

Contribution to the Historical-Dogmatic Investigation of Pauline Ecclesiology on the Basis of *Ephes.* 1, 22-23

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1. Studying the descriptive references to the Church in Apostle Paul, we discern the characteristic formulation “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ»), which refers with every theological consistency to the biblical prerequisites of his thought. This view is confirmed by the use of this formulation in his Epistles *Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους*¹, *Α΄ Κορινθίους*², *Ἐφεσίου*³ and *Κολοσσαεῖς*⁴ and additionally in the Epistles *Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους*⁵, *Α΄ Κορινθίους*⁶, *Γαλάτας*⁷, *Ἐφεσίου*⁸ and *Κολοσσαεῖς*⁹, where the specific

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1. 12, 5, 48.

2. 6, 15-20; 10, 16-17; 12, 4-31.

3. 1, 20-23; 2, 11-22; 4, 1-16, 25, 30; 5, 22-32; 12, 16.

4. 1, 13-29; 2, 6-19.

5. 5, 12-21; 6, 1-7.

6. 11, 3-4; 15, 20-23.

7. 3, 27-29.

8. 1, 3-14, 16-19.

9. 3, 9-17. Th. Soiron, *Die Kirche als der Leib Christi. Nach der Lehre des hl. Paulus exegetisch, systematisch und in der theologischen wie praktischen Bedeutung dargestellt*, Patmos-Verl., Düsseldorf 1951, pp. 53-171. In particular for Apostle Paul's ecclesiology see T. Schmidt, *Der Leib Christi (Σῶμα Χριστοῦ). Eine Untersuchung zum urchristlichen Gemeindegedanken*, Deichert (Werner-Scholil), Leipzig 1919; A. E. J. Rawlinson, “Corpus ChristiÓ, in: G. K. Bell and A. Deismann (eds.), *Mysterium Christi*, Longmans, London 1930, pp. 225-244; J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*, SCM Press, Chicago – London 1952; P. L. Malevez s.j., «L'Église, corpus du Christ: sens et provenance de l'expression chez Saint Paul», *Recherches de Sciences Religieuses* 32 (1944), pp. 27-94; E. Percy, *Der Leib*

formulation describes an empirical situation¹⁰, expresses absolutely an ecclesiological content and does not refer to the nature of the personal body of Christ.

This original conception of the description and expression of the Church as the “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ») introduces something new to the New Testament biblical environment and is therefore an issue of “major importance and examination”¹¹, not only for biblical but also for the historical-dogmatic research.

Therefore, the understanding of the formulation “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ») and its correlation with its ecclesiological content requires a historical-dogmatic consideration and investigation in order to determine the content of the term *body*, to be led to the way of understanding of its use by Apostle Paul and subsequently to the description of the

Christi (Σῶμα Χριστοῦ) in den paulinischen Homologumena und Antilegomena, G. W. K. Gleerup, O. Harrassowitz, Lund – Leipzig 1942; S. Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament: Colossians and Ephesians*, [Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis 14], Almqvist & Wiksell, Uppsala 1946; L. Cerfaux, *La théologie de l'Église suivant Saint Paul*, [Collection «Unam sanctam» 54], Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1965; A. Wikenhauser, *Die Kirche als der mystische Leib Christi nach dem Apostel Paulus*, Aschendorff, Münster in Westfalen 1937; Atanasije Jevtić (retir. bishop of Herzegovina), *Ἡ ἐκκλησιολογία τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου κατὰ τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν Χρυσόστομον*, Grigoris Publications, Athens 1984; E. Best, *One Body in Christ*, S.P.C.K., London 1955; W. Goussens, *L'Église, corps du Christ d'après saint Paul. Étude de théologie biblique*, Librairie Lecoffre, J. Gabalda et Cie, Éditeurs, Paris 1949; St. Jaki, *Les tendances nouvelles de l'ecclésiologie*, Herder, Rome 1957; Th. Ioannidis, «Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ὡς ‘σῶμα’ Χριστοῦ σὺν Ἐπιστολὴς τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου», in: K. Belezos (ed.), *Τιμητικὸς τόμος τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Ε.Κ.Π.Α. γιὰ τὴν τριακονταετὴ διακονία τοῦ Οἴκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου κ. Βαρθολομαίου Α΄*, Alter Ego Media Publishing, Athens 2021, pp. 489-504.

10. The avoidance by the Fathers of the Church of a concrete definition of “what the Church is” and the adoption of a descriptive formulation of the ecclesiological event through images confirms that each term, image, expression or formulation is used descriptively and only to express a situation or an experience and is not used exclusively to define the essence, the nature or the identity of the Church. For the use and interpretation of the expression «σῶμα Χριστοῦ» see Io. Karmiris, «Σῶμα Χριστοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ Ἐκκλησία», *Ἐκκλησία/ Ecclesia* ΛΘ', 15-16 (1962), p. 334; Id., *Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησιολογία (Δογματικῆς Τμημα Ε')*, Athens 1973, pp. 11-18 and 171-178.

11. See V. Tsakonas, *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὴν Κολοσσαεῖς Ἐπιστολὴν τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου* (Εἰσαγωγή-Κείμενον-Ἑρμηνεία), Athens 1975, p. 34.

ecclesiological experience and indeed in terms of a community¹², of «σώματος Χριστοῦ»¹³.

The expression “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ»), as an exclusively Pauline expression¹⁴, is one of the special formulations of Apostle Paul’s vocabulary, with which he expresses on the one hand his religious experience¹⁵ and on the other hand his differentiation from any other human view of the term *body*¹⁶. The term *body* seems to express better, according to Apostle Paul, the relationship between the members of the Church as the “body of Christ”¹⁷ than the term *flesh* («σάρξ»), which is more used to describe the anthropological content of the term. For these reasons, the term *body* is characterized as an expression “of special kind”, while it is known that in the Jewish tradition the term *body* does not express a part of man but the whole man.

Under these conditions the essential meaning of the particular formulation is rendered by the word “Christ’s”, which does not designate the body of the faithful (*coetus fidelium*) but the Church as the «σῶμα Χριστοῦ» (*corpus Christi*)¹⁸, a very important distinction, because it declares on the one hand the differentiation of the “body of Christ” from

12. Ioannis Zizioulas, *Metr. of Pergamon, Ἔργα Α΄ Ἐκκλησιολογικά μελετήματα*, Domos Publications, Athens 2016, p. 178.

13. P. Vasileiadis, «Σύγχρονες προσεγγίσεις τῆς παύλειας θεολογίας», in: K. Belezos, *Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος καὶ Κόρινθος. Πρακτικά Διεθνoῦς Ἐπιστημονικοῦ Συνεδρίου (Κόρινθος, 23-25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2007) / Praktika Diethnous Epistimonikou Synadriou (Corinth 23-25 September 2007)*, vol. Α΄, Psichogios Publications, Athens 2009, p. 293.

14. See J. M. O’Connor, “Tradition and redaction in Col. 1, 15-20”, *Revue Biblique* 102, 2 (1995), pp. 231-241. For the concept of the *body* in Apostle Paul see Io. Karavidopoulos, «Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ὡς σῶμα Χριστοῦ», *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμάς/Gregorios ho Palamas* 72 (1989), pp. 789-793; Ch. Atmatzidis, *Ἀπὸ τῆ βιβλικῆ ἔρευνα στὴν πίστι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Συνοπτικὴ Θεολογία τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης*, vol. Α΄, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 2010, pp. 149-151.

