Aryeh KOFSKY
Serge RUZER*

THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA'S HERMENEUTICS: TRANSFORMED THEOLOGY IN RESPONSE TO FOURTH CENTURY CRISES**

Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428), the ultimate representative of the so called Antiochene School, embodies the major theological juncture of the late fourth and early fifth centuries, responding to the persistent Arian and Apollinarian challenges and charting the new frontiers of christological controversies. During the last few decades, the theological and especially christological views of Theodore of Mopsuestia, celebrated in the East Syrian tradition as „The Interpreter" (ܡܦܫܩܢܐ), have been studied extensively[1]. Given the loss of his major treatise *On the Incarnation*, even greater importance for reconstructing Theodore's christology can be assigned to his *Commentary on John* surviving in its entirety only in Syriac[2]. Except for short commentaries

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* Aryeh Kofsky, Full Professor, Ph.D. – Lecturer of Comparative Religion at the University of Haifa, email: kofsky@research.haifa.ac.il; Serge Ruzer, Ph.D. – Senior Lecturer and Researcher at the Department of Comparative Religion and at the Center for the Study of Christianity and the Chais Center of the Hebrew Univeristy of Jerusalem, emal: ruzer@mscc.huji.ac.il.

[1] On Theodore's christology, see, e.g., F.A. Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Rome 1956; P. Galtier, *Theodore de Mopsueste: sa vraie pensé sur l'incarnation*, RSR 45 (1957) 161-186, 338-360; L. Abramowski, *Zur Theologie Theodors von Mopsuestia*, ZKG 72 (1961) 263-293; R.A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Oxford 1963; A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, vol. 1, London 1975, 421-442; F.G. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, London – New York 2009, 34-63. For the extant fragments of *On the Incarnation*, see T. Jansen, *Theodor von Mopsuestia: De incarnatione. Überlieferung und Christologie der griechischen und lateinischen Fragmente einschließlich Textausgabe*, Berlin 2009, 234-291.

[2] For the Syriac text, see Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, ed. J.M. Vosté, CSCO 115, Louvain 1940, Latin translation J.M. Vosté, CSCO 116, Louvain 1940. For an English translation see M. Conti: Theodore of Mopsuestia: *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Downers Grove 2010 (hereafter: Eng.). For the Greek fragments, see R. Devreesse, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*, Vatican 1948, 305-419. For an English translation of the Greek fragments, see G. Kalantzis: Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Strathfield 2004. One may note Theodore's own statement that he will treat theological matters in the *Commentary* in a relatively concise way, referring the reader to his earlier work *On the Incarnation* (Theodorus Mopsuestenus,

on the minor Pauline epistles, extant in Latin[3], this work is the only one to have been fully preserved out of the numerous commentaries on almost the whole of the New Testament penned by Theodore. While a considerable amount of *catenae* Greek fragments are extant, the text in its entirety survives only in Syriac, which may account for the relatively scant scholarly attention it has received so far[4].

Already Theodore's master Diodore of Tarsus laid down the main contours of what would become the characteristic „Antiochene stance", especially the cardinal distinction between the Logos (son of God) and the *homo assumptus* („perfect man", „son of Mary", „the man", „son of David") – with the incarnation thus reduced to an indwelling of the Logos: because of Diodore's refusal to admit that human attributes can be predicated to the Logos that, according to Diodore, cannot be called „son of David". The Logos assumed flesh but did not *become* flesh. The consequence of this attempt to safeguard the divinity of the Logos was that another ultimate subject had to be found for the human predicates. Consequently, Christ was essentially perceived as two persons loosely united via „assumption", „clothing" or „indwelling" – the typical Antiochene terminology. The main difference between the indwelling in Christ and in the prophets was only a matter of duration and degree. Diodore's stance should be understood in the general context of Arian and Apollinarian (and Julian's) polemics in which he insisted on the complete humanity of Christ[5].

Commentarius in Joannem, CSCO 115, 210, lines 28-29, transl. Conti, p. 97; cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 34, lines 18-19, transl. Conti, p. 16).

[3] On Theodore's commentaries on the Pauline epistles, see U. Wickert, *Studien zu den PaulusKommentaren Theodors von Mopsuestia als Beitrag zum Verständnis der antiochenischen Theologie*, Berlin 1962.

[4] Recently, however, a detailed study was undertaken by Felix Thome – with an emphasis on the textual aspects of the work (F. Thome, *Studien zum Johanneskommentar des Theodore von Mopsuestia*, Bonn 2008).

[5] Greek terminology and theological polemics notwithstanding, the basic underlying incarnation concept of the assumed man and the indwelling Logos, the emphasis on Christ's humanity, and the devaluation and relativization of his divinity do not seem all that different from the crude christology of Aphrahat. In his exegesis, Diodore followed the rationalist interpretation of his teacher Eusebius of Emesa and insisted on a literal and historical method, strenuously opposing „the old wives' tales of the allegorists" and not looking for a hidden meaning in the text (see *Commentarii in Psalmos* 6, 1, ed. J.M Olivier, Paris 1980). In his partially recovered *Commentary on Psalms* he allows messianic relevance only to four Psalms (2, 8, 44, and 109). On Diodore's commentary on Psalms, see M.J. Rondeau, *Le „Commentaire des Psaumes" de Diodore de Tarse et l'exégèse antique du Psaume 109/10*, RHR 176 (1969) 153-188; 177 (1970) 5-33; idem, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier*, vol. 1, Rome 1982, 93-102. This calls to mind, all differences notwithstanding, Ephrem's general inclination toward literal interpretation and „low anthropology". The similarity between the Antiochene School and Ephrem's literalism and anti-allegorism, especially in his *Commentary on Genesis*, was noted by R.B. Ter Haar Romney, *A Syrian in Greek Dress: The Use of Greek, Hebrew and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis*, Leuven 1997, 93. Unfortunately we are dependent mostly on insufficient fragments for the recon-

Theodore of Mopsuestia would further refine the ideas of his master. Thanks to him, our picture of Antiochene theology and hermeneutics is greatly enhanced[6]. It is clear that for him also the polemical context constituted a major axis and impetus for his theological elaborations. In his *Commentary on John* Theodore clearly points to the parameters underlying his exegetical strategies; most prominently, he stresses the composition's polemical setting and its declared objective of refuting heresy – primarily, (against) that of the Arians and Apollinarians – paying special attention to verses in the gospel exploited by the heretics (ܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܘ)[7]. Our study therefore focuses on Theodore's responses to these challenges and the ways in which they reshaped his theology and especially his christological thinking as reflected mainly in the hermeneutical context of the *Commentary*.

