

**A CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY IN THE *HEXAEMERON* OF BASIL THE GREAT AND IN THE *HEXAEMERON* OF AMBROSE OF MILAN AS PROCESS OF RELEASING OF THE IMAGES OF THE ANTIQUE CULTURE FROM THE PAGAN INFLUENCE**

**O activitate educativă creștină în *Hexameronul* lui Vasile cel Mare și Ambrozie din Milano ca proces de eliberare a imaginilor culturii antice de sub influența păgână**

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**Abstract:** *This article aims at showing the process of releasing some terms, metaphors and images of the antique culture from the paganish connotations, and sometimes affiliation them with the christian dogmatic. Two exegetical tractates are compared: „Hexameron“ of st.Basil and „Hexameron“ of st.Ambrose of Milan. Significant are four images: commentary on the words „the Heaven and the Earth“ from Gen 1:1, image of the rain, image of the bee as example of the mechanism of the government, commentary on the words „in the beginning“ from the Gen 1:1.*

**Key words:** Hexaemeron, the Heaven, the Earth, the cause, the matter, the Beginning.

The activity of the christian thinkers from the first century was aimed at the interpretation, explaining, and demonstration of the event of the incarnation of God as a real matter of fact. In particular it was important for the dialog with the pagans, among whom we can find on the one hand those, who was sharply criticizing the christianity and on the other those, who was making some syncretical religious forms (gnosticism for example). It is of a great significance to note, that christians have countered the problem, what to do with the cultural background of the antiquity. There were developed some questions of theology, philosophy, literature, science, but they all were together as a whole corpus of undivided subjects. The activity of a person from the antiquity was inseparable from the antique religion too. There were some thinkers, who tried to reject the pagan wisdom (Tertullian), but there were also such people who partly rejected and partly took some useful elements. Such method became the most fruitful and functional.

For some authors the explanation of christianity in tradition and in terms of the antique philosophy became the apologetic, missionar and educational task. Taking it in account Young writes, that one of the paradoxal moments in the patristic interpretation of such activity became the "secularisation" of the pagan philosophy, literature, culture, education, because ist philosophical, theological terms and images were disengaged by the christian authors from the pagan religion.<sup>1</sup>

There were already in the first century some authors, who reflected on the Old Testament texts in the terms and categories of the greek philosophy. For example Philo of Alexandria. As Dowson<sup>2</sup> assumes, Philo has reduced famous philosophical

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> D. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria*, California, 1992, p. 73.

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statements in anonymous conceptions, released from the influence of pagan religion. In this article I want to show how this problem was made up by the christian authors of the 4th century Basil the Great and Ambrose of Milan.

Christian thinkers, when they were releasing popular and easy understandable for the antique society images from the connection with the pagan religion, showed the christian interpretation of this images and formed the christian way of thinking. We can see the examples of such idea in the works of Clemens of Alexandria, Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great - among greek authors and among the latine authors we can name Ambrose (who refered to the works of the greek authors). Studer<sup>3</sup> names this process "conversion of values" through which the old became the new without losing its worth. In such a way christian thinkers have adopted not the philosophy of the antique world, but the language, which can express transcendent reality in the context of the christian Revelation. Through the exegetical texts of Ambrose and Basil we will see in this article four examples of the christian educational theology, which was released from the antique pagan influence.

- The image of the "heaven and earth" from Gen 1:1
- The rain
- The bees
- The notion "Beginning" from the Gen 1:1

### 1. The heaven and the earth:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen 1:1

Basil the Great "Hexaemeron" 1:7	Ambrose of Milan "Hexaemeron" 1:20
<p>"In the beginning God made heaven and earth." By naming the two extremes, he suggests the substance of the whole world, according to heaven the privilege of seniority (τῷ μὲν οὐρανῷ τὰ πρῶτα τῆς γενέσεως ἀποδοῦς), and putting earth in the second rank. All intermediate beings (εἴ τι τούτων μέσον) were created at the same time as the extremities (τὰ τῆν μέσην τούτοις ἐκπληροῦντα)".</p>	<p>"Nevertheless, for our present purposes it is sufficient to assert that in the beginning He created the heaven, from which proceeds the preliminary cause of generation (<b>praerogativa generationis et causa</b>), and created the earth, in which existed the substance of generation. (<b>generationis substantia</b>). In fact, with heaven and earth were created those four elements from which are generated everything in the world."</p>