15. P. Vasileiadis, *op.cit.*, p. 293.

16. St. Giagkazoglou, «Τὸ βιβλικὸ πλαίσιο τῆς συνάντησης Ἑλληνισμοῦ καὶ Χριστιανισμοῦ», in: St. Giagkazoglou, *Στὸ μεταίχμιο τῆς Θεολογίας. Δοκίμια γιὰ τὸν διάλογο θεολογίας καὶ πολιτισμοῦ*, Domos Publications, Athens 2018, p. 39.

17. *1 Cor.* 12, 12-17.

18. See Ioannis Zizioulas, *Metr. of Pergamon, Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῷ Εὐχαριστίᾳ καὶ τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ κατὰ τοὺς τρεῖς πρώτους αἰῶνας*, Grigoris Publications, Athens 2012, p. 45; Atanasije Jevtić (retir. bishop of Herzegovina), *Ἡ ἐκκλησιολογία τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου*, *op.cit.*, p. 95.

the Jewish perception of the synagogue (qahal)¹⁹ and, on the other hand, the gathering of “God’s people” («λαοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ»)²⁰, where the Holy Eucharist is celebrated²¹.

The term *body* in Apostle Paul and in its specific ecclesiological context cannot also be associated with a simple natural impersonal body with only anthropological dimensions²²; this is a Greek philosophical perception²³. In Apostle Paul, the term *body* is directly differentiated from the above view mainly with the use of the genitive “Christ’s”, while it also assumes a different content as to its deeper meaning.

In the first place, what does this coupling of the two terms, *body* and *Christ* mean in the thought of Apostle Paul?

The coupling of these two concepts describes a unique relationship: the relationship of the members of a body with each other and with Christ. This coupling is a concrete and real relationship, which is expressed in a particular way, the communal-eucharistic.

Therefore, the expression “body of Christ” is a descriptive image that “signifies” a real relationship between all those who are the members of a particular body²⁴, to each other, as “members of one another” («ἀλλήλων μέλη») ²⁵, and which is given meaning exclusively by the relationship of the members with the person of Christ. This depiction of the relationship of the members to each other and to the person of Christ was the basis in Apostle Paul’s thought in order to identify this relationship with the Church; for that reason the Church as the “body of Christ” is not only defined by the faithful, but also as a relationship of Christ to the members of His “body”. The description of Origen is characteristic, that Christ as

19. James 2, 2; Ephes. 1, 22 ff.

20. 1 Cor. 11, 28.

21. Cf. S. Agouridis, *Χριστός-Παῦλος*, Athens 1977, p. 136 ff.

22. Cf. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς τὴν Α΄ Κορινθίου*, Ὁμιλία ΚΣΤ΄, 3, PG 61, 215-216; J. Robinson, *The Body. A Study in Pauline Theology*, op.cit.

23. Cf. V. Ioannidis, «Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τὸν Ἀπόστολον Παῦλον», *Εὐχαριστήριον. Τιμητικὸς τόμος ἐπὶ τῇ 45ετηρίδι τῆς ἐπιστημονικῆς δράσεως καὶ τῇ 35ετηρίδι τακτικῆς κατηγεσίας Καθηγητοῦ Ἀμίλκα Σ. Ἀλιβιζάτου*, Athens 1958, p. 179.

24. 1 Cor. 12, 2.

25. Rom. 12, 2.

the Son of God is encountered within the community and lives only in the midst of those, who are united with Him and with each other²⁶.

Therefore, Apostle Paul draws from the Stoics of his time the descriptive image of the human body, which he relates to the genitive “of Christ” («Χριστοῦ»)²⁷, in order to formulate a new empirical state of relationship, which is depicted with the eucharistic communion²⁸, while the determinant of this relationship is now the person of Christ and not only the term *body*. The Apostle Paul describes exactly the significance of this relationship between *body* and *Christ* when he uses other expressions such as that Christ is the “head” of the “body” or that he is the “fullness” («πλήρωμα») of the “body of Christ”, which he identifies with this Church²⁹.

However, how Apostle Paul is led to the definition of the expression “body of Christ” with the specific ecclesiological content?

2. Although Apostle Paul derives the term *body* from Stoic philosophy³⁰, gives meaning³¹ to it with the Jewish conception of totality and attributes to it a particular characteristic, as this is described in *1 Cor.* 10, 17 and 12, 13. With this interpretative approach the term *body* no longer simply expresses the cumulative totality and fullness of the members, which is achieved by the joining of the various members, as in the Stoics, but the special relationship of the members with Christ and with each

26. Origen, *Εἰς τὸν Ματθαῖον* 14, 1, PG 13, 1188; See Fr. Amiot – Io. Karavidopoulos, «Σῶμα Χριστοῦ», *Λεξικὸ Βιβλικῆς Θεολογίας* (*Vocabulaire de Théologie Biblique*, Paris 1971), transl. (Greek) under the supervision of S. Agouridis, St. Vartanian, *et al.*, Artos Zois Publications, Athens ³1980, p. 927.

27. *1 Cor.* 12, 13, 27.

28. *1 Cor.* 10, 17.

29. *Ephes.* 1, 23. For the etymology of the term Ἐκκλησία/*Ecclesia* see K. L. Schmidt, *The Church*, Adam & Charles Black, London 1950, p. 57 ff.; J. Y. Cambell, “The origin and meaning of the Christian use of the word ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ”, *Journal of Theological Studies* 49, 195-196 (1948), p. 130 ff.; L. Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l’Église suivant saint Paul*, Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1948; P. N. Trempelas, *Δογματική*, vol. 2, Adelfotis Theologon “Ho Sotir” Publications, Athens 1978, p. 318 ff.; Io. Karmiris, *Ἡ περὶ Ἐκκλησίας Ὁρθόδοξος δογματικὴ διδασκαλία*, [Reprint from *Thriskeutiki kai Ithiki Engyclopaideia*, vol. E’, pp. 465-519], Athens 1964, p. 3; Io. Zizioulas, *op.cit.*, p. 29 ff.

30. See P. L. Malevez s.j., «L’Église, corps du Christ: sens et provenance de l’expression chez Saint Paul», *op.cit.*, pp. 33, 83 ff. and 92.

31. Cf. John Chrysostom, *Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους*. Ὁμιλία XI, 1, PG 62, 81.

other, where each member is distinguish from the other without being homogenized³².

In this perspective, the term *body* («σῶμα») with the genitive “of Christ” («Χριστοῦ») is identified with the Church, since Christ and the Church are ecclesiologicaly interdependent³³, while the formulation “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ») underlines the relationship between unity and communion in the peculiar way of a relationship of the many between and with the One³⁴, Christ, in “one body” («ἐν σῶμα»).