1. Theology. Theodore's trinitarian ideas do not essentially differ from the Nicene outlook as developed in response to the Arian challenge throughout the fourth century. They have been amply studied, so we will relate to them only briefly, especially in regard to their polemical concerns, hermeneutical context and christological implications. In his commentary on the Johannine Prologue, Theodore addresses major Arian theological arguments – namely, that the Logos was created; it is not a truly divine hypostasis; it was created as

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struction of Diodore's theology and exegesis. On Diodore's theology, see Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, p. 181-196; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, p. 352-360. On Diodore's exegesis, see E. Schweizer, *Diodor als Exeget*, ZAW 40 (1941) 33-75; F. Thome, *Historia contra Mythos: Die Schrifauslegung Diodor's von Tarsus und Theodors von Mopsuestia im Widerstreit zu Kaiser Julians und Salustius' allegorischem Mythenverständnis*, Bonn 2004.

[6] On Theodore's theology, see also Norris, *Manhood and Christ*; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, p. 421-439. On his hermeneutics, see also D.Z. Zharopoulos, *Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Bible: A Study of his Old Testament Exegesis*, New York 1989; M. Simonetti, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, in: *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, ed. Ch. Kannengiesser, Leiden 2006, 799-828.

[7] Cf. e.g. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 3, lines 7-10, transl. Conti, p. 1; ibidem, CSCO 115, 5, lines 6-7, transl. Conti, p. 1-2. For discussion of Arianism, see T. Böhm, *The Exegesis of Arius: Biblical Attitude and Systematic Formation*, in: *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, p. 687-705; idem, *Die Christologie des Arius. Dogmengeschichtliche Überlegungen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Hellenisierungsfrage*, St. Ottilien 1991; R.C. Gregg – D.E. Groh, *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation*, Philadelphia 1981; R. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381*, Edinburgh 1988; R. Williams, *The Logic of Arianism*, JTS 34 (1983) 56-81; Ch. Kannengiesser, *Arius and the Arians*, „Theological Studies" 44 (1983) 456-475; *Arianism after Arius*, ed. M.R. Barnes – D.H. Williams, Edinburgh 1993. For anti-Arian arguments, see, e.g., Theodorus Mopsuestenus*, Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 8-14, 18 i 25. For discussion of the anti-Arian polemics in the *Commentary*, see Thome, *Studien zum Johanneskommentar*, p. 315-334. Theodore refers explicitly to the Arian Asterius who wrote a commentary on John which is lost, and it appears that at least some of Theodore's allusions to Arian interpretation of verses from John refer to that work. See Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 4-5, line 14 – line 14; 210, lines 16-25. He also refers to Eunomius (Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 3, lines 7-13).

a medium for the creation of the world and perhaps even exclusively of life. Against these doctrines, Theodore reestablishes that the Logos was a divine hypostasis, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, proceeding from him but not made by him, and whose existence is *not* a function of its role in the creation[8]. According to Theodore, the evangelist wanted to show that „the Son was always with the Father and that he is of the *same nature* (ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܠܗ, ὅμοιος τὴν φύσιν) and *a partner* (ܫܘܬܦܐ, κοινωνὸς) *with him in creation*", whose role was in no way limited to the creation of life[9]. He further emphasizes that the Son „has no communion [of nature] (ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ, κοινωνία)" with the created things (ܒܪܝܬܐ)[10].

Theodore presents his arguments as interpretation of the opening verses of the Gospel in what amounts to a discourse on the meaning of „in the beginning" (Jn 1, 1) and the unity of divine substance in philosophy and Scripture[11]. He rejects an Arian interpretation of Jn 1, 1 as referring to the „beginning" of the Logos, claiming that in the Scripture „the beginning" indicates something which is not preceded by anything else[12]. This instance is an example of Theodore's penchant for studying the meaning and usages of scriptural words and idioms to substantiate his hermeneutics. In a similar vein he argues that although elsewhere in the Scripture ܡܠܬܐ (λόγος) does not necessarily mean hypostasis, here it is clearly the case[13]. For Theodore, not only John, but also Paul and in fact Jesus himself expressed the same Logos-theology balancing between the Scylla of Arian distinction and the Charybdis of monarchian Sabellianism – a balancing act, which is nothing but Theodore's own version of post-Nicene theology[14]. Theodore moreover relates polemically, albeit in

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[8] Cf. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 14, lines 5-15; ibidem, CSCO 115, 18, lines 5-8; ibidem, CSCO 115, 112, lines 9-14. Theodore is aware that John's Prologue is an elaboration on the opening verses of Genesis and pits Genesis terminology – „one day" and not „first day" – against Arian interpretation of Jn 1, 1. For a midrashic parallel, see *Genesis Rabbah* 3, 8-9 (ed. J. Theodor – C. Albeck, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah*, Jerusalem 1965), where the meaning of „one day" in Gen 1, 5 likewise does not mean the „first day".

[9] Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 25, lines 11-16, transl. Conti, p. 12; ibidem, CSCO 115, 26, lines 5-19, transl. Conti, p. 2. Cf. Aphrahat, according to whom the world was not created via Christ (see S. Ruzer – A. Kofsky, *Syriac Idiosyncrasies: Theology and Hermeneutics in Early Syriac Literature*, Leiden 2010, 12-16).

[10] Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 24-25, line 29 – line 1, transl. Conti, p. 12.

[11] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 12, lines 20-25.

[12] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 16-17, line 17 – line 2; ibidem, CSCO 115, 25, lines 1-6.

[13] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 21, lines 3-8, transl. Conti, p. 10. Moreover, according to Theodore, the evangelist here intentionally avoids applying to the Logos the appellation „Son" in order not to mislead the reader with regard to his/its eternity, see ibidem, CSCO 115, 18, lines 4-10, transl. Conti, p. 8. In a similar vein, Theodore asserts that the Scripture uses a variety of appropriate appellations to indicate divine nature, e.g. „our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12, 29).

[14] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 24, line 25: „ܡܚܬ ܕܝܢ ܠܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ", transl. Conti, p. 11: „diminishing the person of the Spirit". Theodore appeals here to Heb 1, 3.

passing, to the divine status of the Spirit contested in his time by the so-called
πνευματομάχοι[15]. The Interpreter thus asserts that the Spirit, being uncreated
and unique, was not included among „all things" – meaning both visible and
invisible (ܚܕܐܬܝ ܗܕܐ ܚܕܐܬܝ) – made through the Logos (Jn 1, 3); it is united
exclusively to the Father and the Son (ܒܣܝ ܕܝ ܠܐܒܐ ܘܠܒܪܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ)[16].

2. Christology. We will now examine how Theodore's post-Nicene po-
lemical context informs his christological hermeneutics. Arian christology
was viewed as posing three main difficulties: (a) a λόγος-σάρξ christology
– admittedly not an exclusively Arian trait – where the Logos is perceived as
created and subject to change. The Logos is further regarded as substituting
the human νοῦς in Christ. This impairs Christ's full humanity and the prin-
ciple of „what is not assumed is not saved (*quod non est assumptum, non
est redemptum*)"; (b) the incarnation here is not, in fact, a true incarnation
of a deity, but of only a created, albeit heavenly, being; and (c) a concept of
tight union between the Logos and humanity in Christ raises the problem of
their reciprocal influence and hence a possible transformation of both. These
difficulties were compounded by the Apollinarian anti-Arian solution, ac-
cording to which a divine, non-created Logos substituted the human νοῦς in
a full-union incarnation.