<sup>3</sup> B. Studer, *Mysterium caritatis. Studien zur Exegese und zur Trinitätslehre in der Alten Kirche*, Roma, 1999, p. 120.

The comparison of this two fragments gives us an opportunity to understand the method of adaptation, that was used by Ambrose. We can note that there is no such thing by Ambrose as "intermediate beings" between the heaven and the earth, and these last elements are considered as the limiting elements of the Universe.<sup>4</sup> The biblical "heaven and earth" by Basil are stated as an obvious objects, which everybody can see. In reference to "And the earth was without form, and void" he marks, that the same could be said about the heaven, because it wasn't enlightened by the luminaries: neither by the sun, neither by the moon or stars. This is the very literal interpretation of the biblical text. Ambrose (1.2.7.) on the contrary will under the influence of Origen attribute to heaven the unseen substance, and to the earth the perceptible substance.

Further van Winden<sup>5</sup> notes, that inspite of the fact, that "praerogativa generationis" by Ambrose is the verbal Translation of the "τὸ ἀπροσβέβλητον γενέσεως" by Basil, there is some addition. We can see the word "causa", and it changes the sence: "from which proceeds the preliminary cause of generation". More than that Ambrose alternatively to Basil notes, that Gen 1:1 means not the seen elements of the world, but two principles of the Universe: the form and substance, "from which" (in his – Ablativus Instrumenti) then originate four elements.

Van Winden explains, that the opposition of this terms (causa et substantia) - it is a classical stoic cosmology (causa et materia). In allegorical interpretation there are Heaven (Uranus) and Earth (Gaia) as active and passive elements, that were the parents of the Universe. The heaven (causa) is causa rerum (principle of the whole creation), that is opposite to the Earth (substantia) - earthly matter, because it forms the earth. Seneca states this idea with such words: there is something, that exists and there "should be something, whence it comes, from what it originates: the first one is

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<sup>4</sup> It is possible, that Ambrose observed the mention by Basil of the "intermediate being" as a reference to the pagan philosophy of Plato. The Dissertation in the dialogue "Timeus" about the correlation between the four elements in the world's flesh contents the notion "intermediate being" 31b6-32c4: "But two things cannot be rightly put together without a third; there must be some bond of union between them... a single mean would have sufficed to bind together itself and the other terms... as the world must be solid, and solid bodies are always compacted not by one mean but by two, God placed water and air in the mean between fire and earth, and made them to have the same proportion so far as was possible." (31.c.1: δύο δὲ μόνω καλῶς συνίστασθαι τρίτου χωρὶς οὐ δυνατόν· δεσμὸν γὰρ ἓν μέσῳ δεῖ τινα ἀμφοῖν συναγωγὸν γίνεσθαι. 32.b.1 **μία μεσότης** ἂν ἐξήρει τὰ τε μεθ' αὐτῆς συνδεῖν καὶ ἑαυτήν, γῆν δὲ στερεοειδῆ γὰρ αὐτὸν προσῆκεν εἶναι, τὰ δὲ στερεὰ μία μὲν οὐδέποτε, δύο δὲ εἰ μεσότητες συναρμόττουσιν· οὕτω δὲ πυρὸς τε καὶ γῆς ὕδωρ ἀέρα τε ὁ θεὸς ἓν μέσῳ θείει...). The similiar way of thinking we find by Basil, Hexam.1.7 : "as therefore height and depth are the points the most opposed to each other it is enough to mention the most distant parts to signify the inclusion of all which fills up intervening Space. Do not ask, then, for an enumeration of all the elements; guess, from what Holy Scripture indicates, all that is passed over in silence."