John Chrysostom emphatically points out this distinction between the secular body of the Stoics³⁵ and the “body of Christ”, when he emphasizes that the “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ») is determined not only by the relationship of the members to each other alone, as in the Stoics³⁶, but first and foremost by their relationship with Christ³⁷. Therefore, the expression “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ») defines an ontological relationship because it is not simply considered as an external connection between the members, but as relationship of absolute unity, complete and without any “void” / «κενό», since Christ is the One «πάντα ἔνωσιν ἐμφαίνει καὶ οὐδὲν μέσον κενὸν ἀφίησιν εἶναι, οὐδὲ τὸ μικρότερον»³⁸. The importance of this remark as specific difference between the cumulative impersonal unity of the members of the secular body of the Stoics and the members of the “body of Christ” is also implied by Apostle Paul, when he speaks of the giving of the gifts proportionally and depending on

32. See John Chrysostom, *Εἰς τὸν Ψαλμὸν* 5, 2, PG 55, 62-63; *Κατήχησις* 1, 12-13, Sch 50, p. 115; *Εἰς Ἑβραίους*. Ὁμιλία 38, 7, PG 63, 202. Cf. E. Lohse, *Ἐπίτομη Θεολογία τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης*, transl. (Greek) S. Agouridis, Artos Zois Publications, Athens 2002, p. 149.

33. Chr. Voulgaris, *Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies, Thessaloniki 1974, p. 174.

34. *1 Cor.* 10, 17.

35. See A. Wikenhauser, *Die Kirche als der mystische Leib nach dem Apostel Paulus*, op.cit., pp. 130-143 and J. Dupont, *Gnosis. La connaissance religieuse dans les épîtres de Saint Paul*, Nauwelaerts – Gabalda, Louvain et Paris 1949, pp. 435-438.

36. See P. Benoit, «Corps, Tête et Plérôme dans les Épîtres de la Captivité», *Revue Biblique* 63, 1 (1956), pp. 5, 11, 14; Io. Karavidopoulos, *Ἀποστόλου Παύλου Ἐπιστολὲς πρὸς Ἐφεσίους, Φιλιππησίους, Κολοσσαεῖς, Φιλήμονα*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1981, pp. 106-107.

37. Cf. *1 Cor.* 12, 12-30; *Rom.* 12, 4-5; John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ψαλμὸν* 44, 10, PG 55, 199.

38. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ἀ' Κορινθίους*, Ὁμιλία 8, 4, PG 61, 73.

the progress of each member³⁹. The distinctive feature of this particular unity of the members of “the body of Christ” is that this unity does not imply static but dynamism and vitality⁴⁰, even if these qualities are also mentioned in the thought of the Stoics⁴¹.

From the above consideration, it is confirmed that the difference between the thought of Apostle Paul and the Stoics is particularized both in terms of the content of the relationship of the members of “the body of Christ” “to each other” («μετ’ ἀλλήλων») and to the person of Christ, as well as in terms of the preservation of the distinction of the members, who participate in this relationship. This relationship “in Christ” («ἐν Χριστῷ») as unity is another distinctive difference in the distinction between the secular and natural unity of stoic philosophy, because for the Stoics unity leads to a homogenization⁴² without distinctions, while the existing distinction of the members of the body according to their perception cannot lead to unity and communion of the distinct members.

Therefore, this particular relationship “in Christ” («ἐν Χριστῷ») is expressed in “the body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ»)⁴³ and is structured in the communion of the members with each other with Christ and the Holy Spirit⁴⁴, Who is also unique⁴⁵, as also the person of Christ⁴⁶.

39. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους*, Ὁμιλία 11, 3, PG 62, 84.

40. See Clement of Rome, *Κορινθίους Β'*, 14, 2, BEΠΕΣ 1, 45: «Ἐκκλησία ζῶσα, σῶμά ἐστι Χριστοῦ».

41. See P. Benoit, *op.cit.*, p. 8, note 2.

42. *Ephes.* 4, 15-16. Cf. Io. Karavidopoulos, *Εἰσαγωγή στὴν Καινὴ Διαθήκη*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 2007, p. 265.

43. Cf. Clement of Rome, *Πρὸς Κορινθίους Β'*, 14, 2, BEΠΕΣ 1, 45, 6-20; Ignatius of Antioch, *Πρὸς Σμυρναίους* 1, 2, BEΠΕΣ 2, 280, 8-9; Clement of Alexandria, *Στρωματεῖς Ζ'*, 14, PG 9, 521; Origen, *Κατὰ Κέλσου* 6, 79, PG 11, 1417; Athanasius the Great, *Περὶ τῆς ἐνσάρκου ἐπιφανείας τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου* 21, PG 26, 1021; Gregory the Theologian, *Λόγος* 32, 10, PG 36, 185; Gregory of Nyssa, *Ἐξήγησις εἰς τὸ Ἄσμα Ἀσμάτων*, *λόγος* 8, PG 44, 949; John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους*, Ὁμιλία I, 1, PG 62, 75; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους* 5, 23, PG 66, 920; Cyril of Alexandria, *Εἰς Ἰωάννην* 7, 39, PG 73, 753; Oikoumenios of Trikki, *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους* 4, 16, PG 118, 1221; Nicholas Kabasilas, *Ἐρμηνεία τῆς Θείας Λειτουργίας* 1, PG 150, 505.

44.2 *Cor.* 13, 13; *Rom.* 6, 3.

45. 1 *Cor.* 10, 13.

46. E. Percy, *Der Leib Christi (Σῶμα Χριστοῦ)*, *op.cit.*, p. 5; L. Cerfaux, *La théologie de l'Église suivant Saint Paul*, [Collection «Unam sanctam» 54], *op.cit.*, p. 206, note 2; S. Hanson, *The Unite of the Church in the New Testament*, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

The members (the many) are united to each other and at the same time with the One, Christ⁴⁷. This unity has Christ as its center and is achieved by the Holy Spirit, who acts, structures and regulates this unity of relationship and communion⁴⁸. The interpretation of the passage *Rom.* 12, 4-5, in the light and perspective of *1 Cor.* 12, 12-18, excellent confirms the contribution of the Holy Spirit to the fact of the relationship of unity and communion of the “body of Christ”, as a relationship of the One and the many, as unity and distinction “in Christ” («ἐν Χριστῷ») and “in the Holy Spirit” («ἐν Πνεύματι Ἀγίῳ»), which is why this relationship of unity communion and Church is a relationship of identity⁴⁹, since «ταῦτα πάντα ἔνωσιν ἐμφαίνουσιν καὶ οὐδὲν κενὸν ἀφίησιν εἶναι, οὐδὲ τὸ μικρότερον»⁵⁰, while neither the “communion of the Holy Spirit”⁵¹, nor the Christo-centrism of the fact of the Church, as an event of communion and unity⁵², is negated where through unity and communion the distinction is also confirmed⁵³.

47. *Gal.* 3, 27-28.

48. G. Florovsky, *Τὸ Σῶμα τοῦ ζῶντος Χριστοῦ. Μία Ὁρθόδοξος Ἑρμηνεία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, transl. (Greek) Io. K. Papadopoulos, Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies, Thessaloniki ²1981, p. 27.