In response to these challenges, already Diodore of Tarsus emphasized the
essential distinction between the Logos and the *homo assumptus* who is de-
ified by reason of conjunction (*synapheia*) to the latter. For Diodore the Logos
assumed flesh but did not *become* flesh. Thus Christ was perceived as two per-
sons loosely united via „assumption"[17]. This dichotomy in turn was perceived
as problematic and it is here that Theodore, though generally following Di-
odore's scheme, aspired for a more adequate concept of conjunction expressed
in his elaborate idea of the „dignity" of the assumed man as a divine power
bestowed on him by the Logos.

Theodore further develops Diodore of Tarsus' emphasis on the distinc-
tion between the Logos and the *homo assumptus* and communication between
them through a loose conjunction due to the difference of natures. With him,
however, this conjunction is characteristically mediated and expressed through
the „dignity' of the Logos bestowed on and empowering the assumed man[18].
Through the conjunction with the Logos, the assumed man also participates in
the other divine persons, the Father and the Spirit. Through Christ, humanity
will also share in this dignity. Theodore is clearly motivated here by the con-
cern to repel the attempts of the Arians to violate the divine transcendence. He

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[15] In relation to Jn 16, 12-14, ibidem, CSCO 115, 296, lines 19-21, transl. Conti, p. 136.

[16] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 26-27, line 19 – line 30, transl. Conti, p. 12-13.

[17] See Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, p. 181-196; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, p. 352-360.

[18] For these principles of Antiochene doctrine, see note 1, above.

is always concerned not to confuse the Godhead with the creature. As a result, the closeness of the conjunction of God and man is loosened. Vis-à-vis the Arians and Apolllinarians, the synthesis between the immanence and transcendence of God in Christ and in humanity is to be such that both the divinity of the Logos and the integrity of humanity in Christ are preserved.

Theodore rejects the λόγος-σάρξ model of incarnation found among his Arian opponents and votes instead for the λόγος-ἄνθρωπος scheme with an emphasis on Christ's human soul:

> „The disciples of Arius and Eunomius say that he (Christ) took a body but not a soul; the divine nature, they say, takes the place of the soul. And they lower the divine nature of the Unique (Son) to the point (of saying) that he declines from his natural grandeur and performs the actions of the soul, by enclosing himself in the body and accomplishing everything to make it «subsist.» Consequently, if the divinity takes the place of the soul, it (i.e. the body) had neither hunger, nor thirst, nor was it tired, nor did it have need of food; for all this happens to the body because of its weakness and because the soul is not equipped to satisfy the needs which it has, save according to the law of the nature which God has given it"[19].

Here, the Logos is combined with the body in a vital unity. According to Theodore, however, such a symbiosis contradicts Christ's true nature. If Christ was hungry, thirsty, and suffered, it could only be possible because the functions of life are performed by the human soul. Both body and soul, then, had to be assumed to enable the death of the body and the sins of the soul. Thus Christ assumed a soul and by the grace of God brought it to immutability and to a full dominion over the sufferings of the body[20]. The difference between this picture of Christ and that of the λόγος-σάρξ christology is clear. The human nature of Christ regains its real physical-human inner life and its capacity for action. The created soul provides the life for the body of Christ and is also the principle of the acts decisive for our redemption. Theodore demonstrates the activity of the assumed man's νοῦς against Apollinarius:

> „Moreover (the divine Son) furnished his cooperation in the proposed works to the one who was assumed. Where does this (cooperation) entail that the deity had replaced the (human) nous in him who was assumed? For it was not his wont to take the place of the nous […] But suppose, as you would have it, that the deity took the role of the nous in him who was assumed. How was he affected with fear in his suffering? Why, in the face of immediate need, did he stand in want of vehement prayers – prayers which, as the blessed Paul says, he brought before God with a loud and clamorous voice and with many tears?

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[19] Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Homiliae catecheticae* 5, ed. A. Mingana: *Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshūni*, Woodbrooke Studies 5, Cambridge 1932, 55, transl. according to Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, p. 150; cf. idem, *Homiliae catecheticae* 3, ed. Mingana, 40-41.

[20] Cf. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Homiliae catecheticae* 5, ed. Mingana, p. 55.

How was he seized with immense fear that he gave forth fountains of sweat by reason of his great terror?"[21]

Apollinarius and Theodore both agree that redemption is achieved through moral integrity, in the immutability of the spiritual principle in Christ. But while Apollinarius regards λόγος as this principle, Theodore emphasizes the enhanced human soul of Christ[22]. The human is the victor over sin and death, albeit only with God's grace, and the redeeming sacrifice of Christ is now seen as an act of his „human decision"[23]. When the complete humanity of Christ is thus emphasized, it is only logical that the distinction of his natures and the question of their unity must be stressed. The concept of πρόσωπον plays a special part in Theodore's understanding of Christ. According to the Interpreter's loose union christology, the two complete natures seem to be united only superficially through „one πρόσωπον" produced by the Logos not as an essential one but as a prosopon of „dignity", and given to the assumed man[24]. This is apparently the channel for infusing the humanity with „dignity"[25].

Theodore's hermeneutical endeavor provided him with a befitting opportunity for contextualizing his ideas. Thus Theodore applies his version of mitigated λόγος-ἄνθρωπος loose-union christology to the Gospel of John's narrative, propagating the idiosyncratic distinction between the „two modes" of speech and action by Christ – those expressing the divine nature of the Logos in him, and those indicating the exclusively human nature of the *homo assumptus*. The Interpreter asserts that the second mode is always employed when addressing Christ's enemies or when referring to his human weakness, whereas the first mode is employed in Christ's words and actions indicating the divine greatness[26]. This distinction pertains, according to Theodore, also to the words of John the Baptist and the narrative of John the Evangelist regarding Christ. In this sense, the Prologue stands out, as here the words of John the Evangelist – which Theodore limits to Jn 1, 1-14 – speak exclusively of the divine Logos „not diminish[ing] the Lord in any way"[27]. The incarnation is correspondingly explained out through the terminology of indwelling („and the Word became flesh" equals „and dwelt among us")[28].

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[21] Idem, *Contra Apollinarium* (fragments), ed. H.B. Swete, in: *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, vol. 2, Cambridge 1880, 315, transl. Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, p. 204.

[22] Cf. Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, p. 186-189.

[23] Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Homiliae catecheticae* 11, ed. A. Mingana, *Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshūni*, Woodbrooke Studies 6, Cambridge 1933, 15-16.

[24] Cf. Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, p. 228-229.