<sup>5</sup> J. C. M. van Winden, „Heaven and Earth in Genesis 1:1“, in *Romanitas et Christianitas*, Amsterdam/London, 1973, p. 380.

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the cause, the second one is the matter".<sup>6</sup> By Aetius we can find such fragment from Zeno: "the beginnings are god and substance (τὴν ὕλην), from which the first one is the cause (αἴτιος) of the action, the second one of the passive".<sup>7</sup> Essential in this context is one more Fragment from Chalcidius: "There is a good many of such thinkers, who distinguish the substance (silva) from the essence (essentia), as Zeno and Chrysippus. As the "substance" they name that, what is in the fundament of such things, that have properties; as the "essence" they name the initial matter of all things or the most primordial basis, that is by nature without face and without form: as for example copper, gold, ferrum and other of ist kind - it is a substance for the things which are made from it, but it is not the essence of it. In fact if it all exist, the first one - it is the cause (**causa**), the second one - it is the substance (**substantia**)".<sup>8</sup>

When Pizzolato<sup>9</sup> comments on the words of Ambrose „generationis substantia“ he marks a strange thing: the more verbaly he follows the greek text, the more divergence with it in sence. For example Ambrose translates „ὑπόρξει“ as „substantia“. Literally it is the same, but Amberose adds the word „causa“, what changes the context of situation.

So Ambrose makes accent on the heaven and earth as the causa and substantia, and therefore deviates from the exegetical tradition of Basil, from the platonic allusions and comes back to the allegories, but this allegories through the stoic point of view become christian.

Henke<sup>10</sup> writes that in the beginning of the text, deviating from the interpretation of Basil, Ambrose crucially rejects apparently pagan notion about the three first priciples of the Universe and proposes his own version about the two first principles. Furthermore Ambrose begins his Hexameron with the polemic against the version about the three first principles: "there are so many opinions among the people, that some of them announced, that three principles form the Universe: God (deum), Pattern (exemplar), sunstance (materia) - this is the idea of Plato and his flock".<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Aetius I.3.25 (DDG p. 289): Ζήνων Μνασέου Κιτιεύς ἀρχὰς μὲν τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὴν ὕλην, ὧν ὁ μὲν ἐστὶ τοῦ ποιεῖν αἴτιος, ἡ δὲ τοῦ πάσχειν, στοιχεῖα δὲ τέσσαρα.

<sup>8</sup> Chalcidius in Tim c. 290. Plerique tamen silvam separant ab essentia, ut Zeno et Chrysippus. Silvam quippe dicunt esse id, quod subest his omnibus quae habent qualitates, essentiam vero primam rerum omnium silvam vel antiquissimum fundamentum earum, suapte natura sine vultu et informe: ut puta aes, aurum, ferrum et caetera huius modi silva est eorum, quae ex iisdem fabrefiunt, non tamen essentia. At vero quod tam his quam ceteris ut sint **causa** est, ipsum esse **substantiam**.

<sup>9</sup> L. F. Pizzolato, „La dottrina esegetica di sant`Ambrogio“, in *Studia Patristica Mediolanensia*, Milano, 1978. p. 85.

<sup>10</sup> R. Henke, *Basilus und Ambrosius über das Sechstagerwerk*, Basel, 2000, p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> It is important to note, that Hyppolitus from Rome writes the same: Refutatio omnium haeresium sive in Sanctam Theophaniam Philosophumena 1.19.1 ὁ δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ὀρίζει ἐστὶ ταῦτα. Ἀρχὰς εἶναι

It means, that Ambrose as well, as other patristic authors (Hippolytus of Rome) fundamentally rejected philosophical doctrine about the three first principles as pagan one. In his Hexameron he tends to show the christian dimension of the image of the heaven and earth as about the two elements. But mostly he doesn't invent his position, he bases on the commentaries of Origen and Philo.