49. In the Fathers of the Church, the lack of unity and communion in the Church is inconceivable, because then the Church does not exist. In any other view of the Church, other than unity and communion, any kind of gathering of corporate type is considered to be a “Church”. See Ignatius of Antioch, *Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους, προοίμιον; Πρὸς Μαγνησιεῖς* 6, 2; *Πρὸς Φιλαδελφίους* 3, 2; *Πρὸς Σμυρναίους* 1, 2, BEΠΕΣ 2, 269, 35 ff.; 277, 26 ff.; 280, 5 ff.; Hippolytus of Rome, *Εἰς τὸν Δανιήλ*, Δ', 37, BEΠΕΣ 6, 97; Irenaeus of Lyon, *Ἐλεγχος* Γ', 24, 1, PG 7, 966; Clement of Alexandria, *Παιδαγωγός* 1, 4, PG 8, 260, *Στρωματεῖς* 3, 10, PG 8, 1172; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Βίος τοῦ Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου* 3, 66, PG 20, 1144; Athanasius the Great, *Κατὰ Ἀρειανῶν* Α' 1, 4, PG 26, 20; Basil the Great, *Ἐπιστολὴ* 161, 1, PG 32, 629; Epiphanius of Cyprus, *Ἐκθεσις Πίστεως* 6, PG 42, 781; Gregory of Nyssa, *Κατὰ Εὐνομίου* 4, PG 45, 652; John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Α' Κορινθίους, Ὁμιλία* Α', 1, PG 61, 13; *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους, Ὁμιλία* ΙΑ', 5, PG 62, 86; Cyril of Alexandria, *Εἰς Ψαλμοὺς* 44, 10, PG 69, 1041.

50. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Α' Κορινθίους, Ὁμιλία* 8, 4, PG 61, 73.

51. *2 Cor.* 13, 13; *Philip.* 2, 1.

52. Cf. P. Vasileiadis, «Σύγχρονες προσεγγίσεις τῆς παύλειας θεολογίας», *Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος καὶ Κόρινθος...*, *op.cit.*, p. 296.

53. *1 Cor.* 12, 18-24; 4, 5, 28; *Ephes.* 4, 11-12; cf. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους, Ὁμιλία* 11, 4, PG 62, 84; *Εἰς Ῥωμαίους, Ὁμιλία* 1, 1, PG 60, 396; *Εἰς Γαλάτας, Ὁμιλία* 6, 1, PG 61, 674-675.

The Church, that is, is understood as a communion with Christ⁵⁴ and as communion of the Holy Spirit⁵⁵, that is why there is no communion without unity and unity without communion⁵⁶ if it is not “in Christ” and in the Holy Spirit⁵⁷.

3. In *1 Cor.* 10, 16-17 we have the unity of the many in “the body of Christ”, in the One Christ, in the One Bread⁵⁸, while in *1 Cor.* 15, 45 we have Christ, Who becomes by the Holy Spirit the “fullness” («πλήρωμα») and the “Last Adam” («Ἐσχατος Ἀδάμ»).

In this way the Holy Spirit is not complementary but structural in the relationship with Christ, “the Last Adam” and with the “body of Christ”, the Church. These two expressions “fullness” and “Last Adam”, are, on the one hand, the essential criteria in the interpretative approach to the term *head* («κεφαλή») and, on the other hand, biblically confirm a development in the ecclesiological thought of Apostle Paul.

In the letters of captivity *Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους* and *Κολοσσαεῖς*⁵⁹, the emphasis is not only on the relationship of the One with the many but also on the relationship of the “head” of the “body of Christ”, that is, of the One and the many⁶⁰.

Christ as the “head” of the “body” of the Church and the Church as the “body of Christ”⁶¹ confirm that the existence of the “body” is the necessary prerequisite for the existence of the “head” and that the “head” is necessary for the existence of the “body”. “A head without a body

54.2 *Cor.* 8, 23; *Philem.* 17.

55.2 *Cor.* 13, 13; *Philip.* 2, 1.

56. Chr. Voulgaris, *Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

57. Cyril of Alexandria, *Εἰς τὸν Ἰωάννην* 11, 11, PG 74, 560.

58. *1 Cor.* 12, 27; *Gal.* 3, 28; John Chrysostom, *Εἰς τὴν Κολοσσαεῖς*, *Ὁμιλία* 8, 2, PG 62, 353. Ioannis Zizioulas, Metr. of Pergamon, *Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῷ Εὐχαριστίᾳ καὶ τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ*, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

59. Io. Karavidopoulos, *Εἰσαγωγή στὴν Καινὴ Διαθήκη*, *op.cit.*, p. 252 ff.; Chr. Voulgaris, *Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν Καινὴν Διαθήκη*, vol. A', Athens 2003, p. 489 ff.

60. Io. Karavidopoulos, «Ὁ Χριστολογικὸς ὕμνος τῆς πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς Ἐπιστολῆς (*Col.* 1, 15-20)», in: P. Skaltsis – N. Skrettas (eds.), *Γηθόσυνον Σέβασμα. Ἀντίδωρον τιμῆς καὶ μνήμης εἰς τὸν μακαριστὸν καθηγητὴν τῆς Λειτουργικῆς Ἰωάννην Φουντούλην* († 2007), vol. A', Kyriakidis Publications Thessaloniki 2015, p. 1083.

61. *Col.* 1, 18, 24; 2, 12; 3, 15; Io. Karavidopoulos, *op.cit.*, 1078.

is not a head at all” («Μία κεφαλή δίχως σῶμα δὲν εἶναι ὁλωσδιόλου κεφαλή»)⁶², just as the body always exists in relation to the head.

It is well-known that just as there is no “head” without “body” and “body” without “head”, because they co-exist and are connected to “each other” («μετ’ ἀλλήλων»)⁶³, so Christ cannot be understood without the Church⁶⁴, since the Church is Christ Himself, Who makes the faithful members of the Son of God but also of «ἀλλήλων μέλη»⁶⁵.

4. The two new ecclesiological terms *head* and *fullness* were used by Apostle Paul with the aim of initially defining the relationship between “head” and “body” in relation to the concept of Church⁶⁶ and the importance of this relationship in terms of the issue of unity⁶⁷.

It is well known that in Apostle Paul the “head”, Christ, who is the “fullness” is identified with the “body of Christ”, which is the Church, expressing, completeness, wholeness and universality. This relationship of identity now declares the fullness of this relationship⁶⁸. In other words, Christ as the “head of the Church” («κεφαλή τῆς Ἐκκλησίας»)⁶⁹ is not understood by Apostle Paul exclusively and only by the individual sense but under the ecclesiological content of the term⁷⁰, which means that

62. Cyril of Alexandria, *Εἰς τὸν Ἰωάννην* 11, 11, PG 74, 560; Ioannis Zizioulas, Metr. of Pergamon, *Ἔργα Α΄. Ἐκκλησιολογικά μελετήματα*, op.cit., p. 90.

63. Gregory the Theologian, *Λόγος* 32, 11, PG 36, p. 185; John Chrysostom, *Κατὰ Ἰουδαίων, Λόγος Α΄*, 3, PG 48, 848.

64. There is an inseparable and organic unity of head and body; see Ignatius of Antioch, *Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους* IX, 1, Sch 10, 64; John Chrysostom, *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην, Ὁμιλία ΜΣΤ΄*, γ΄, PG 59, 260; *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὴν Ἐφεσίους Ἐπιστολή*, Ὁμιλία Γ΄, β, PG 62, 26; Io. Karmiris, «Σῶμα Χριστοῦ ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ Ἐκκλησία», op.cit., p. 366.

65. *Rom.* 12, 5; Ignatius of Antioch, *Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους* IV, 1-2, Sch 10, 60; *Πρὸς Τραλλιανούς* X 1-2, Sch 10, 102.

66. *Ephes.* 1, 23; 5, 23-32; *1 Cor.* 12, 18; 15, 9; *Gal.* 1, 13; *Philip.* 3, 6.

67. *Ephes.* 2, 16; 4, 4; 7, 16.

