Incarnation, could not be identified with the truth of existence. With Augustine, on the other hand, the moralistic ethics⁵⁵ led to the acceptance of cosmology in which the God Incarnate was also unable to take the central position. He did not, as Origen, begin from the assumption of static ontology, but he came to it in the end. In the light of linear temporality, the place of a historical event is the place of intercession with a higher, final reality, which is ultimately static. It is only with Cappadocian Fathers, especially with Maximus the Confessor, that Christian ontology acquires its more dynamic and dialogical expression.⁵⁶

Critical review of the ideas of these two great teachers of the Church does not mean that it is easy to answer the questions the two of them posed. The issue of apocatastasis, at least in the terms of general salvation, still remains open to theological discussion. Insisting on the idea that there would be those who would not be saved, leads either *a)* to the introduction of the difference between existence and salvation, while negating the ontological dimension of soteriology, which is thus reduced to an autonomous ethics, or

⁵⁴ One should not think that Augustine only formally wanted to fulfil what the tradition demanded of him. On the contrary, he willingly converted and voluntarily submitted to the authority. He believed in that authority, and accepted it sincerely and with all his heart. Cf. Karl JASPERS, *Plato and Augustine*, New York, 1957, 105.

⁵⁵ About Augustine's ethics as a moralistic one see: Phillip CARY, *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul*, Oxford, 2008, 35–37; James WETZEL, Augustine on the origin of the evil: myth and metaphysics, in: James WETZEL (ed.), *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge, 182–183.

⁵⁶ Cf. John ZIZIOLAS, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, New York, 1997; Nikolaos LOUDOVIKOS, *A Eucharistic Ontology: Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity*, New York, 2010.

b) to denial of the unity of creation, which calls into question the understanding of the historical Christ as a corporeal person. The teaching about the general salvation questions the freedom as an anthropological constant, with all its consequences.

It is similar with the problem of grace. Even if we reject Augustine's approach, the question of how God acts in the world still remains. The negation of the need for grace would lead not only to Pelagianism, but also to deism. If the human being's free will is sufficient for the salvation, is the grace necessary at all? Is it possible to constitute the divine presence in the world without the concept of grace?

On the basis of the static ontology of Origen and Augustine, it is not possible to give satisfactory answers to these questions. The answer to the question lies in definition of the problem, in understanding the ontology as dynamic, i.e. personal, and not static. In the field of static ontology, the solutions that Origen and Augustine offered represent the highest achievements that can hardly be surpassed. Their solutions, however, lead to *aporia* from which there is no way out.

Static ontology of Origenian and Augustinian type left a significant impact on the development of Christian theology and the Church practice in both the East and the West. In the East, it led to the development of the ecclesial mysticism, while in the West it led to the development of juristic ecclesiology. There is no need to emphasise that the boundaries between »the East« and »the West« are neither geographical nor confessional. A higher degree of existence of the one or the other term of static ontology could be determined rather quantitatively than qualitatively, because of their intrinsic compatibility. Changing the basic notions of ontology and its understanding as dynamic remains the task of the contemporary theology, which only on this basis can respond to the dilemmas of the past.

Sažetak

**APOKATASTAZA I PREDESTINACIJA
ONTOLOŠKE PRETPOSTAVKE ORIGENOVE I AUGUSTINOVE
SOTERIOLOGIJE**

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Augustin po vlastitu svjedočanstvu nije dobro poznao Origenova djela. No to ne znači da su mu bile nepoznate Origenove ključne soteriološke pretpostavke, prije svega njegov nauk o apokatastazi. Iako Augustinov nauk o predestinaciji ima sasvim suprotne konzekvencije od Origenova nauka o apokatastazi, oba učenja dijele zajedničke ontološke pretpostavke na kojima počivaju, a koje se u ovome radu ispituju. Dok se Origenova kristologija često dovodila u pitanje, Augustinova se držala ispravnom. Međutim, i kod jednoga i kod drugoga autora prisutna je izvjesna marginalizacija kristologije na području ontološki shvaćene soteriologije. Njihovi teološki uvidi u značajnoj su mjeri utjecali na razvoj teologije i na Istoku i na Zapadu, zbog čega je njihov nauk i danas značajan, kako glede kršćanskog samorazumijevanja, tako glede ekumenskog dijaloga.

Ključne riječi: *Augustin, Origen, apokatastaza, predestinacija, soteriologija, ontologija.*