Origen was thinking about the heaven and the earth as about two types of substance: "the imaginable substance of the immaterial things" and "the material substance without form" (this commentary on the book Genesis doesn't survive, but it is well-known in recitation by Chalcidius<sup>12</sup> and similar idea is expressed by Origen in "De principiis" 2.9.1.<sup>13</sup>) Equal interpretation we can find by Philo of Alexandria, but in another terms: he considers the heaven and the earth from Gen 1:1 as *κόσμος νοητός* and *αίσθητός*<sup>14</sup> (the imaginable world and the sensual world). In addition „κόσμος νοητός“ - it is a collection of the divine ideas, the Logos.<sup>15</sup> The confirmation of it Philo finds in the fact, that the creation of the heaven and earth as well as of the man are mentioned in the Bible twice. It proposes that at the first time was created immaterial idea of the heaven and the earth - the Logos of the creation, at the second time was created the corporeal creation.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. The rain:

Both of the authors, Basil and Ambrose speak about the four elements of the material world. They are mixed and contain one another. We can mark, that the argument of Basil that the water and the air are contented in the earth ("The earth contains water, as diggers of wells teach us. It contains air too, as is shown by the vapours that it exhales under the sun's warmth when it is damp. ") Ambrose omits and adds his own idea about the water, that is in the air. With reference to Gen 1:7 "And God made the Firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so" he remind about the

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τοῦ παντός θεόν καιῦλην καιπαράδειγμα· In the same way thinks Alkinoos: „μετὰ δέἐπομένως περί τῶν ἀρχῶν... και πρώτον γε περίῦλης λέγωμεν... ἔτι καιἄλλας ἀρχάς παραλαμβάνει, τήν τε παραδειγματικήν, τουτέστι τήν τῶν ἰδεῶν, και τήν τοῦ πατρὸς τε καιἰατίου πάντων θεοῦ.“ Alkinoos Dadaskalikos. VIII.1, IX.1.

<sup>12</sup> J. C. M. van Winden, *Calcidius on matter. His doctrine and sources*, Leiden, 1965.

<sup>13</sup> Porro esse et Scriptura dicit „numero et mensura universa“ /Sap 11:20/ condidit deus, et idcirco „numerus“ quidem recte aptabitur **rationalibus** creaturis vel **mentibus**, ut tantae sint, quantae a providentia dei et dispensari et regi et contineri possint. „Mensura“ vero **materiae corporali** consequenter aptabitur.

<sup>14</sup> Philo De orificio mundi 19: ὡς ἄρα τήν μεγαλόπολιν κτιζειν διανοηθεὶς ἐνενόησε πρότερον τοῦς τύπους ἀύτῆς, ἐξ ὧν κόσμον νοητὸν συστησάμενος ἀπετέλει και τὸν αἰσθητὸν παραδειγματι χρώμενος ἐκείνῳ.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, 20 οὐδὲν ἄν ἕτερον εἴποι τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον εἶναι ἢ θεοῦ λόγον ἤδη κοσμοποιῦντος... For further details: A.P.Фокин Формирование Тринитарной доктрины в латинской патристике. М.: 2014. С.112.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 29: πρώτον οἶν ὁ ποιῶν ἐποίησεν οὐρανὸν ἀσώματον και γῆν ἀόρατον καιἀέρος ἰδέαν και κενοῦ· ... καιἔστιν ὑπερουράνιος ἀστήρ, πηγὴ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀστέρων.

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rain, that pours out on the earth "In the heavens, too, we can perceive the presence of water, which is either above the heavens or from that high position falls frequently to earth in heavy rainstorms".