68. P. Benoit, op.cit., pp. 19 and 22; Chr. Voulgaris, *Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν Καινὴν Διαθήκην*, op.cit., p. 536. Both scholars rightly ascertain that between *1 Corinthians* and the two letters of captivity (*Ephesians* and *Colossians*) there is a development in the expression and formulation of this theological thought of Paul.

69. *Rom.* 12, 5 *1 Cor.* 12, 27; *Ephes.* 4, 15. 5, 23-29; *Col.* 1, 24, 18.

70. See *Col.* 1, 24. Io. Karavidopoulos, *Ἀποστόλου Παύλου Ἐπιστολὲς πρὸς Ἐφεσίους, Φιλιππησίους, Κολοσσαεῖς, Φιλήμονα*, op.cit., p. 456.

Christ is not a simple member, like the others or among the others, but in this particular relationship is the support of life for the coherence and growth of the body. The emphasis on Christ as “head” in the *Epistle to Colossians* and indeed in relation to the “body of Christ”, the Church, seems to have been dictated to Apostle Paul by his intention to respond to the heretics of the city of Colossae⁷¹, who distorted the “knowledge” of the person of Christ and limited it to an historical person without any soteriological reference. Thus, for Apostle Paul although Christ is “the image of the invisible God” («εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀοράτου»)⁷² and “the first-born of all creation” («πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως»)⁷³ he is also at the same time the “head” of all, as the principle of everything, “that in everything he might be pre-eminent, for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” («ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι»), but also the first-born from the dead⁷⁴. The Apostle Paul bases this particular principle on the wisdom literature of the Old Testament⁷⁵, as modern interpreters also support⁷⁶. With this relationship, between Christ as “head” and the “body of Christ”, the Church, is confirmed by Apostle Paul that this relationship is continuous and dynamic, until the Church, the “body of Christ” reaches the measure of the “fullness” of Christ⁷⁷, which is why it is not possible for the Church to exist without Christ and Christ without the Church⁷⁸.

In relation to the source of origin of the term *head* in Apostle Paul, two theories have been developed. The first comes from the biblical-Semitic tradition and the second from Greek philosophy, where the concept of “head” is associated with the concept of “principle”. The majority of the researchers rightly converge on the first tradition⁷⁹, the biblical-Semitic, and

71. On the issue of the heretics of the community of the Colossians see V. Tsakonas, *Υπόμνημα...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 37-40 (where also bibliography) and *id.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 558, 565.

72.2 *Cor.* 4, 4.

73. *Rom.* 8, 29; *Hebr.* 1, 6.

74. *Col.* 1, 15-20.

75. see *Sirah* 24, 9, 1, 4 *Proverbs* 3, 19; 8, 22; *Wisdom* 7, 25-26. 9, 9, 4.

76. See Chr. Voulgaris, *op.cit.*, p. 557.

77. *Ephes.* 4, 13 ff.

78. Cf. V. Tsakonas, *op.cit.*, pp. 82-83.

79. See P. Benoit, *op.cit.*, pp. 26-30 (where is the relevant bibliography).

in fact interpreted in the light of *Col.* 1, 18 it is emphasized that the “head” is considered to be Christ as the “new Adam” or as the “Last Adam”. This approach finds support in the wisdom literature⁸⁰, where Christ as “the image of the invisible God” («εἰκόνα τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου»), identified with “the first-born of all creation” («πρωτότοκο πάσης κτίσεως») is not just the temporal or cosmological principle, but the eternal “head” of the “body of Christ” («ὅ ἐστι ἡ Ἐκκλησία»)⁸¹. Moreover, this relationship of the Last Adam-Christ in Apostle Paul is based interpretatively⁸² on the principle that Christ is “the likeness of God” («εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ»)⁸³ and on the basis of communion⁸⁴, while he confirms that Christ as “head” is not only the “beginning” but also the end of the world.

The two Christological hymns⁸⁵ also, as they present Christ in the corresponding terms, confirm on the one hand that Christ as the “head” of the Church is the beginning of a new humanity, as “the first-born from the dead” («πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν») but also “of all” («πάντων»)⁸⁶, and on the other hand they define the relationship between the “One” and the “many”, where Christ is characterized “new or the last Adam” («νέος ἢ Ἐσχάτος Ἀδάμ») and “type of the one who was to come” («τύπος τοῦ

80. *Wisdom* 7, 25-26.

81. *Col.* 1, 24.

82. *Rom.* 5, 12-21; *1 Cor.* 21 et seq., 45-49.

83. *Gal.* 3, 27; *Ephes.* 4, 24; *Col.* 3, 10.

84. *Col.* 4, 2-6.

85. *Ephes.* 1, 3-23 and *Col.* 1, 15-20. For the specific Christological hymns see Chr. Voulgaris, *op.cit.*, pp. 92 and 510; Io. Karavidopoulos, *Ἀποστόλου Παύλου Ἐπιστολές...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 428-429; V. Ioannidis, «Ὁ ὕμνος τοῦ ἀπ. Παύλου πρὸς τὸν ἐν Τριᾷδι Θεὸν ἐν Ἐφεσ. 1, 3-14», *ΕΕΘΣΠΑ/ΕΕThSchPA* 14 (1963), pp. 387-418; Io. Karavidopoulos, «Ἐρμηνευτικὸν Ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὴν πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς Ἐπιστολὴν τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου», *ΕΕΘΣΠΘ/ΕΕThSchPTh* 13 (1969), p. 40 ff.; L. Cerfaux, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul*, Herder & Herder, Freiburg 1959, p. 397 ff. 406 ff.; S. Hanson, *The Unite of the Church in the New Testament*, *op.cit.*, p. 106 ff.; J. M. Robinson, “A formal analysis of Colossians 1, 15-20”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76, 4 (1957), pp. 270-287; Ch. Masson, «L’hymne christologique de l’épître aux Colossiens 1, 15-30», *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 36, 148 (1948), pp. 138-142; R. P. Martin, “An Early Christian Hymn (*Col.* 1, 15-20)”, *The Evangelical Quarterly* 36, 4 (1964), pp. 195-205; S. Lyonnel, «L’hymne Christologique de l’épître aux Colossiens et la fête juive du Nouvel An», *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 48, 1 (1960), pp. 93-100. Io. Karavidopoulos, «Ὁ Χριστολογικὸς ὕμνος τῆς πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς Ἐπιστολῆς (*Col.* 1, 15-20)», *op.cit.*, pp. 1073-1085.

86. Io. Karavidopoulos, *Ἀποστόλου Παύλου Ἐπιστολές...*, *op.cit.*, p. 448.

μέλλοντος»)⁸⁷.

In this perspective, therefore, everything is recapitulated in Christ⁸⁸, and for that reason “has made him the head over all things for the Church which is his body” («αὐτὸν ἔδωκε κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἣτις ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ»)⁸⁹, and the Church continues to implement the recapitulative work of Christ⁹⁰. In this way, Christ is the Church Himself and not just the mediator or the messenger, just as the Church is Christ Himself⁹¹. In this dynamic state of recapitulation from the theological reflection of Apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit is actively present⁹².

