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### THE ONE, THE LIMIT AND INFINITY IN PHILOSOPHY OF IOANE PETRITSI

In his preface to the commentaries on Proclus' "Elements of Theology" Petritsi speaks about the importance of terminological exactitude in translation of philosophical works and complains that Georgian translators before him did not take enough care on that, sometimes having rendered different concepts with the same terms, which "terribly hindered" Petritsi in his efforts to translate such works. For the sake of example of how painstakingly one should translate the philosophic concepts, Petritsi provides his own newly coined Georgian terms "midmogoneba" and "gagoneba"—standing for Greek "dianoia" and "noesis"—distinguishing thus discursive thought of soul from instantaneous grasp of intellect. Petritsi then gives his translation of the Greek term "noeton", that is, the object of understanding, at the same time explaining an ontological law that an object of understanding is always higher to a subject who understands it. At this point Petritsi depicts Proclus' whole Neoplatonic metaphysical hierarchy of the incorporeal universe in terms of subjects and an objects of understanding. According to this hierarchy the intellect is "noeton" for the soul, the True Being "noeton" for the intellect, the henads for the True Being, and the First Limit and the First Infinity for the henads. Finally, the ultimate object of understanding is "the supreme One and Good<sup>1</sup>, whom our desire of honouring Him called also Father" (7.24-8.7)<sup>2</sup>. Here, as well as in other passages, Petritsi definitely identifies Proclus' One with the Father in the Christian Trinity. In the present paper I shall demonstrate that in Petritsi's universe the second metaphysical level, that of the Limit and Infinity, is related to the two remaining hypostases of the Trinity, respectively to the Son and the Holy Spirit. I shall show different metaphysical functions of the One, the Limit and Infinity in Petritsi's understanding and his peculiar theory of the "three Ones".

#### The Limit

The First Limit in Petritsi's system is called several times "the idea of ideas". As a source for this expression he refers to Aristotle: "The First Limit of beings, called by Aristotle 'the idea of ideas'" (§10,37,19; cf. also §29,78.14-15)<sup>3</sup>; and to the Eleatic Stranger from Plato's "Sophist": "the First Limit, the super idea, or as the Eleatic Stranger calls him, 'the idea of all ideas'<sup>4</sup> (95,145.9-11). The Limit is

<sup>1</sup> Petritsi here differs, at least from the terminological point of view, from Proclus who does not apply the term "noeton" to the One: "[τὸ ἓν] οὐδ' νοητὸν ἢ νοερὸν, ἀλλ' ὑποστατικὸν καὶ τῶν νοητῶν καὶ τῶν νοερῶν ἐνάδων (In Parm. 1069, 22-23)." Cf. also Michael Psellus: "πλὴν ὁ θεὸς καὶ τοῦ νοητοῦ καὶ τοῦ αὐτονοήτου ἐπέκεινα (Psellus, 145). Petritsi may follow Plotinus, who describes the One as νοητὸν for the subsequent, that is to say, for the νοῦς – *Enneads*, V.4.(7).2.2-11.

<sup>2</sup> In calling the One "Father", Petritsi is in tune with Plotinus and Porphyry and diverges from the later Neoplatonists, as Proclus and Damascius, who reserved the name "father" to the prime aspect of the intelligible triad, "the highest point of νοῦς" (Cf. J. M. Rist, *Mysticism and Transcendence in Later Neoplatonism*. In: "Platonism and its Christian Heritage", *Variorum*, London, 1985, p.218.)

<sup>3</sup> cf. Aristotles, *De Anima*, Book G, 432a2: *kai o nous eidos eidōn*: "The intellect is the form of forms".