According to the opinion of Pepin,<sup>17</sup> the words of Ambrose made the literary reminiscence and reget the educated reader to the images from the *Georgics* of Vergil (Georg 1:23): "Gods all and Goddesses, Who make the fields your care, both ye who nurse the tender unsown increase, and from heaven shed on man's sowing the riches of your rain"

In the latin text we can see: *dique deaque omnes... quique satis largum caelo demittisimbrem...* , - the same as by Ambrose: *argo...imbre demittitur*. Pepin<sup>18</sup> writes, that this reminiscence is useful for Ambrose because of the need to make the image of rain as released from the association with the marriage of Air (aether) and Earth (tellus), which is described by Vergil (2:325-327) - to change pagan pantheistic allusions. This reminiscence gave a possibility to feel a christian image of the rain unstead of well-known pagan one.

Why is it important for Ambrose? Because the image of the rain he uses in his Exegese several time as a symbol of the Holy Scripture. For example in his late work (c.a.389) "Commentary on the psalm 118" Ambrose speaks as follows: "it is good to have an ebriosity from the spiritual meal... it is that is an ebriosity of the earth, after being filled up with the rain, it has the habit to nurture the seeds and multiply the fruits. So the Word of God, Which like the rain descends from the heaven...".<sup>19</sup> The water descending from the heaven as image of the New Testament - it is the rain, which freely flows down from the heaven and expanding over all people - in opposition to the circularity and density of the cloud of the Old Testament.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. The Bees:

It is important to pay attention to the image of the "bees-state" which is well-known again from the *Georgics* of Vergil and this image is used by the Basil and Ambrose in the commentary on the 5. day of creation - about the birds, who flight over the open firmament of the heaven.

Basil Hexaemeron 8.4	Ambrose Hexaemeron 21:66
"What a variety, I have said, in the actions and lives of flying creatures. Some of	Now I shall proceed to show ( <i>nunc age...expediam</i> ) what birds ( <i>aves</i> ) usually live under the control of laws in a sort of

<sup>17</sup> J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne*, Paris, 1964, p. 447-452.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 451.

<sup>19</sup> Expos.Ps.118.13.24: *bona mensae spiritalis ebrietas,... eo quod ebrietas terrae, cum infusa fuerit imbre caelesti, suscitare semina, fructus multiplicare consueverit. Itaque Verbum Dei, quod sicut pluvia descendit e caelo.*

<sup>20</sup> L.F. Pizzolato, „La dottrina esegetica di sant`Ambrogio“, in *Studia Patristica Mediolanensia*, Milano, 1978, pp.36-39.

these unreasoning creatures even have a government, if the feature of government is to make the activity of all the individuals centre in one common end. This may be observed in bees. They have a common dwelling place; they fly in the air together, they work at the same work together; and what is still more extraordinary is that they give themselves to these labours under the guidance of a king ..."

commonwealth- From this is derived the fact that the state establishes laws bearing equally on all citizens laws (*vitae huius aetatem sub legibus*), which are loyally-observed by all members of the community. No claim is made to a right which is clearly not permitted to all the citizens. Rather, each and every member of the group shares equally in these rights. What is not permitted to every citizen is not considered a right. All share in paying respects to their elders, by whose wise counsel the state is governed. Each one has a right to the common place of abode (*commune omnibus urbis domicilium*). Social duties are shared. They all follow a single prescribed (*consilium*) and orderly mode of life.

It seems that Ambrose is enthusiastic from a kind of juridical idea on the general and particular, found by Basil. Then he roll put the idea of comparison between state and bees organisation. As Basil Ambrose takes the correlation of the statehood by people and purposefulness in the bee's mode of life. It is interesting to point that Basil uses the word "particular life" (μῖα) once and the word "common life" (κοινῆ) twice, but Ambrose uses 13 times the word on common life (communis) and 5 times the word on the particular life (unum). Henke<sup>21</sup> notes that «κοινῆ οἰκησις» (common dwelling place) which is substituted by Ambrose as "commune omnibus urbis domicilium" (common place of abode) and «unius patriae clauduntur limine» (are confined within the limits of one native land) add own and very special for the romans notions «urbis» (state) и «patria» (home land).