The Pauline term *recapitulation* («ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις»)⁹³ expresses the entire reception “in Christ” of the human race⁹⁴ and has a universal character. The recapitulation in Christ has also soteriological consequences, since it is the redemptive work of Christ⁹⁵, while with the recapitulation “in Christ”, the restoration of God’s communion with people is achieved, with a particular way of existence, the “communion in Christ”, that is, the Church, where Christ is the “head”, the One in whom the many are

87. Chr. Voulgaris, *Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, *op.cit.*, p. 79. This concept of the “new Adam” is an influence of a purely Judeo-Christian tradition and is described by modern biblical with the term scholars “corporate personality”; see Archim. Amphilochios Miltos, «La notion biblique de “personnalité corporative”. De l’exégèse biblique à la théologie dogmatique», *Θεολογία/Theologia* 85, 2 (2014), pp. 147-175, (where the entire biblical reflection as to the content of this expression and the discussion about the ecclesiological consequences).

88. *Ephes.* 1, 10; 2, 13; 2 *Cor.* 5, 18-19.

89. *Ephes.* 1, 22-23.

90. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Ἐλεγχος* IV, 40, 3, *SCh* 100, 983. III, 16, 6, *SCh* 211, 313.

91. See Con. B. Skouteris, *Ἱστορία Δογμάτων Α'*, Athens 1998, p. 386.

92. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Ἐπίδειξις* § 89-90: Εἰρηναίου ἐπισκόπου Λουγδούνου/Irenaeus of Lyon, *Ἐπίδειξις Ἀποστολικοῦ Κηρύγματος*, Introduction-Translation-Comments Io. Karavidopoulos, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 1965, p. 77. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Ἐλεγχος* III, 22, 3, *SCh* 211, 439.

93. *Ephes.* 1, 10; 1, 12; 4, 15; 5, 23.

94. See A. d'Alès, «La doctrine de la recapitulation en saint Irénée», *Recherches de Sciences Religieuses* 6, 1 (1916), p. 185; St. Papadopoulos, *Πατρολογία Α'*, Athens ²1982, pp. 296-299, (where there is bibliography).

95. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς τὸν Ψαλμὸν* 44, 10, PG 55, 199 : «Οἱ πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης πιστοὶ ὄντες, καὶ γενόμενοι καὶ ἐσόμενοι» and «αὕξει τὴν αὕξησιν τοῦ Θεοῦ»· *Εἰς τὴν Ἑβραίου*, *Ὁμιλία* 17, 3, PG 63, 131; Germanos Patriarch of Constantinople, *Περὶ τοῦ μυστηριώδους*, PG 160, 365C.

recapitulated, and all together constitute the “body of Christ”, which is not limited to a certain period of time⁹⁶, because the entire human race is recapitulated “in Christ”, from the first to the “Last Adam”, and the whole time is fulfilled till the end of times, since this recapitulation “in Christ” is also accomplished in “the Holy Spirit”⁹⁷. In this sense, according to John Chrysostom, the recapitulation “in Christ” also implies the characterization of the Church as “body of Christ”⁹⁸. The Son and the Holy Spirit prepare the redemption and the work of divine dispensation “in the Church” («ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ»), in order man to become «ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ»⁹⁹ an image and likeness of God, which is why, according to Irenaeus of Lyon, his teaching on recapitulation is the center and the pivot of his entire theology¹⁰⁰.

5. But let us see in what way and what is the importance of the use of the term *fullness* («πλήρωμα»), according to Apostle Paul, and mainly what is the ecclesiological content which it expresses. In the description of the Church as the “body of Christ”, which is described as a relationship between “body” and “head”¹⁰¹, Apostle Paul also includes the term *fullness* with the intention to give a more substantial meaning to this relationship¹⁰².

The term *fullness* –as is well known– has a wide variety of meanings. It

96. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους*, Ὁμιλία 1, 4, PG 62, 15-16.

97. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Ἐπίδειξις* 97, 98 (ed. Io. Karavidopoulos), pp. 81-82.

98. Cf. Andr. Theodorou, *Ἡ περὶ ἀνακεφαλαιώσεως διδασκαλία τοῦ Εἰρηναίου*, Athens 1972, p. 10.

99. See Ignatius of Antioch, *Πρὸς Τραλλιανούς* 11, 2, SCh 10, 102; Athanasius the Great, *Περὶ τῆς ἐνσάρκου ἐπιφανείας* 12, BEΠΕΣ 33, 229; Gregory of Nyssa, *Εἰς τὸ ὅταν ὑποταγεῖ*, PG 44, 1313. Cf. Chr. Voulgaris, *Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, *op.cit.*, pp. 93 and 223-225.

100. Irenaeus of Lyon, III, 18, 1, SCh 211, 343-345; Irenaeus of Lyon, *Ἐπίδειξις* §§ 6, 30, 37 (ed. Io. Karavidopoulos), 30-31, 46-47, 50. Cf. Io. Karavidopoulos, *Ἀποστόλου Παύλου, Ἐπιστολαί...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 87-88.

101. Cf. Chr. Voulgaris, *Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, *op.cit.*, p. 92.

102. Ioannis Zizioulas, *Metr. of Pergamon, Ἔργα Α΄. Ἐκκλησιολογικά μελετήματα*, *op.cit.*, p. 101.

denotes either complementarity¹⁰³ or wholeness¹⁰⁴ or even fulfillment¹⁰⁵. However, the use of the term, in terms of defining the relationship between “head”-Christ and “body of Christ”-Church, does not denote something cumulative, but a union and interdependence of Christ and the Church, that is, as the complete presence of the One in relation to the members, the many¹⁰⁶. In fact, John Chrysostom describes this relationship emphasizing that the “fullness” of the “body” is the “head” and the “fullness” of the “head” is the “body”¹⁰⁷. This relationship is an expression of communion and unity, since the Church is the whole Christ, as “*totus Christus*”, and Christ Himself, in Whom dwells «*πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς*»¹⁰⁸, and the Church as the “body of Christ” is the “fullness” («*πλήρωμα*») of Christ¹⁰⁹.

Because the term *fullness*, due to its use is susceptible of several interpretations¹¹⁰, we think that a historical-dogmatic approach to the term is necessary, in order to understand its ecclesiological significance.

The term was originally used by the Stoics to formulate the secular fullness, which is understood as a unified and absolute principle¹¹¹. In this content it is also taken from the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, in which however it is used with a different theological

103. *Col.* 1, 24.

104. *Rom.* 11, 12, 12, 25.

105. *Rom.* 13, 10.

106. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς τὴν Ἐφεσίου*, Ὁμιλία 3, 2, PG 62, 26.

107. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ἀ' Κορινθίους*, Ὁμιλία 30, 1, PG 61, 250; Io. Karmiris, *op.cit.*, pp. 364-365.

108. *Col.* 1, 19.

109. *Ephes.* 1, 23; 5, 30; *Col.* 1, 18, 24; 2, 17. For the developed interpretations of the term see J. A. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, Macmillan and Co., London 1903, p. 42 ff., pp. 7 and 100; P. Benoit, «Corps, Tête et Plérôme dans les Épîtres de la Captivité», *op.cit.*, pp. 5-44; L. Cerfaux, *La théologie de l'Église...*, *op.cit.*, p. 321; L. Malevez s.j., «L'Église, Corps du Christ...», *op.cit.*, pp. 27-94; V. Tsakonas, *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὴν πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 83-87. Io. Karavidopoulos, *op.cit.*, p. 105, note 5.