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Sophist*, 253 D-E: "...Then who can do that intuitively perceives a) one Form extended everywhere throughout many, where each one lies apart, and b) many forms differing from one another included within one Form". Cf. also Proclus *In Parmenidem*: ζετεῖν τὴν τῶν ιδεῶν μονάδα μίαν (887, 18); καὶ γὰρ πλῆθος τῶν ιδεῶν ἐν τῷ ἐνι ὄντι τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχειν, ὡς ἐν μονάδι τὸν οἰκεῖου ἀριθμοῦ (636, 21-23): which means that the monad of the ideas is the One Being – this indicates a different interpretation of the *Sophist*, thus, Petritsi's source here is not Proclus but somebody else, presumably Origen who defined the Son as ἰδέα ιδεῶν in *Contra Celsum*. Moreover, in the *Chaldean Oracles*, quoted by Proclus in *In Parmenidem* 800,20-801,5 we find expressions (1) Νοῦς πατρὸς ἐβρόιζησε νοήσας ἀκμάδι βουλή παμμόρφους ιδέας, πηγῆς δὲ μιᾶς ἀπο πάσαι ἐξεθορον...(13) ἔννοιαι νοεραὶ πηγῆς πατρικῆς ἀπο...(15) ἀρχεγονοὺς ιδέας πρώτη πατρὸς ἔβλυσε τάσδε αὐτοτελῆς πηγῆ. Petritsi, who knew Proclus' commentaries on *Parmenides* must have known also those *logia*, and have interpreted "paternal source" to be the Limit in his system (cf. for instance his commentary on prop.151). This, however, is quite different from the interpretation of Proclus who identifies the "paternal source" with the Demiurgic Mind—holding quite a low rank in the intellectual realm. Petritsi's interpretation or usage of the Oracle is radically different, for he interprets the νοῦς πατρικός and the πηγῆ πατρικῆ as the Word of the Father, as the

"supra-idea" and the limiting Principle of everything, first of all of the henadic numbers. The different orders of henads receive their properties through participation in this limiting principle. Any number would have been infinite were not "the light of the One sewn in it" (§1,15.25-26). The transcendent One is described as the giver of limit to all, and It does so through the First Limit, viz. the second *One*<sup>5</sup> which he begets: "The One which derives from Him is the Principle of the series of henads" and "the participable cause in the series of henads", while the One is referred to as [something] "beyond Principle"<sup>6</sup> and is posited above the henadic series (§116.158.7-15)<sup>7</sup>. We read that "before the multitude the One engenders the *One* and only then follow the series of the henads" (§29). The Limit is called the 'First Number' (§30) which gives origin to the henadic series. The scheme corresponds to that held by the later Pythagoreans and Platonists, for "the monistic theory, involving as it does a distinction between the ideal One and the unit which begins the number series, is surely Platonic in character"<sup>8</sup>. The One is broader than the unifying principle, i.e., the second One it produces, that is why Petritsi declares the One to "transcend even the unity" (§56,123.16-17). That the One goes beyond Limit is evident, for instance, in a beautiful passage where the perpetually moving sky is described as a lover of the One: the movement of the sky has no end because its Beloved cannot be attained due to the fact that It "is above the Limit and Principle"<sup>9</sup>, for had the beloved a border or were It confined in limit the sky would have also stopped its ceaseless travel (§13,45.23-28). Petritsi, of course, never says that the One is beyond the Limit *for the Limit itself*, that is to say, that the One is unattainable in full also for the Limit. Moreover, he alludes twice to St. Paul, saying that the "Father manifests in the Son the entire fulness of His Divinity". However, Petritsi's adherence to the hierarchical patterns and language of the Neoplatonic ontology can lead to a suggestion of a subordinationist view in his system.<sup>10</sup>

The *One* produced by the One is the unifying Principle and cause of all (§56,123.17-18). Being the Super Idea it imposes idea upon all: "the First Limit eternally unifies, gives unity and idea" (§151,176.20-21). The Limit is called the "paternal source" (ibid.1.17): "this paternal being is produced before all the others by the Father of all", and it "constructs all henads giving them limit and unity" (§151,176.25-29). To elucidate the meaning of this last sentence it is appropriate to examine the commentary on *prop.* 3 Here Petritsi teaches that everything that has unity but is not the One-itself is com-