[25] In other words, this conjunction is not a combination of the two natures to form a new one but rather an equality of dignity now shared by Christ's human nature and the hypostasis of the Logos. Christ's πρόσωπον is thus the ultimate expression of the close conjunction between his humanity and the ὑπόστασις of the λόγος. See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, p. 433.

[26] Cf. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 11, lines 17-19

[27] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 11, lines 13-17, transl. Conti, p. 5.

[28] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 33-34, line 16 – line 16, transl. Conti, p. 16.

This interpretation is explicitly presented as part of anti-Arian polemic: Some Arians claim that „became" means that he has thus changed. Theodore likewise rejects what he describes as the majority view – namely, that the Logos indeed *became man*. According to him, therefore, the evangelist explains the matter sufficiently by adding in Jn 1, 14 „and dwelt among us" as an explanation to „and the Word became flesh"[29]. In his determination to dispel the notion of a full-blooded incarnation, Theodore further elaborates that „the Word became flesh" means nothing but that this was the erroneous opinion of „those who saw him" – namely, he was believed to be „only a man" because of his appearance[30].

In this context, Theodore also rejects the concept current in early Christian thought, according to which the Logos, which conveys the will of God, had been revealed personally to the righteous (ܙܕܝ̈ܩܐ) – namely, patriarchs and prophets – in the biblical past in quasi-angelic form. Theodore regards this idea as unacceptable associating it with contemporary heretical, primarily Arian, views. In fact, such views were entertained by such prominent early Christian writers as Justin, Irenaeus, Origen and Eusebius[31]. There is, actually, nothing peculiarly Arian about this view, but having been strongly advocated by Eusebius in the 4th century, it might have been regarded as smacking of Arianism. According to Theodore, it is only in the incarnation that the Logos was revealed hypostatically, and seen, whereas, earlier, God's words – were conveyed through angelic intermediaries[32].

Unlike his treatment of the Prologue, in the bulk of the commentary Theodore consistently applies his modified two-mode loose union christology to the Gospel narrative. A characteristic example may be found in his interpretation of John the Baptist's saying „After me comes a man who was made (= ranks) before me, for he was before me" (Jn 1, 30). According to Theodore, it would be redundant to claim the superiority of the pre-existent divine Logos over the Baptist; it should therefore be rather understood as referring to Christ's

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[29] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 34, lines 17-19, transl. Conti, p. 16. The Interpreter refers his audience for further discussion of the matter to his now lost *De Incarnatione* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܥܠ ܡܬܒܪܢܫܢܘܬܗ).

[30] He indeed became flesh only in the sense that he dwelt in the human nature. Theodore characteristically refers here to 2Cor 5, 4, where the human body is called tabernacle, dwelling place (ܡܫܟܢܐ ܐܘ ܒܝܬ ܡܥܡܪܐ). He notes that in Scripture, „flesh" equals the whole human being (our nature) – therefore here too (p. 34, line 1) by saying „became flesh," the evangelist in fact intended „became human". But again, (further on p. 34), „becoming" does not mean change but only the perception by others. Cf. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem* 33, 16 - 34, 3. See Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, p. 229-230.

[31] Cf. Justinus Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 56; Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses* III 11, 8; IV 5, 2-3; IV 7, 2-4; IV 9, 1; IV 10, 1; Eusebius Caesarensis, *Eclogae Propheticae* 1, 3; idem, HE I 2, 7-8; idem, *Demonstratio Evangelica* V 9, 8. See also S. Pines, *God, Glory and Angels According to a Second-Century Theology*, „Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought" 6 (1987) 1-14 (in Hebrew). It may be worthy of notice that this motif is absent in Aphrahat's writings, see Ruzer – Kofsky, *Syriac Idiosyncrasies*, p. 16.

[32] Cf. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 18-19.

humanity (ܐܢܫܘܬܗ). In other words, Jesus was more powerful than John even in his human nature with its acquired superior dignity (ܪܒܘܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܘܣܦܬܗ) in which he was elevated over all creatures thanks to his conjunction with the Logos (ܒܢܩܝܦܘܬܗ ܕܠܘܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ)[33]. The *Commentary* leaves no doubt that the application of John's words to the assumed man (ܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܐܬܢܣܒ) is tailored to annul the Arian claim that this is a proof-text for their idea that the Logos itself was created or generated[34].

Theodore further interprets the title „son of God" in the Baptist's follow-ing declaration „And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (Jn 1, 34) as *not referring* to the divine nature (ܐܠܗܘܬܗ) but rather *to his enhanced human nature* because of the *conjunction* of that nature with the Logos the only begotten (ܝܚܝܕܝܐ)[35]. Theodore anchors his interpretation in what he sees as the historical context of the idiom – namely, the traditional meaning of the „son of God" title according to the putative usage of Jesus' Jewish milieu:

> „Nathanael said that he was the *son of God* not because he knew about his divine birth (ܝܠܕܗ ܐܠܗܝܐ), but because it was *a familiar way of saying things*, since those who by their own *moral virtue drew near to God were called sons of God* (ܡܛܠ ܕܡܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܬܩܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܒܢܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ ܩܪܒܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܘܬ ܐܠܗܐ)["36].

Yet, Theodore never looses the sight of the anti-Arian agenda with its ne-cessity to highlight the „true divine sonship" of the Logos. He therefore has to balance this idea with his peculiar version of loose-union christology by claiming that the assumed man „through his conjunction with God the Logos (ܒܢܩܝܦܘܬܗ ܕܠܘܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ), by means of the spirit (ܡܢ ܪܘܚܐ ܕܒܗ ܚܕ) participated in a true sonship (ܐܫܬܘܬܦ ܒܒܢܝܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ)["37]. This participation is termed by the Interpreter as „adoptive sonship" (ܣܝܡܬ ܒܢܝܐ)[38].

Jesus himself is portrayed as constantly aware of the presence of the Logos; nevertheless, according to the Interpreter, Jesus mostly speaks as the assumed

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[33] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 43-44, line 24 – line 20, transl. Conti, p. 21. The word ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ expresses the idea of conjunction or connection of the two natures in Christ without intermingling.

[34] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 43, lines 27-30, transl. Conti, p. 21.

[35] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 47, lines 12-16, transl. Conti, p. 22.

[36] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 53, lines 18-22, transl. Conti, p. 25. Cf. the habitual Jewish exegesis of the „sons of God" in Gen 6, 4 (e.g., in the Aramaic Targum) as „sons of the chosen elite". See D. Flusser, *Jesus*, Jerusalem 2001, 113-123. Theodore (*Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 52, lines 1-5, transl. Conti, p. 24) also explains the rhetorical question by Nathanael „Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (Jn 1, 46) by suggesting – seemingly on the basis of „the Galilee of the Gentiles" in Is 9, 1-2; Mt 4, 15 – that the village was at that time much despised by the Jews because its inhabitants were mostly Gentiles (ܚܢܦܐ ܗܘ, ὑπ᾿ ἐθνικῶν). See also *Commentarius in Joannem* (CSCO 115, 83, lines 11-13, transl. Conti, p. 39) where Theodore emphasizes that now, „after he had talked about the divine nature (ܟܝܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ), the Baptist turned his attention to the *human nature* (ܟܝܢܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ)".