110. See Hippolytus of Rome, *Κατὰ πασῶν αἱρέσεων ἔλεγχος* Α', 21, BEΠΕΣ 5, 218, 4 and 5: «Πεπληρωσθαι πάντα καὶ μηδὲν εἶναι κενὸν ταῦτα καὶ οἱ Στωικοί». Cf. S. Hanson, *The Unite of the Church in the New Testament*, *op.cit.*, pp. 197, 127.

111. V. Tsakonas, *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὴν πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς...*, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

content¹¹², mainly on the basis of the passage *Wisdom* 1, 7, with which Apostle Paul seems to attribute to the term *fullness* («πλήρωμα») its ecclesiological content¹¹³.

However, how is the Church, as the “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ»), the *fullness* («πλήρωμα») of Christ?

A first approach to the relationship between the “body of Christ”, of the Church (many) and Christ – “head” (One), is confirmed by the recapitulation of everything “in Christ”¹¹⁴ in the Church Itself¹¹⁵. This relationship of identity between Christ and Church, however, is also linked to the presence of the Holy Spirit¹¹⁶, since it is the Holy Spirit who structures and coheres this relationship. From this perspective, the Holy Spirit is not only an element of the identity of Christ but also of the Church as the “body of Christ”; that is why it is necessary to investigate the way in which Apostle Paul connects Christ with the presence of the Holy Spirit in the “body of Christ”, the Church.

For Apostle Paul, in Christ “all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” («ἡὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι»)¹¹⁷, an expression which was debated in terms of its interpretation¹¹⁸, that is, whether the term *fullness* in this passage denotes the Church, as in *Col.* 2, 9 or whether the passage *Col.* 1, 19 signifies, according to Apostle Paul, the relationship of Christ with the Church.

For the historical-dogmatic investigation of this question, it is necessary to point out that in the ecclesiological thought of Apostle Paul the relationship of identity between Christ and the Church¹¹⁹ is a given, and in fact, John Chrysostom describes it as a relationship of unity and communion. where

112. *Wisdom* 1, 74; 7, 24; *Sirah* 16, 29; 43, 27. See P. Benoit, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

113. Cf. Ioannis Zizioulas, Metr. of Pergamon, *Ἔργα Α΄. Ἐκκλησιολογικά μελετήματα*, *op.cit.*, p. 150 ff.

114. *Ephes.* 1, 10; *Philip.* 2, 6-11.

115. *Rom.* 13, 9; *Ephes.* 1, 23; 5, 22-24; *Col.* 1, 24.

116. See V. Tsakonas, *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὴν πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 83-87 and 122.

117. *Col.* 1, 19.

118. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους*, Ὁμιλία 3, 2, PG 62, 26; Ignatius of Antioch, *Πρὸς Τραλλιανούς* 11, 2, BEΠΕΣ 2, p. 273. Athanasius the Great, *Περὶ τῆς ἐνσάρκου οἰκονομίας* 12, BEΠΕΣ 33, 229. Gregory of Nyssa, *Εἰς τὸ ὅταν ὑποταγῇ*, PG 44, p. 1313. Cf. Atanasije Jevtić (retir. bishop of Herzegovina), *op.cit.*, p. 47.

119. *Ephes.* 1, 23; *1 Cor.* 12, 12.

Christ is the “fullness” of “the body”, as the “head”, since «*όμοῦ πάντες ὄμεν συνημμένοι καὶ συγκεκολλημένοι*»¹²⁰. This relationship of identity between Christ, “head” and the “body of Christ”, as a relationship of communion and unity, reveals the Church, where on the one hand “the members of the body of Christ, being in a relationship of communion, have come to fullness” («*τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος Χριστοῦ, εὐρισκόμενα σὲ σχέση κοινωνίας, καθίστανται πεπληρωμένα*»)¹²¹, since Christ is the head “of all rule and authority” («*πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας*») and in Him “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” («*κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς*»)¹²², and on the other hand “conjoined” («*συνημμένα*») and “united” («*συγκεκολλημένα*»), since they are in communion and unity “in the Holy Spirit”.

However, in what way does this fullness between Christ and Church prove to be related to the fact of communion and unity?

It is already known that the relationship between Christ, as “head” and the “body of Christ”, as “fullness of the “head”, is a relationship of interpenetration. In this sense, the Church, as “the body of Christ”, is the “fullness” of Christ, and the two terms *body* and *fullness* are connected to each other and one defines the other¹²³. In fact, it is the only way of understanding the Church as an event of communion and unity, which is why Apostle Paul, speaking of the Church¹²⁴ and unity¹²⁵, relates these two concepts to the concept of incorporation¹²⁶, as the way of communion¹²⁷, without abolishing the distinction.

120. Io. Karavidopoulos, *Ἀποστόλου Παύλου Ἐπιστολὲς πρὸς Ἐφεσίους, Φιλιππησίους, Κολοσσαεῖς*, *op.cit.*, p. 476.

121. John Chrysostom, *Ὁμιλία πρὸ τῆς ἐξορίας* 1-2, PG 52, 427-429: Christ «*Ἐκκλησίας σάρκα ἀνέλαβε*».

122. *Col.* 2, 4-10; *Col.* 2, 9; G. Florovsky, *op.cit.*, pp. 33-34.

123. H. de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum. L'Eucharistie et l'Eglise au Moyen Âge. Étude historique*, Aubier, Paris ²1944.

124. *Ephes.* 1, 23; 5, 23-32.

125. *Ephes.* 2, 16; 4, 4, 7-16.

126. *Hebr.* 2, 14.

127. Ioannis Zizioulas, *Μετρ. of Pergamon, Ἔργα Α΄...*, *op.cit.*, p. 88 ff., where it is analyzed that the Holy Spirit is component of the identity of Christ and not merely complementary or helper in His work.

This communion and unity is not of a secular type of union, but a mystical unity in Christ¹²⁸ the center of which is the mystery of the Holy Eucharist¹²⁹, by which the Church is revealed as “the body of Christ” and Christ as the “head” of this body¹³⁰ while the “pleasing before Christ’s presence” («οἱ πρὸ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας εὐηρεστηκότες») and the faithful of every age participate in this body¹³¹.

Therefore, the “fullness” in a relation of communion is not just a numerical type of completeness or incorporation, but it determines the relationship of identity between Christ, as “head” and the Church as the “body of Christ”, and in this relationship of identity the Holy Spirit is a constitutive element, with whom the relationship between Christ, the One, and “the body of Christ”, the many is structured, as a relationship of communion and unity, that is, as a Church, which is why the Holy Spirit is «Πνεῦμα κοινωνίας»¹³², and with whom is achieved “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” («κοινωνία τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος») ¹³³.

The biblical references that the Holy Spirit makes Jesus “Christ of the Lord” («Χριστὸν Κυρίου») and the Spirit “Lord” («Κύριον») ¹³⁴ are the basis for understanding this relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the notion of Irenaeus of Lyon, that with the communion with Christ we also commune with the Holy Spirit¹³⁵, because “where the Spirit is there, the Church” («ὅπου τὸ Πνεῦμα

128. Io. Karmiris, *op.cit.*, p. 366.

129. G. Florovsky, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

130. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ἐφεσίους*, Ὁμιλία 10, 1, PG 62, 75; Ὁμιλία εἰς τό «Τοῦτο δὲ γινώσκετε», 6, PG 56, 277.

131. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Κατήχησις* Δ, 4, 3, PG 33, 1100; John Chrysostom, *Πρὸς Ἑβραίους*, Ὁμιλία 6, 2, PG 63, 56; John Damascene, *Περὶ τοῦ ἀχράντου σώματος* 2, PG 95, 408C; Gregory Palamas, *ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων* Α', 3 in: P. Christou (ed.), *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ, Συγγράμματα*, τόμος Α', Thessaloniki 1988, p. 449.

132. *Philip*. 2, 1.

133. 2 *Cor*. 13, 13. Chrysostomos Savvatos, Metr. of Messinia, «Ἡ ἐκκλησιολογικὴ ἐρμηνεία τῶν ἐκφράσεων “κοινωνία Πνεύματος” (*Philip*. 2, 1) καὶ “κοινωνία τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος” (2 *Cor*. 13, 13) ὡς δημιουργικὴ συνάντηση Ἑλληνισμοῦ καὶ Χριστιανισμοῦ στὴ σκέψη τοῦ ἀπ. Παύλου», *Θεολογία/Theologia* 92, 2 (2021), pp. 7-34.

134.2 *Cor*. 3, 17.

135. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Κατὰ αἱρέσεων* III, 24, 1, Sch 211, 473.

ἐκεῖ καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία»)¹³⁶, justifies the remark of Chrysostom that: «εἰ μὴ Πνεῦμα παρῆν οὐκ ἂν συνέστη ἡ Ἐκκλησία· εἰ δὲ συνίσταται ἡ Ἐκκλησία, εὐδὴλον ὅτι Πνεῦμα πάρεστιν»¹³⁷.

6. However, the Holy Spirit not only builds the Church, but also makes its work “fulfilled”, by giving an eschatological perspective to this concept of “completeness”, another element that differentiates the Church, the “people of God”, from the Jewish perception, since –as it is well known– the “people of God” moves towards the end of the times, with which the Holy Spirit is directly related¹³⁸. In this sense the Church, as the “body of Christ” and communion “in the Holy Spirit” is the “fullness” of Christ and of His humanity and at the same time receives its identity¹³⁹. However, the Church communes its fullness through this “bond of the Spirit” («τοῦ Πνεύματος δεσμόν»)¹⁴⁰.

Therefore, the term *fullness* is also attributed to the “Spirit of the Lord”, Who, according to the passage *Wisdom* 1, 7¹⁴¹, “holds all things together” («συνέχει τὰ πάντα») because “knows what is said” («γνώσιν ἔχει φωνῆς») and dwells in Christ¹⁴², in Whom all the treasures of knowledge are hidden¹⁴³. It is also known that the work of the Holy Spirit is the knowledge as communion and participation, which is why Irenaeus of Lyon precisely emphasizes that this knowledge as a result of communion constitutes “life and light” («ζωὴ καὶ φῶς») and is achieved “in the Holy Spirit” («ἐν Πνεύματι Ἀγίῳ»)¹⁴⁴.

136. Irenaeus of Lyon, *op.cit.*, 473-475.

137. John Chrysostom, *Εἰς τὴν ἀγίαν Πεντηχοστὴν* 1, 4, PG 50, 459. Ioannis Zizioulas, *op.cit.*, pp. 210-211.

138. *Acts* 2, 17.

139. Basil the Great, *Περὶ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος* 26, 61, PG 32, 181; John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Κολοσσαεῖς*, Ὁμιλία 1, 3, PG 62, 303.

140. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Κατὰ αἰρέσεων* IV, 20, 5, Sch 100, 639 ff. and IV, 38, 1-3, Sch 100, 943-957.

141. Cf. 7, 24.

142. *Col.* 1, 19, 2, 9.

143. *Col.* 2, 3.

144. *Acts* 2; *1 Thess.* 4, 8; *Hebr.* 6, 4; *1 Peter* 1, 2, 11 ff.; *1 John* 3, 24; 4, 13; *Jude* 19 ff.; *Joel* 3, 1-5; *Ezekiel* 36, 27.

The relationship between Christ and the Spirit makes Christ “Last Adam” («Ἐσχάτο Ἀδάμ») ¹⁴⁵ and the Church the “temple of God” («ναὸν Θεοῦ») and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit ¹⁴⁶, because the Holy Spirit brings the end times to the Church and in this way “the people of God” («ὁ λαὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ») become “the new Israel” («νέος Ἰσραήλ»).

The recapitulation in Christ describes a new creation from the beginning, since Christ as the “new Adam” («νέος Ἀδάμ») is offered to the man and to creation, through the mystery of Incarnation. This relationship with the “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ»), the Church, becomes a fact of salvation for man, because man through the Church is related to Christ as the Only-begotten Son and in the “Holy Spirit” («ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ»). Irenaeus of Lyon expressed this realism in his writings, addressing the Gnostics of his time ¹⁴⁷.

Christ is not only the personal resurrected body of Christ, nor only “the new nature” («καινὸς ἄνθρωπος») ¹⁴⁸ but also the one eucharistic “body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ»), that is the Church, where “the faithful everywhere in the world, those who are, who were and those who will be” («οἱ πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης πιστοί, καὶ ὄντες καὶ γενόμενοι καὶ ἐσόμενοι») commune “in unity” («ἐν ἐνότητι») ¹⁴⁹.

This trans-temporality of the use of the term “body of Christ” is for Apostle Paul something given and accepted ¹⁵⁰, because in the context of the recapitulation “in Christ” there is no temporal distinction, nor a local dimension, but everything is renewed, from the beginning to the end of the times.

On the ecclesiological basis of Apostle Paul’s thought, “the body of Christ” («σῶμα Χριστοῦ») is inclusive of “everything” («τῶν πάντων»), that is, of the whole creation. Identified with the mystery of the Holy Eucharist it “depicts” («εἰκονίζει») the recapitulative and renovating work

145. 1 Cor. 15, 45.

146. 1 Cor. 3, 16.

147. P. Benoit, op.cit., p. 11, note 2.

148. Ephes. 4, 24; Col. 3, 10.

149. Cf. Ioannis Zizioulas, Metr. of Pergamon, Ἔργα Α΄..., op.cit., pp. 178-180.

150. 1 Cor. 6, 15-20; 10, 16-17; 11, 1-27. For the relationship between the eucharistic and the ecclesiological body of Christ see John Chrysostom, Εἰς τὴν Α΄ Κορινθίου, Ὁμιλία 24, 2, PG 61, 200.

of Christ and expresses the fullness “in the Holy Spirit” («ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ») The identification of the ecclesiological and eucharistic body of Christ, is the basis and the cause of the communion and unity, but also of the soteriological work of the Church¹⁵¹, which concerns the entire human race, a fact which gives theological meaning to the ecclesiological content of the passage *Ephes.* 1, 22-23.

151. This identification after the schism of 11th century (1054) was weakened and rejected due to an uncritical and clearly erroneous understanding and interpretation of the expression “*Corpus Christi mysticum*”, of St. Augustine, which had serious and dangerous consequences to the understanding of the relationship between Christ and Church. See J. D. Zizioulas, “The Church as the ‘Mystical’ Body of Christ: Towards an Ecclesial Mysticism”, in: Id., *Communion and Otherness*, P. McPartlan (ed.), T & T Clark, London 2006, pp. 286-307; Vl. Io. Pheidas, *Εκκλησιολογία μετὰ Χριστολογία καὶ Πνευματολογία ὑπὸ τὸ φῶς τῆς πατερικῆς παραδόσεως*, Athens 2018, pp. 37-133, 232-293.