Second One, that is, the highest possible principle after the Absolute God. The reasons for that may be that (1) for a Christian the Demiurge who creates the world is the highest God, thus his νοῦς or πηγή will be the Son; (2) Petritsi may have been influenced by the Biblical and Patristic sources, precisely, according to the interpretation of Capadocians, in the Psalmic verse "ὅτι παρὰ σοι πηγή ζωῆς, ἐν τῷ φωτὶ σου ὀψόμεθα φῶς"(35,9) "you" (παρὰ σοι) means Father and the "Source of Life" the Son, who is also the Light of the Father, and in this Light shall we see Light, that is the Holy Spirit (this last Capadocian interpretation is taken over also by Petritsi in his "Epilogue"). Thus, if a Christian combines the two "Revelations": the pagan *logia* and the Jewish-Christian *logia*, it is only logical to interpret the "paternal source" as the Son. Interestingly, Michael Psellus, who may have directly influenced Petritsi, identifies the "paternal intellect" of the Oracles (108,1) with the Biblical Creator God (Psellus,140). Furthermore, in *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine refers to Porphyry's commentary on the Oracles and identifies *paterna mens*, that is, νοῦς πατρικός, with the God the Word. Thus, Petritsi relied on a long existing tradition in the Christian theology.

<sup>5</sup> I use italics to distinguish the "second One", that is, the Limit, from the absolute One.

<sup>6</sup> Proclus in his commentary on the *Parmenides*, in that part which is extant now only in the Latin translation of William of Moerbeke, refers to Speucippus' interpretation of the "view of the Ancients" concerning palcing the One beyond the principle: "Et ut Speusippus—narans tamquam placentia antiquis—audit. quid dicit? 'Le unum enim melius ente putantes et a quo le ens, et ab ea que secundum principium habitudine liberaverunt'" (quoted from an article of Leonardo Tarán: *Proclus and the Old Academy*, Colloques internationaux du C.N.R.S. Proclus.—Lecteur et interprète des Anciens. Éditions du C.N.R.S., Paris 1987, p 229).

<sup>7</sup> In this identification of the second One with the Limit, which is only implicit in the *Elements* (cf. *prop.* 89), Petritsi follows the *Platonic Theology* of Proclus. Cf. Τὸ μὲν τοίνυν ἐν τὸ προϋπάρχον τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ πρώτου ἀπο τῆς ἀμεθέκτου καὶ ἀγνώστου τῶν ὄλων αἰτίας προϋποστάν, πέρας ὃ ἐν Φιλήβῳ Σωκράτης ἀποκαλεῖ, τὴν δὲ γεννητικὴν τοῦ ὄντος δυνάμιν ἀπειρίαν. (Th.Pl. III.8. 2-5)

<sup>8</sup> As Guthrie observes, it is more likely that initially Pythagoreans did not hold the conception of the ultimate One as the *arche* of all, but their doctrine was dualistic, i.e. the One derived from the two initial principles-Limit and Unlimited. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, v. 1. p.249. Cf. also Proclus' Th.Pl.III,12,p.44,ln23-p.45,ln12. where he speaks about the God-Limit to derive from the highest unparticipated God.

<sup>9</sup> I capitalise the Limit and Principle, thinking that Petritsi refers here exactly to the First Limit and does not speak merely in general terms.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Michael Psellus, who in his commentaries on a Chaldean *logion* ("ὁ πατήρ ἑαυτὸν ἤρπασεν...Or.Chal.3) criticizes the pagan idea of the supreme Deity as unapproachable even to "His own power", that is to say, to His Son, from the Orthodox-Trinitarian viewpoint: ὁ μὲν νοῦς τοῦ λογίου τοιοῦτος, ὡς ὃ ἐπὶ πάντων θεός, ὃς δὴ καὶ πατήρ ὠνόμασται, ἀκατάληπτον ἑαυτὸν ποιεῖ καὶ ἀπερίληπτον, οὐ μόνον ταῖς πρώταις καὶ δευτέραις φύσεσι καὶ ταῖς ἡμέτεραις ψυχαῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ υἱός. 'ἑαυτὸν' γὰρ φησιν 'ἤρπασεν ὁ πατήρ' ἀπὸ πάσης φύσεως. οὐκ ἔστι δὲ τὸ δόγμα ὀρθόδοξον. ἐν τῷ υἱῷ γὰρ παρ' ἡμῶν ὁ πατήρ δευδογμάτισται, ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ πατρὶ. καὶ ὅρος τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ υἱὸς καὶ θεῖος λόγος ὑπερφύης (Psellus,141).