[37] Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 37-38, transl. Conti, p. 18.

[38] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 39, lines 26-28, transl. Conti, p. 19.

man, only rarely referring to the divine nature of the indwelling Logos. Occasionally Theodore inserts into his running commentary indications regarding guidelines of his exegetical functional division. Thus, for example, commenting on Jn 5, 22 („The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son"), the Interpreter states that this cannot possibly pertain to the divine nature in Christ „since the Logos […] does everything like the Father"[39]. Following the same logic, the passage in Acts 1, 11 („This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven") could refer only to the man who has been assumed – and who will come down from heaven – but not to the ubiquitous Logos, who is never separated from the Father[40]. However, it is clear for Theodore that the assumed man (ܕܐܬܢܣܒ ܐܢܫܐ) receives this omnipotent (ܚܠ ܠܣܠ) judiciary power, as well as the power of resurrection, only thanks to his conjunction with the Logos[41]. In a similar vein, Theodore interprets Jesus' appeal to God to raise Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11, 41-42) as coming from the assumed man as „it is abundantly clear that God the Logos would never need (ܐܠ ܓܝܪ ܣܢܝܩ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ, ἀπρεπὲς γὰρ τῷ Θεῷ Λόγῳ) to make a request through prayer to obtain power to raise the dead"[42].

The polemical context of the emphasis on the human subject of Jesus' sayings and acts comes to the fore in Theodore's comments on the assumed man's soul, which is intrinsically connected to the issue of Jesus' passion. Here, the Interpreter attacks head-on the λόγος-σάρξ christology of Apollinarians (and possibly Arians), which preempts the full humanity of the Messiah and, hence, the voluntary nature of his atoning death[43]. Theodore refers here, most pointedly, to Jn 10, 17: „For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my soul, and I may take it again". It is clear, then, that it was not the divine nature but the human one that spoke here about the *human* soul. It is this human soul that when the right time comes „voluntarily accepts death" (ܡܝ ܚܝܢܗ ܣܡܚܠ ܠܗ ܠܡܘܬܐ) and suffering[44].

Theodore thus often polemically emphasizes the enhanced human nature of the assumed man. He seems, however, to limit the occurrences when Jesus' acts and sayings are exclusively ascribed to the divine nature to a relatively few cases where exegetical exigencies demand it. For example, in various places, where Jesus' words or acts presuppose similarity or even equality with the Father, as in Jn 14, 11 („I am in the Father and the Father in me"), it must be understood as referring to his divine nature:

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[39] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 116, lines 1-7, transl. Conti, p. 54.
[40] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 116, lines 24-28.
[41] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 118-119, line 27 - line 1; ibidem, CSCO 115, 121, lines 15-18.
[42] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 229, lines 17-20, transl. Conti, p. 105.
[43] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 209, lines 5-7.
[44] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 205, lines 25-27, transl. Conti, p. 94.

„He is pointing the likeness of [his] *divine nature* (ܕܟܝܢܗ ܐܠܗܝܐ) with that of the Father. The assumed man could not be said to be like God the Father (ܠܗ ܓܝܪ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܢܣܒ ܡܫܒܚܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܡܬܕܡܝܘ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܐܒܐ)"[45].

The insistence on the Logos' equality and unanimity of will is presented explicitly as responding to a polemical challenge[46].

A telling example is provided by the story of healing the paralytic (Jn 5, 2-17). Unlike, for example, the tradition in Lk 13, 10-17, where Jesus offers quasi-halakhic arguments for his healing on the Sabbath, here Theodore seems to advocate the view that indeed the humans in general and, pointedly, the assumed man himself, are subject to Sabbath Jewish prohibitions without concessions backed by casuistic reasoning. However, according to Theodore's logic, the notion of equality with the Father assumes that it is no one else, but the consubstantial Logos who has the same authority to act on the Sabbath for our salvation: „There is no commandment or law that would prevent him from doing whatever he wants"[47].

Theodore's distinction between the „two voices" in Christ is further exemplified in his juxtaposition of the two and transition between them in various contexts where such juxtaposition allows coping with an exegetical constraint in accordance with his general hermeneutical approach. Thus commenting on the dynamic of Jesus' speech in the course of the same paralytic episode the Interpreter states that Jesus, first, being „rightly accused as *a man* of violating the Sabbath" switches to speaking about the greatness of the divine nature and afterwards „in good order he turned the discussion back to his human nature"[48].

Indeed, Theodore recognizes that certain words, like the personal pronoun „I" are employed for both voices, human and divine, yet he claims that in such cases they are accompanied by distinct qualifiers signaling the distinct natures and fluctuations between them:

„When he spoke about his humanity and his divinity, he referred the pronoun *I* to the common *prosopon* (ܒܕ ܓܝܪ ܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ ܡܛܠܬܗ ܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܘܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܘܗ ܐܢܐ ܕ ܘܐ ܡܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܓܘܢܝܐ). And in order to show that in all these passages he was not speaking about one and the same nature, he used different words (ܘܕܢܚܘܐ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܚܠܦ ܚܕ ܟܝܢܐ ܒܟܠܗܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܬܚܫܚ ܗܘܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ, ܗܘ)"[49].

Another illuminating example is provided by Jesus' use of the title „Son of Man" (ܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ, ܒܪܗ ܕܐܢܫܐ) in Jn 12, 23, where Theodore sees a reference:

[45] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 270, lines 17-19, transl. Conti, p. 124.

[46] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 112, lines 10-12, transl. Conti, p. 52: „[These words] demonstrate his [Logos'] equality with the Father and do not separate the one from the other in any way, as they [the heretics] maintain".

[47] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 103-105, line 17 – line 4, transl. Conti, p. 48.

[48] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 113-114, line 24 – line 5, transl. Conti, p. 52-53; cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 167, lines 5-12, transl. Conti, p. 77.

[49] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 168, lines 1-4, transl. Conti, p. 77. See also ibidem, CSCO 115, 271, lines 14-17, transl. Conti, p. 124-125.

„to *the man* who before the cross bore all the characteristics of humanity
(ܪܡܕ ܝ ܠܒܟ ܚܠܘܡ ܐܕܬܥܐ ܗܒܠ), but after the resurrection and ascension […]
is worshiped by all creatures because of his conjunction with God the Logos
(ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܕܝܢ ܡܬܕܐ ܘܡܘܠܡܐ ܘܠܐܟܪܐ ܠܐ ܕܠܘܠ ܢܣܓܘܕܘ ܗܠܠ ܠܥܠܬܐ ܕܐܐܠܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܠ ܘܬܘ ܕܬܘܕܐ
ܝܓܠ ܕܡܘܣ)”[50].