And Ambrose again adds a play with well-known Fragment from Georgics of Vergil:

"Come, then, I will unfold (nunc age...expediam) the natural powers  
Great Jove himself upon the bees bestowed,  
The boon for which, led by the shrill sweet strains  
Of the Curetes and their clashing brass,  
They fed the King of heaven in Dicte's cave.<sup>22</sup>  
Alone of all things they receive and hold  
Community (communis) of offspring, and they house

<sup>21</sup> R. Henke, *Basilus und Ambrosius über das Sechstagerwerk*, Basel, 2000, p. 176.

<sup>22</sup> It is well-known from the greek mythology, that the mother of Juppiter (or Zeus) was Rea, she concealed her son from the father (Kronos) at the island Crete under the care of nymphen Adrastea and Idea, who brought Zeus up with the milk from the divine goat Amalfea. The bees carried the honey to the small Zeus from the slopes of the mountain Dikt.

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Together in one city (urbis), and beneath  
 The shelter of majestic laws they live (magnisque agitant sub legibus aevum);  
 And they alone fixed home and country (patriam) know, ...  
 Moreover, not Aegyptus, nor the realm  
 Of boundless Lydia, no, nor Parthia's hordes,  
 Nor Median Hydaspes, to their king  
 Do such obeisance..."  
 5.149-155, 210.

The connection of Ambrose with Vergil give the latin words: urbis, sub legibus, patriam and the grammatical structure at the beginning of the fragment: nunc age...expediam. You may see, that Ambrose omits all, what doesn't concern Jupiter and the myth about his education by the bees. He is interested only in the conception on parallelism of the commonwealth, state, social life of people and life organisation by the bees. Particular use of the word "law" regarding the apian life sounds very unnatural. But Ambrose puts away an adjective "majestic" laws, but he praises at the end the constitutional, ruled by the law society (Social duties are shared. They all follow a single prescribed and orderly mode of life). The mention of the wise council of the elders, who gouvernes the state could be a reference to the Senate, and to the corresponding behavior of the citizens. There are in this fragment the references to Cicerone too.

#### 4. The beginnig:

The biblical book Genesis amazed the church thinkers because from the beginning there were many themes, that were developed by the greek philosophy. The title for instance "Genesis" (γένεσις) - it is a philosophical term "formation", "becoming" from the Plato's writings. Or we can pay attention to the Forst word from the book Genesis "in the beginning". In a similiar way Basil and Ambrose speculate on the term "beginning", laying emphasis on the two meamings of the word "beginning": the beginning in time and timeless beginning. Moving in the first direction Basil names four possible sences. They correlate with the reflection of Aristotle on the essence of the four "beginnings" in Methaphysics (1013a 24ff.). But Argumentation of Basil comes from the biblical text Hexaemeron 1.5:

"The first movement (κίνησις) is called beginning. "To do right is the beginning of the good way." /Proverbs 16:6/ Just actions are truly the first steps towards a happy life. Again, we call "beginning" the essential and first part from which a thing proceeds, such as the foundation (θεμέλιος) of a house, the keel of a vessel; it is in this sense that it is said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," /Proverb 1:7/ that is to say that piety is, as it were, the groundwork and foundation of perfection. Art (τέχνη) is also tile beginning of the works of artists, the skill of Bezaleel began the adornment of the tabernacle /Exodus 1-11/. Often even the good which is the final cause (τέλος) is the beginning of actions. Thus the approbation of God is the



beginning of almsgiving, and the end laid up for us in the promises the beginning of all virtuous efforts."

You may notice the coincidence of this narration about the four "beginnings" with the ideas of Aristotle on the four principles (αἴτια), but Aristotle himself names this principles "beginnings".<sup>23</sup>

1) That from which each thing would best be originated (ἔξοὔγινεται)...

2) The form or pattern, i.e. the definition of the essence, and the classes which include this (e.g. the ratio 2:1 and number in general are causes of the octave), and the parts included in the definition.