posed of parts which participate in each other in order to constitute a certain essence: e.g. parts of "five" participate in each other and compose the essence of five. "Five", as well as any other number taken in its counting function, denotes the number of units it counts, and thus is viewed in relation to those units. As "fiveness", however, it has no more a counting function but is already an idea and essence. Parts of the "fiveness" are now not simple arbitrary units, five in number, to be readily applied to any other multitude, but each of them receives a certain qualification, a "label" of that genus, viz. the "fiveness". So each number appears in this sense as a certain integral structure. Petritsi makes an analogy with the term "man", for it also must consist of several parts: animality, reason, mortality, etc. Those parts are in man not in a simple and autonomous way, but man possesses man-type animality pertaining precisely to his genus (pp. 24-25). This act of defining of a multitude of units and parts according to a certain genus, is the property of the Limit, which provides idea to all. This act takes place on different levels, because as Petritsi says there are three orders of numbers: natural, arithmetical and theological (metaphysical). The natural numbers are likely to refer to numbers viewed in nature, e.g. everything in nature, for instance a tree, is *a number* of roots, stems, branches, leaves etc.; the arithmetical numbers probably denote numbers taken as devices for numbering, that is, in their counting function, whereas the metaphysical numbers could be applied to numbers taken in their essence, an integral "three" or integral "seven". Metaphysical numbers, which seem to denote henads<sup>11</sup>, are the principles of metaphysical ideas which have essential existence in the sphere of the True Being, called by Petritsi "the place of ideas" (§57,125.2).<sup>12</sup> Henads in fact are simpler than ideas, because the ideas are preceded by and composed of henadic numbers. With the words of Lossev: "the henads are principles of ideality itself"<sup>13</sup>. This superiority of the henads is confirmed also by Petritsi: "The Good can be viewed either in ideas or in composition of beings, or above ideas, i.e. in the henadic sphere" (§28, 76,24-25). All the other entities are number of something other than indivisible units, for example, the human body is a number of hands, eyes, fingers which are not themselves simple, whereas "divine numbers" (as Petritsi calls henads) are comprised of such simple, indivisible units, which the Limit being "the first and super idea of ideas" (§90,142.31-32) constructs and qualifies within proper numbers.

"Let us take any number of multitude, be it hundred: each separate [unit] of the monads and numbers<sup>14</sup> in the hundred is one (unit), but the "hundredness" puts idea on those units and makes them belong to its genus. And also "hundredness" is one and one-like. Look, how the One gave Its property to all—both to each of the parts and to the wholeness" (1. 11, 15-20);

shortly below Petritsi writes that this participation in unity is possible for everything through the "unitary limit": "Everything has both its wholeness and parts from the One, and all are circumscribed by unitary limit" (ibid.15,34-36).

The Limit in Petritsi's system is explicitly identified with the second hypostasis of the Trinity, the Son. In the 29th commentary he alludes to the Apostle Paul who called the Son the image of the One<sup>15</sup> (here again the One is identified with the Father), and, continues Petritsi, this firstborn Word, which precedes all beings and henads the philosopher (Aristotle) calls "the idea of ideas" (§29,78.8-15). In the following commentary Petritsi again returns to the Limit, the "first Number and head of ideas" citing Socrates' saying "'the first measure measured all and the first Limit limited all"<sup>16</sup>, and—so Petritsi adds—we have just (that is, in the previous commentary) called that Limit the Son". We also read that "the first Word of the One established ideas in the dimension of eternity", i.e. in the sphere of ideas (§24,68.6-7). All the corporeal ideas are just reflections of lights issuing from the "head of ideas (the Limit) which is born from the One as One and as the Principle of henads" (§41,98.18-20). When those lights draw back and diminish, the matter darkens and changes one shape into another.