Granted that Theodore was well aware of the heavenly son-of-man figure of
Daniel 7, our interpreter seems to imply that Jesus intentionally adopted this
title because its dual meaning, as both human and heavenly, allowed it to be
consecutively suited at both pre- and post-resurrection stages of the revelatory
process.

   3. The Hermeneutics of Loose-Union Christology. In the *Commentary*,
the main features of Theodore's loose-union christology – succinctly expressed
by the distinction of voices in Christ – indeed appear in the exegetical context
of the treatise, albeit in a concise and unelaborated manner, as Theodore him-
self explains, referring the reader to his work *On the Incarnation* for a more
extensive treatment[51]. The conceptual framework of the conjunction of natures
is established by the particular application of the term *prosopon* as the medium
of the union. Thus, commenting on Jn 14, 10-13, the Interpreter clarifies:

   „He (Jesus) speaks about himself as about a single being (ܐܝܟ ܕܥܠ ܚܕ ܐܝܟ
   ܢܦܫܗ ܠܚ). He thus reveals the conjunction of the *prosopon* (ܘܣܒܚ ܕܩܘܦܐ
   ܘܦܢܝ ܩܣܐ). If this were not true, there would be no honor (ܐܝܩܪ) for him
   who was assumed (ܐܬܢܣܒ), since he evidently has a part in everything
   (ܒܟܠ ܕܥܒܕ) because of the one who dwells in him (ܡܛܠ ܗܘ ܕܥܡܪ ܒܗ)”[52].

We may note here how the phrase „conjunction of *prosopon*” essentially means
loose conjunction of natures in πρόσωπον.

   The conjunction of natures (ܢܣܒܚ ܕܩܝܢܒ) mediated by πρόσωπον
forms the channel for what Theodore calls „unanimity of will” (ܐܘܝܘܬܐ
ܗܘܦ ܕ ܝ ܨܒܝܢܐ, τοῦ βουλήματος ἡ ταυτότης)[53] and „proper communion”
(ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ)[54]. It is instructive that for clarifying the loose-union chris-
tology Theodore invokes here the authority of Paul in Rom 7, 21-25, where
the union of soul (νοῦς) and body (σῶμα, σάρξ) in fact presupposes a *conflict*
of distinct natures: „I see in my members another law at war with the law of
my mind […] I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my
flesh I serve the law of sin”[55]. The application of this well-known simile of
the psychosomatic union to the λόγος-ἄνθρωπος exemplifies the looseness of

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[50] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 240, lines 7-12, transl. Conti, p. 110.

[51] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 210, lines 28-29; 34, lines 18-19.

[52] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 271, lines 18-22, transl. Conti, p. 125.

[53] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 110, lines 15-17, 23, transl. Conti, p. 51.

[54] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 269, line 22, transl. Conti, p. 124.

[55] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 167, lines 12-30, transl. Conti, p. 77.

the prosopic conjunction[56], further illustrated by statements to the effect that „because of the conjunction of the natures they reached a *certain unity* (ܚܕܐ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܗ ܕܡܬܢܟܐ ܒܗ ܟܕ ܐܝܟ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ)", as well as by the language of „assumption" and „indwelling":

> „I (the *Logos*) was in the man (ܒܒܪܢܫܐ ܠܝ ܗܘܝܬ) and was considered to be a man by those who did not know me. Through him I did everything for the salvation of the human race, and *I assumed him* so that I might join him to the Father (ܐܒܐ, ܐܦܩܘܕܝܗ ܕܒ ܐܘܚܕܗ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܗ ܗܘܐ)"[57].

The prosopic union enables the influx of divine dignity unto the assumed man without annulling the humanity of Christ but rather enhancing it. This enhancement conditioned by the looseness of the conjunction results in abilities which are beyond ordinary human capacity. Such an understanding safeguards, albeit somewhat paradoxically, the full humanity of Christ in the incarnation. One of the salient expressions of this acquired dignity is the power to perform miracles transcending the laws of nature, of which the ultimate example is the ability to „take up his soul by returning it to his body" in the resurrection[58]. The acquired dominion[59], as well as the mental and cognitive powers, far exceeding the usual human wisdom, constitute another feature of the enhanced humanity[60]. The superior, albeit still human, cognitive powers are emphasized against Apollinarian and Arian christologies denying a human soul in Christ[61]. Generally speaking, through this received dignity, the assumed man „was made a participant of this honor (ܐܝܩܪܐ) together with the Father"[62].

4. Religious anthropology and soteriology. For Theodore, the concept of empowerment by divine dignity through the prosopic union becomes the channel of also conjoining humanity at large via Jesus as the assumed man – and thus in an indirect and inferior way – to the Logos. This is the Interpreter's general soteriological scheme that finds its expression also in the *Commentary on John* reflecting at the same time his dualistic loose-union christology[63].

The ongoing empowerment of the believers takes place in the descent of the Spirit in the Eucharist. Theodore's treatment of the Eucharist highlights the polemical context of both his pneumatology and christology. On the one hand, he emphasizes – evidently against the *pneumatomachoi* – the divine consubstantial nature of the Spirit, while on the other hand, he reiterates the complete

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[56] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 167, lines 12-30.

[57] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 304, lines 11-16, transl. Conti, p. 140.

[58] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 208-209, line 25 - line 4, transl. Conti, p. 96. See also ibidem, CSCO 115, 205-206, line 26 - line 2, transl. Conti, p. 94; ibidem, CSCO 115, 270, lines 19-21, transl. Conti, p. 124.

[59] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 113, lines 19-22.

[60] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 209, lines 1-3.

[61] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 209, lines 5-6.

[62] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 117, lines 17-18, transl. Conti, p. 54.

[63] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 315, lines 17-21.

separation between the divine nature of the Spirit and the humanity of Christ's eucharistic post-resurrection body – to be „eaten symbolically" (ܩܘܠܣܐ) – which is evidently informed by the Interpreter's dualistic christology[64].

5. Human Development in Christ. The consequence of the aspiration to safeguard the divinity of the Logos within the anti-Arian context was that another ultimate subject had to be found for the human predicates of Christ related to in the Gospel account. The loose-union model, employed for this end, had to be complemented through its specific implementation in the idea of the human development of the *homo assumptus* leaving the Logos unaffected and unchanged by the processes undergone by Christ's dignity-enhanced humanity.

The issue of human development in Christ was naturally raised in the context of the question of the precise moment of the union between the Logos and humanity in the incarnation, remaining undetermined in the christological discourse for a long time after Theodore[65]. He seems to distinguish between the pre-union and post-union phases following Mary's impregnation. While during the former the Logos is present, but no union is as yet effected, in the latter – taking place at a certain undefined moment of the pregnancy or at the very moment of birth – the union comes about through the mediation of the Spirit. This motif of the Spirit as the active agent in the incarnation is, of course, a traditional feature derived from its prominent place in the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke. Theodore's adaptation of this motif to the claim for the existence of a pre-union stage can be understood in the context of his overall loose-union christology and viewed as a residual form of adoptionism of sorts applied to the early period of the pregnancy[66].