3) That from which the change or the resting from change first begins; e.g. the adviser is a cause of the action, and the father a cause of the child, and in general the maker a cause of the thing made and the change-producing of the changing.

4) The end, i.e. that for the sake of which a thing is...<sup>24</sup>

The first two principles are internal (matter and form), the second two are external (moving and aim). Here we can see coincidence of the ideas of Aristotle and Basil and divergence. For instance when Basil speaks about the beginning of the motion, he understands the first movement, and Aristoteles means the principle of the motion. When Basil speaks about the fundament he means actual and perceptible Fundament, but Aristoteles means the general principle - the matter, from which may the fundament arise (ἔξοὔγινεται, as copper is for example the cause of sculpture). Particulary clear is the divergence between the descriptions of the fourth principle: for the Aristotle the aim - it is the point, where the object directs, but by Basil the aim - it is the end, that was designed by the Creator. So we can see, that Basil constructs his own content, but the structure is from the Aristoteles Metaphysics. The most distinction in the description of the four principles of the being is in the Intention of Basil to show, that the Arche of all is God, by Aristoteles this four principles are the independent elements.

Comparing Basil's text with the Ambrose's one we can observe that Ambrose gives seven variants of the meaning for the word "beginning", but he closely follows the examples and the structure of Basil's text: 1) the beginning in the time (ad tempus), 2) the numeral beginning (ad numerum), 3) the beginning as fundament (ad fundamentum), 4) the beginning as the change (principium conversionis), 5) the beginning as art (ars), 6) the beginning as the aim (finis), 7) the beginning as the power of God (virtus divina).

Besides that Ambrose takes into account his own exegetical system, that based on the three senses of the scriptural text: naturalis (Hexam.1:4:12), moralis(Hexam. 1:4:13-14), mysticus=rationalis (Hexam. 1:4:15-16).

The whole fourth part of the first chapter describes this. The first level of the interpretation (naturalis) correlates with Basil's text - it describes seven types of the beginning. The second level (moralis) correlates with the sacramental sense, with the

<sup>23</sup> Aristoteles, Metaphysika 1013a 16ff. πάντα γὰρ τὰ αἴτια ἀρχαί.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, 1013a 24ff.

„A christian educational activity in the *Hexaemeron* of Basil the Great and in the *Hexaemeron* of Ambrose of Milan as process of releasing of the images of the antique culture from the pagan influence“, *Astra Salvensis*, II, 4, p. 112-122.

Sacrament of baptisme as the begining. The third level (mysticus=rationalis) opens the connection with Christ.<sup>25</sup>

Altogether Ambrose polemizes with Basil and doesn't follow his composition in this part. It is important for Ambrose, that this is the sermon during the Great Lent and it's listeners are catechumens. Consequently he finds in confirmation of his ideas the citates, which will direct the listeners to the feelings of the Easter-night and to the connection between the fest of Easter and the sacrament of the baptisme.<sup>26</sup> Thereby in his exposition of the sences of the word "beginning" there are some moments, that hardly could be reffered to the very book Genesis 1.1. In the Hexameron 1.4.15 Ambrose consider the beginning as *initium mysticum* in accordance with the text of Revelation 1.17, 8: "I'm the first and the last...I'm Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending". Therefore the words "in the beginning" Ambrose takes as "in Christ" and proceeds to the christocentric exegese, what is an important attribute of the ambrosian exegese, as a consequence of his attraction to Origenes, as it was argued by Th.Graumann.<sup>27</sup> In such a manner Ambrose more clear and precise interrupted any conception of the beginning as it was in the pagan philosophy and literature and conceptually gave to this term the only possible meaning - Jesus Christ.