<sup>11</sup> It is also possible that metaphysical numbers directly denote metaphysical ideas, for sometimes (e.g. in §198) Petritsi equates numbers with ideas, as elsewhere he equates numbers with beings (§64).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Aristotle. *De Anima* 429a27-soul as *topos eidôn*, and also Proclus *In Parmenidem* 930.11: τόπος γὰρ αὐτῶν (i.e. τῶν ἰδεῶν) ἐστὶν ὁ νοῦς.

<sup>13</sup> Lossev, Commentaries on the *Elements of Theology*, in *History of Antique Aesthetics*, p.448.

<sup>14</sup> Those 'monads and numbers' must be taken as atomic units for otherwise there will be an infinite regress and, hence, nothing to be circumscribed for the idea of "hundred".

<sup>15</sup> Cf. cor.4.4."who is the image of God" (The Bible, New International Version), and Col.1.15."He is the image of the invisible God..".

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Philebus*, 25b ("And what of..... anything else which has the ratio of number to number, or measure to measure? All these, I believe, we should do well reckon as in the class of Limit.") Cf. also *Philebus*, 64d-e (where Socrates says that no mixture could be sustained if it lacks measure.) and *Laws*, Book IV, 716c4:"In our eyes God will be measure of all things". However the last two passages do not apply directly to the *peras*.

### The Infinity

If the One and the Limit are respectively the Father and the Son, it is only plausible to suppose that the Infinity which has a parallel ontological status with the Limit, refers to the Holy Spirit<sup>17</sup>. Though Petritsi never makes this identification explicit, the text, as I shall demonstrate, provides good grounds for this assertion. Infinity appears as the principle of multiplication and birthgiving (§151,178.18-19; §152,179.4-5).

In contradistinction to the Limit, which is the 'paternal cause' Infinity is the maternal source and "the infinite power for the multiplication of all things" (ibid.). Unlike the Limit, Infinity is the principle of even (*artios*) henads. Alluding to Pythagoras Petritsi says that "two (even) is always a cause of infinity, whereas "three" is a cause of limit"<sup>18</sup> (§152,177.7-9). Contrary to the Limit, which is the shaping and, so to say, status-giving source, the First Infinity is the dynamic principle, the cause of ceaseless change.<sup>19</sup> In terms of metaphysical structures, this change means procession of effect from cause. In his commentary to prop.29 Petritsi speaks about the two causes of derivation of effects from their causes—likeness and difference. The "likeness" in this passage applies to the First Limit and in the "difference" which is the "birthgiving cause" (29,79.4) in virtue of which each of the series is differentiated and multiplied (ibid. 11-12), we can recognize the First Infinity. The same thought recurs in the commentary to prop.125, where we read that henads proceed through the two causes, that is likeness and difference, of which the first is the one which sustains the effects within their causes, the second is the "multiplier" (§163,163.15-19).

The First Infinity is constantly rendered as "power"; it is a "non-diminishing and limitless power" (§10,37,20); the *"analkestati* power, ceaseless in virtue of its infinity" (§90,145.12). It seems strange that Petritsi characterizes Infinity by the Greek adjective "analkestati", which in fact means "the most powerless". The clue for this might be found in the philosopher's discourse about the One or the Good; he makes an allusion to "Timaeus"<sup>20</sup> and states that the One poured out like an overfilled cup, with purpose to enable also others take share in Its goodness, for "the Goodness is free of envy, and is not to be confined due to Its *powerlessness, for It transcends powers*" (§25,68.26-30). Usage of "powerlessness" in the superlative sense probably points to the fact that any power has a measure, and measure is a limitation which does not apply to the One. Thus, *powerlessness* seems to imply that the One acts without efforts, of which analogy is the effortless shining of the sun. In this light the adjective "analkestati" in reference with the Infinity can be interpreted as "the most effortless". At this point it seems that we encounter a clear superiority of the One in relation to the Infinity: the First One is absolutely "power-free", while the First Infinity is already a power, though "analkestati" power. The First Infinity appears to be the "first power", originating the series of infinite powers: "the first infinite power excels all other powers, the latter having their existence in virtue of the former" (§90,143.31-33), but the One as Petritsi emphasises is higher than any series, thus over above being the first (cf. §56,123.17; §60,127.20), and, thus, also above the series of powers.