Tellingly, this developmental pattern continues also after the incarnation, where Theodore discerns two consecutive operational modes of the Logos on the humanity in Christ – potential and effective. This is clearly dictated by Theodore's insistence on the full humanity as the subject of development in Christ, which had to be emphasized against Arian and Apollinarian views[67]. He applies the first mode, when the empowerment by the Logos is not yet active, to the period preceding Jesus' anointment by the Spirit at baptism. This seems to be the background for Theodore's fierce rejection of apocryphal stories of Jesus' childhood miracles in the Infancy Gospels[68].

The second, effective, mode is initiated by the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism,

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[64] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 152-153, transl. Conti, p. 70-71. For further elaboration on the Eucharist, cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 142-143, line 9 - line 3; CSCO 151, 148-153.

[65] Cf. e.g., Philoxenus Mabbugensis, *In Prologum Iohannis* 4, 17. See Ruzer – Kofsky, *Syriac Idiosyncrasies*, p. 131.

[66] Cf. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 296, lines 26-29.

[67] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 33-34. See also R. Lorenz, *Die Christusseele im Arianischen Streit. Nebst einigen Bemerkungen zur Quellenkritik des Arius und zur Glaubwürdigkeit des Athanasius*, ZKG 94 (1983) 1-51.

[68] Cf. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 59, lines 3-12.

explicitly marked by Theodore as conferring the additional grace of empowerment[69]. This grace sets in motion Jesus' public ministry, miraculous powers and moral perfection newly acquired by his enhanced humanity[70]. Resembling what Augustine would claim with regard to humanity in general, Theodore presupposes regarding Christ a need for an additional influx of God's grace in order to achieve moral perfection[71]. Theodore thus advocates a notion of development in Christ's human nature reaching its perfection in the anointment by the Spirit, which becomes, in effect, the crowning stage of the incarnation. This enhanced human nature, however, is no longer an ordinary human nature – it now participates in the divine goodness on behalf of all humanity that will „participate in all the things that happened to him" (ܪܟܠܗ ܕܗܘܡ ܕܐܠ ܙܐܝ)[72].

Following the internal logic of the Gospel narrative, Theodore further seeks to conceptualize in christological terms also the events of the post-resurrection stage, incorporating it into his overall scheme of the progressive development of Jesus' humanity. The Interpreter emphasizes time and again that the sayings in John regarding the resurrected Christ's ascension refer to the assumed man and not to the Logos, which remains immutable – one more indication of Theodore's loose union christology and polemical agenda:

> „The Son of Man will ascend (ܢܣܩܠܗ) into heaven, and this is something that has never happened to anyone until now. Therefore, when he ascends, he will clearly demonstrate the *nature dwelling in him* (ܗܒ ܒܗ ܕܥܡܪ ܟܝܢܐ) that naturally descended without moving (ܕܢܚܬ ܠܗ ܟܝܢܐܝܬ) from any place [...] He (the Logos) therefore assumed him into heaven (ܠܫܡܝܐ ܢܣܒܗ) as the one who must be exalted over everything"[73].

This post-resurrection enhanced state of Christ's humanity is described in terms of fulfilling the potential of the dignity bestowed on it[74]; it is moreover perceived as derived from a *new, stronger, mode of conjunction* with the Logos:

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[69] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 80, lines 7-9..

[70] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 296-297, line 29 - line 2.

[71] Cf. e.g., Augustinus, *De spiritu et littera* 5; idem, *Epistula* 217 (to Vitalis); idem, *De correptione et gratia* 34-38..

[72] Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 297, lines 2-7, transl. Conti, p. 137.

[73] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 72, lines 5-16, transl. Conti, p. 34.

[74] Which in turn finally allows the suspended recognition by the disciples and others of the indwelling Logos: „The dignity of the assumed man was so great that it was perceived that God dwelled in him (ܗܘ ܒܗ ܕܥܡܪ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ, ܕܐܬܢܣܒ ܕܐܢܫܐ ܪܘܬܗ ܗܘܬ ܪܒܐ ܗܟܢ)" (Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 310, lines 15-16, transl. Conti, p. 143 with a slight change). See also the Greek fragment to Jn 17, 4-5: „Reveal me to them making known to them my divine nature (τὴν θείαν μου φύσιν) [...] the invisible one, through which my glory is also made manifest (τὴν ἀόρατον, δι᾽ ἧς καὶ ἡ δόξα μου γίνεται καταφανής)". See ibidem, CSCO 115, 310, lines 15-16. Jesus is in fact presented as being aware of the gap between his human state and dignity and his future post-resurrection glory and dignity. See ibidem, CSCO 115, 255, lines 14-18.

„He (the assumed man) separated his person from other human beings […]
by indicating that he had received a *more excellent* grace (ܩܘܒ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܝܬ
ܘܗܒܬ) through which he is joined together
with God the Logos like a *real* son (ܚܒܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܟܚܕܐ
ܕܒܪܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ)”[75].

The upgraded conjunction finds its principal manifestation in Jesus' ascension
and his newly acquired universal dominion (ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ, τὴν κατὰ πάντων
ἐξουσίαν)[76].

    Finally, it leads to the perfect conjunction (ܚܒܝܫܘܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ, ܠܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ)
with the Father mediated through the Logos, which was proclaimed sepa-
rately in advance, according to Theodore, by both Jesus and the Logos[77].
This new phase of conjunction with the Father is manifested by the greater
glory of the assumed man in his post-resurrection heavenly existence[78].
Theodore indicates here the polemical implication of his position: in con-
tradistinction to the Arians who exploit Jn 14, 28 („I go to the Father;
for the Father is greater than I”) to prove that the nature of the Father is
greater than that of the Son-Logos, Theodore claims that Jesus referred
here to the enhanced mode of conjunction of the assumed man and not
to the „Logos whose divine nature did not suffer the torment of the cross
(ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܚܫ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܡܠܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܕܢܚܫ ܒܝ ܠܕܐ)”[79].

    As Theodore reiterates this loose union perception again and again, it
seems to be not only a reaction to a localized exegetical constraint but rather
a reflection of a core element of the Interpreter's outlook. And he succinctly
summarizes it in the context of his comments to Jn 17, 11:

    „When our Lord wanted to put an end to that death and make humanity imperi-
    shable (ܠܐ ܡܬܚܒܠܢܘܬܐ) […] he *assumed* one man as the principle of all, in which
    God the Logos *dwelled*. He caused *him* to perform and endure all the things that
    happen to human beings while living a life of the utmost integrity […] But after
    he rose from the dead, he was born into another life […] as *a new imperishable
    man* (ܟܕ ܐܬܝܠܕ ܡܢ ܡܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܐܢܫܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܒܠܢܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܐܟܠ ܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ) and after re-
    ceiving *the entire gift of the Spirit* (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ ܟܠܗ ܕܪܘܚܐ ܒܬܪ ܕܩܒܠ), he easily
    (ܕܠܝܠܐܝܬ) did all the things that were required in this world for our salvation.
    Since he received immortality *after his resurrection*, he (the *man*) was made

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[75] Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 350, lines 19-22, transl.
Conti, p. 162.