We have explored four examples of the correlation between pagan philosophy and biblical exegese: 1) understanding of the heaven and earth as two extremes of the beginning, in which contents all, as form and matter. 2) we have got acquainted with the transformation of the pagan image of the rain to the neutral christian one as the water, which is in the heaven. 3) We have examined the correlation between the apian organisation and the state, demonstrated by the both Basil and Ambrose and released from the connections with Juppiter/Zeus. 4) We have seen the transformation of the notion "beginning" from the independent principle of the world-organisation to the understanding of the "beginning" as a märk of the God's plan and as image of Christ. From this examples we can see that in the times of the early christian authors the Bible-books were at the same place as pagan philosophical literature. For that reason it was possible for the church fathers to look for similitudes and differencies between them and to find it. In the very Bible we can find many philosophical moments, that became a fundament for the church fathers to assert, that the Spring of the

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<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to note, that the greek word «λόγος» could be translated to the latin not only as «verbum», but as «ratio» too. Consequently it is possible to connect the highest sence in the exegetical system of Ambrose (rationalis) with the Christ Himself.

<sup>26</sup> Ambrosius Hexameron 1:4:14 „, The sons of Israel left Egypt in the season of spring and passed through the sea, being baptized in the cloud and in the sea, as the Apostle said /1 Cor. 10.1./-. At that time each year the Pasch of Jesus Christ is celebrated, that is to say, the passing over from vices to virtues, from the desires of the flesh to grace and sobriety of mind...» Siquidem verno tempore filii Israel Aegyptum reliquerunt, et per mare transierunt, baptizati in nube, et in mari, ut Apostolus dixit (I Cor. X, 1 et seq.): et eo tempore Domini quotannis Jesu Christi Pascha celebratur, hoc est, animarum transitus a vitiis ad virtutem, a passionibus carnis ad gratiam sobrietatemque mentis.

<sup>27</sup> Th. Graumann, *Christus Interpres: Die Einheit Von Auslegung Und Verkündigung in Der Lukaserklärung Des Ambrosius Von Mailand*, Berlin, 1994.

philosophical thought, such as Plato and others situated in the biblical books, because Moses was before all of the greek philosophers.

We can observe the strong appreciation by the patristic authors of the Bible, which became the source of the pushing aside of the greek wisdom. On the one hand they preserved the content of the philosophy, on the other they withdrew the pagan images and allusions from it. However the language of the antique culture wasn't the universal language. Likely it became a device for the rapprochement and understanding between christians and ellens.

As a result of the wise distinction between primary and secondary, between the Creator and the creation Basil and Ambrose metamorphose the hart pagan creeds into deeply christian way of thinking. Some physical observations are in contradictio with the words of the Holy Scripture, that's why it is important to find a more deep sense of the Word of God: if it's said, that on the third day comes up the green grass and only on the fourth comes up the sun, we should understand, that "Let everyone be informed that the sun is not the author of vegetation. The earth is freed through the clemency of God; the fruit of the earth emerges therefrom through His indulgence. How can the sun give the faculty of life to growing plants, when these have already been brought forth by the life-giving creative power of God before the sun entered into such a life as this?" (*Ambrosius Hexam. 3.6.27*)

Henke<sup>28</sup> wirtes, that Ambrose extended, reduced and changed the sample, which was the Basil's text. This on the most allegirical changes are serving to the moral Instruktion and spiritual extension of the understanding of the six days of creation, to the understanding the position of God and man, their relations. Numerous references to the Vergil, Seneca, Cicero and others give a more western type of understanding, a western accent of the Ambrose's sermons.<sup>29</sup> It fitted his pastoral tasks to have reminiscences from the antique latin literature, rhetoric and spekulative philosophy in the Affirmation and interpretation of the christian truth of the Holy Scripture.

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<sup>28</sup> R. Henke, *Basilus und Ambrosius über das Sechstagerwerk*, Basel, 2000, pp. 423-431.

<sup>29</sup> J.B. Kellner, *Der Hl. Ambrosius, Bischof von Mailand, als Erklärer des Alten Testaments. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese*, Regensburg, 1893, p. 83.