As we have said, Petritsi never identifies the First Infinity with the Holy Spirit directly, but in the "Epilogue" where he writes about the vision of the Trinity in the Psalms, he refers to the Holy Spirit in a language similar to that applied to the First Infinity in the commentaries. The specific, personal characteristic of the Holy Spirit in the "Epilogue" is "power". In the very beginning of the "Epilogue" Petritsi states that the Father "will give us the kingdom of His hand which is the Son, and will communicate to us the power which issues from Him, which is the Spirit" (207.16-17), or another passage: "the 'power' denotes the Above Holy Spirit, which gives holiness to the heavenly powers" (210.8-9). In the commentaries Petritsi describes the First Infinity as "the non-diminishing power for the preservation of beings" (§90,143.2-3), and in the "Epilogue":

"essence of the beings is preserved and maintained in the Son by the Spirit of God, which is the Power" (210.8-14).

<sup>17</sup> In order to maintain the Trinitarian model, Petritsi makes Limit and Infinity parallel principles. In this he differs from Proclus, who posits the Limit explicitly above Infinity (Cf. *Th.Pl.* III.8.2-5); also, *In Timaeum*, I, pp.176,6-177,2 (Diehl): καὶ μὴ διὰ τοῦτον οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ λόγος, ὅτι δὴ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῶν πραγμάτων διηρημένας θετέον, καὶ τὰς δύο ταύτας συστοιχίας ὁμογνίους φάμεν· προηγείται γὰρ τὸ ἐν ἀπάσης ἐναντιώσεως, ὡς καὶ οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι φασιν. Ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ καὶ μετὰ μίαν αἰτίαν ἢ δυνάμεις τῶν ἀρχῶν ἀνεφάνη, καὶ ἐν ταύταις ἡ μονὰς κρείττων τῆς δυνάμεως.

<sup>18</sup> In Pythagoras' teaching "two" was a symbol of difference, division, whereas "three" of perfection, for three components: beginning, middle and end makes thing perfect. Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras*. pp.49-51.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. ἔστι δὲ καὶ θεία δυνάμεις ἀπειρος. ζωῆς προόδος ἀνέκλειπτος – In: *New Fragments from Iamblichus*, ed. D. O'Meara. American Journal of Philology, Vol.102, 1981, p.39.

<sup>20</sup> *Timaeus*, 29e.

The two ultimate principles—Limit and Infinity—permeate the whole universe; their activity starts on the level of the henads, then proceeds to the True Being, which possesses "infinite power as being established by the First Infinity, and is one, but not a particular idea, given that it is unified and perfected by the First Limit." (§89,142.19-22). From there on the two sources go down to the intellects and intelligent beings, souls, nature and at last, to corporeal essences (§159,180.29-181.3). For instance, Infinity is present in perishable beings in their faculty of reproduction, and it is perceived even in the prime matter, insofar as it is something deprived of all limits (§94,144.30-145.2). Every essence should contain those two elements, but in some of them the infinite principle prevails, in others the limiting principle. For example, each of the henadic numbers must participate in the Limit, for the very essence of number is imposition of limit on an indefinite multitude of units, but some henads (the even numbers) are of the genus of the Infinity, the others (the odd numbers) are of the genus of the Limit. This pattern goes down to corporeal essences; even among the four qualities of the elements two are passive and two active: heat and coolness are active and forming principles, which means that they are of the paternal and limiting genus, whereas humidity and dryness are receptive and maternal, and hence belong to the genus of Infinity (§152,177.9-15). At last, the prime matter has also a certain kind of limitation being confined in the "fetters of unity" (124,12), and it is infinite as deprived of any definable essence. Below I provide a summary list of the properties and faculties applied to the Limit and Infinity in the text of the commentaries:

<u>Limit</u>	<u>Infinity</u>
similarity/identity	difference
odd	even
paternal	maternal
definition/unification	multiplication/division
rational (principle of ideas)	dynamic (principle of powers)
active	passive

### The "three Ones"

In the basic metaphysical process consisting of three fundamental aspects—procession, remaining and reversion—the One, the Limit and Infinity have their discrete functions. According to Proclus any effect at the same time proceeds from its cause, remains in its cause and returns to its own cause (if it has any). In the perspective of the metaphysical levels, each of which has its own monadic cause—the psychic series its monadic universal Soul, intellectual series its monadic universal Intellect—each series appears to be an unfolding of this monadic cause, that is to say, its multiplication. The specific cause for the procession and multiplication is Infinity; the specific cause for safeguarding of each particular member of series in its proper steadfast identity is Limit; eventually, the specific cause for unification of the whole series through reversion of all the effects to their monadic cause is the transcendent One. Petritsi here provides an original theory of "three Ones". The first One, which is beyond all series is the transcendent One, the Father; the next One, which is called "the multiplied One" is the procession or multiplication of the transcendent One – the Infinity, the Spirit; eventually the "One of the proper natures", that is to say the One immanent in each particular being is to be identified with the Limit, the Son. A gloss in one of the manuscripts across the passage where Petritsi describes his "three Ones theory" reads: "learn for the Holy Trinity". The gloss probably belongs to an attentive reader of Petritsi. However, one can suppose that it is Petritsi's own note.

### Concluding remarks

Petritsi's schematic and functional description of the Trinity—not only the assimilation but the entire identification of the Christian dogma with a modified Proclian Neo-Platonic scheme—does not seem to

reflect the traditional Orthodox teaching.<sup>21</sup> Yet, this requires a detailed analysis of Petritsi's patristic Byzantine sources which goes beyond the scope of the present paper. Clearly, indeed, there are at least apparent traits of subordinationist Trinitarianism in Petritsi, which must be caused by the fact that Petritsi does not abandon Neoplatonist language and metaphysical framework.

There are, however, passages that depict Trinity without looming of any subordinationism. Eventually, I adduce a quotation of one of such passages coming from Petritsi's *Epilogue* where he provides a nice musical analogy for the Trinity:

Our beloved book [the Psalms] is altogether a music embellished by the Holy Spirit, and in music there are also three *phongs*,<sup>22</sup> that is to say, tonalities which make one whole. They are "mzakhr" [strained, high pitch], "jir" [middle] and "bam" [lower tension, bass], and all arrangements of strings and voices make a beautiful melody by those three, for any composition is beautiful through its irregularities. You would perceive the same in the number of the Holy Trinity, for we speak about the Father being unborn, the birth of the Son, the procession of the Holy Spirit, and the unity of the Nature, with the difference of the Hypostases. Similarly in different musical tonalities—"mzachr," "jir" and "bam"—we perceive the unity of a whole (*Epilogue* 217. 1-14).

<sup>21</sup> It is not by chance that one of the seventeenth-century readers of Petritsi's commentaries, a certain Christophore, who, according to the opinion of M. Djanashvili, is Katholikos Christophore Udrubegashvili, put a leaf with his remark in one of the manuscripts of the commentaries, just on the page where Petritsi identifies the metaphysical Limit with the Christian Son: "Here Paul is born as a witness who said ... The philosopher calls [Him] Limit of Limits and Idea of Ideas, as Paul calls [Him] the unchanging Image who has in Himself the richness of the Father. This chapter reveals the blasphemy even more." Ioane Petritsi, *Opera*, I, p. lxxii.

<sup>22</sup> Greek: φῶγγος - "voice."