    [76] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 306, lines 26-30, transl. Conti, p. 141.

    [77] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 273, lines 5-9, transl. Conti, p. 125; 271, lines 3-4, transl. Conti, p. 124.

    [78] Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 278, lines 19-21.

    [79] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 278-279, line 29 – line 1, transl. Conti, p. 128. See M. Simonetti, *Giovanni
14:28 nella controversia ariana*, in: *Kyriakon. Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. P. Granfield –
J.A. Jungmann, vol. 1, Münster 1970, 151-161.

Lord of all in his *conjunction* with God the Logos (ܡܫܘܬܦ ܗܘܬ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܘܐ ܕܟܠ ܢܫܩ ܗܘܐ)"[80].

It is apparent here and elsewhere in the *Commentary* that the body of the assumed man in his post-resurrection existence acquires a new physical mode: „he (the resurrected Jesus) had assumed forever the sublime and admirable garment of incorruptibility (ܠܚܡܐ ܘܕܟܐ ܘܬܗܡܘܬܐ ܘܡܫܒܚܐ ܠܒܫ ܗܘ ܘܡܙܕܟܝ ܠܐ ܒܡܬܚܒܠܢܘܬܐ, τῷ εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν μεταχωρήσαντι σώματι)"[81]. Moreover, this dramatic change pertains not only to his human body but also to his human soul, which now finally becomes immutable *similarly to the Logos*:

> „[The resurrected Jesus] had received a better life in an imperishable body and an immutable soul (ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܐ ܘܢܦܫܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܒܠܢܐ ܠܐ ܚܝܐ)"[82].

Although the concept of such imperishability is not peculiar to Theodore, for him, it is idiosyncratically integrated into his overall scheme of a progressive upgrade of the humanity of the assumed man as caused by the enhanced conjunction with λόγος and, correspondingly, the realization of the full potential of grace through the Holy Spirit after resurrection.

Furthermore, this transformation of the humanity of Christ appears to be taken a step further, somewhat reminiscent of Origen's concept of the resurrected body. The Interpreter states explicitly that the new body is not simply an enhanced natural human body but is in fact „a *different and exalted* body (ܦܓܪܐ ܕܡܥܠܝ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܡܕܡ)"[83]. Theodore emphatically specifies that this „different and exalted" body is „spiritual and luminous", which may refer to Jesus' appearance in the scene of the transfiguration, probably understood as a prefiguration of his post-resurrection bodily glory[84].

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

We have shown how Theodore's enterprise, engendered by the impetus to respond to the main theological crises of his generation, led him to further

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[80] Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 313, lines 19-30, transl. Conti, p. 145.

[81] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 347, lines 9-11, transl. Conti, p. 160. Cf. ibidem, CSCO 115, 350, lines 5-8, transl. Conti, p. 162.

[82] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 347, lines 4-6, transl. Conti, p. 160.

[83] Ibidem, CSCO 115, 349, line 14, transl. Conti, p. 161.

[84] This concept is also consistent with Theodore's general preference for a logical and quasi-realistic interpretation – in this case, for Jesus' miraculous appearance before the disciples in a room safely locked from the inside: „Since he rose from the tomb as a spiritual being (ܪܘܚܢܐ), luminous (ܢܗܝܪܐ), thin and agile, he easily passed through closed doors and whatever else he wanted to without any difficulty – although it was no one else who had risen other than that same person who was dead but nevertheless, in the glory of immortality (ܒܫܘܒܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܒܠܢܘܬܐ), was in a state incomprehensible to us" (ܕܠܐ ܡܬܕܪܟ ܡܢ ܬܪܥܝܬܢ) (Jn 20, 26). See Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in Joannem*, CSCO 115, 357-358, line 28 - line 2; cf. 1Cor 15, 40-44. 51-53.

developing the loose-union christology solution inherited from his master Diodore. Moreover, the polemical dynamic of Theodore's thinking resulted in a bold and consistent portrait of Christ's development and gradual realization of the dignity potential as pertaining exclusively to his humanity. This indeed seems unprecedented and indicative of Theodore's original genius applied in the hermeneutical framework as part of the battle over the „right" understanding of the constitutive acts and sayings of Jesus. Let us note parenthetically that in our earlier study, we have outlined a complementing aspect of Theodore's originality, his relatively mitigated supersessionism vis-à-vis the Jews.

One observes here an instructive dialectic: Theodore's enterprise, which aimed at safeguarding the immutable divinity of the Logos vis-à-vis the Arians and thus producing a definitive closure to the main theological schism of the first century of Christian dominion would, in turn, provide the seeds of contention for the fifth-century christological disputes. It is in the context of those later disputes that the Interpreter would be anachronistically branded – together with other diphysites, especially of the Antiochene School – as a Nestorian and Judaizer[85].

HERMENEUTYKA TEODORA Z MOPSUESTII: TEOLOGIA PRZEKSZTAŁCONA W ODPOWIEDZI NA TEOLOGICZNE KRYZYSY IV WIEKU

(Streszczenie)

Niniejsze studium ukazuje, w jaki sposób egzegeza Teodora z Mopsuestii, powstała w reakcji na główne spory teologiczne IV w., wpływała na dalszy rozwój jego chrystologii, którą odziedziczył po swoim mistrzu – Diodorze z Tarsu. Polemiczna dynamika myślenia Teodora doprowadziła go do wytworzenia obrazu Chrystusa, skupiającego się wyłącznie na Jego człowieczeństwie. Rozwój ten jest wyraźnie dostrzegalny przede wszystkim w zachowanym w języku syryjskim *Komentarzu na Ewangelię według św. Jana*. Niniejszy artykuł skupia się zatem na analizie tego komentarza i poszukiwaniu w nim wskazań Teodora na wyzwania czasów w których żył, zwłaszcza ówczesnych herezji (głównie arianizmu i apolinaryzmu), oraz dróg, które wiodły go do przekształcenia jego teologii, w szczególności zaś chrystologicznego myślenia, odzwierciedlonego w hermeneutycznym kontekście *Komentarza*.

Key words: Theodore of Mopsuestia, exegesis, theological disputes, christology.

Słowa kluczowe: Teodor z Mopsuestii, egzegeza, spory teologiczne, chrystologia.

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[85] On Theodore's stance on Jews and Judaism, see A. Kofsky – S. Ruzer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia on Jews and Judaism: Mitigated Supersessionism in Christological and Hermeneutical Context*, „Revue des Études Juives" (forthcoming).