

One Catholic House, Two Wings

J.Konstapel, Leiden, August 8 2026

1. The occasion

In August 2026 the Financial Times, and in Dutch translation Het Financieele Dagblad, published an essay by Carmody Grey, a Catholic theologian and philosopher teaching at Durham and at Radboud University Nijmegen. She explained why she declined an invitation from Anthropic, the maker of the chatbot Claude. Her stated reason: AI companies court the humanities for credibility and ask the wrong questions. They wanted to discuss whether Claude could suffer. She wanted to discuss the user — addiction, power, accountability.

The essay was read as one academic's defence of independence. This essay documents a different reading. Grey is a node in a transatlantic network. The network has a doctrine that is 2,400 years old, an infrastructure that is new, capital on both sides of the ocean, and, since 2025, a seat near the American presidency. None of this is hidden. Every fact below is on the public record. The reader can weigh them and decide.

2. The house

Picture one house with two wings.

The left wing is social and ecological. Its charter is Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015), on climate and the poor. Its institutions include the Laudato Si' Research Institute at Campion Hall, Oxford, and the Laudato Si' Institute at Radboud University, founded in December 2023, where Grey holds her chair. Its funders include Porticus, the philanthropy network of the Brenninkmeijer family, owners of C&A.

The right wing is political. Its public faces are the American "postliberals": Patrick Deneen (Notre Dame), Adrian Vermeule (Harvard Law), Sohrab Ahmari (Compact magazine), Gladden Pappin (now advising the Hungarian government). Its most powerful adherent is Vice President J.D. Vance, a Catholic convert of 2019. Its adjacent financier is Peter Thiel — not himself a Catholic, but the man whose 2011 lecture at Yale, by Vance's own account, set Vance on the path to conversion, via the French thinker René Girard.

The two wings fight each other. The postliberal right spent years attacking Pope Francis; Robert Prevost publicly criticised Vance's philosophy before becoming Pope Leo XIV. The Porticus wing funds migrants' causes and climate work that the Vance wing despises. On church politics they are enemies.

And yet they are one house, because they share the foundation. Both hold that the secular does not exist, that liberalism is dying, and that the question "what is the human?" belongs to the tradition, not to science and not to the market. The quarrel is over who holds the steering wheel, not over the direction of the car.

3. The doctrine, in its own words

The shared foundation was not invented recently. It was assembled from a chain of texts, and the chain can be quoted.

Plato supplies the architecture: perfect originals above, dependent copies below, joined by "partaking" [methexis] — "if anything is beautiful besides the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful because it partakes of that Beautiful" (*Phaedo* 100c). Paul and John identify the upper floor with a personal God: "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28 — quoting, as the verse itself says, Greek poets). Plotinus adds the flow: what is produced is "a radiance out of the One, while the One abides" (*Enneads* V.1.6). Augustine imports the synthesis into the church and demotes evil to a lack: "evil is not a substance" (*Confessions* 7.12). Pseudo-Dionysius, writing around 500 under a false apostolic name, makes indefinability the mark of the highest: the negations "are here true above the affirmations" (*Mystical Theology* V). Thomas Aquinas systematises the whole: God is "subsistent being itself," creatures "would fall away into nothingness" unless continuously conserved (*Summa Theologiae* I q.104), and language about God works only "according to analogy" — never with fixed, testable meanings (I q.13 a.5).

The modern school dates the fall of the West to the moment this construction was challenged. When Duns Scotus argued around 1300 that "being" must mean one thing — otherwise no statement about God says anything determinable — he became, in this school's historiography, the father of the flat, secular world. John Milbank's founding book opens with the school's whole programme in five words: "Once, there was no 'secular'" (*Theology and Social Theory*, 1990). The 1999 manifesto *Radical Orthodoxy* demands that every discipline be framed theologically, "because if it is not, these discourses define a zone apart from God." Grey's own monograph applies the frame to biology: "knowing life is knowing God, and knowing God is knowing life" (*Theology, Science and Life*, 2023).

Note the two properties of this doctrine that matter for everything below. It is circular by design — each floor is known through the other. And it is untestable by design — analogy guarantees that no term ever holds still long enough to be checked. Its defenders present both properties as depth. The reader may also read them as armour.

4. The capital

Doctrines with armour still need buildings. Two independent capital streams have paid for them for decades.

The Catholic-Dutch stream. The Brenninkmeijer family's assets are estimated around €35 billion, structured through the Cofra group in Zug, Switzerland. Their philanthropy runs through a network of foundations — Porticus, Benevolentia, Laudes, Auxilium — under the umbrella Constanter, which describes its work as rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. The family has given over a billion euros to the Catholic church, helped finance the founding of the Dutch Christian-democratic party CDA, and paid for the papal visit to the Netherlands in 1985. Porticus operates from fourteen offices in over a hundred countries. Grey's Nijmegen chair, at the institute named after the left wing's charter encyclical, was established with Porticus among its supporters. Investigative journalists at Follow the Money have documented the family's foundations funding NGOs that lobby the European Commission.

The Protestant-American stream. The John Templeton Foundation, endowed at roughly \$2.5–3.4 billion, spends on the order of \$150 million a year on the engineered overlap of science and religion. It funds positions inside science faculties — a post in philosophy of cosmology within the Cambridge physics department, a twin at Oxford — and its grants concentrate on exactly the topics where science borders theology: free will, consciousness, purpose. During the 2013 controversy

over this funding, the philosopher Jason Stanley put the mechanism in one sentence: people respond to the agendas of their funders in unconscious ways. The money does not buy conclusions. It buys the agenda.

The tech-American stream. Peter Thiel funds the political wing: Vance's Senate campaign, allied candidates, and an intellectual ecosystem around Girard's theory of imitation and scapegoating. Thiel is not Catholic; observers note he values the church as a vehicle of order and hierarchy. His interest closes a remarkable loop: the network's left wing warns publicly against AI capital, while its right wing is financed by it.

5. The politics

The right wing's programme is stated in print. Deneen's 2023 book calls for "regime change — the peaceful but vigorous overthrow of a corrupt and corrupting liberal ruling class." Vermeule's "common-good constitutionalism" advocates strong rule in the interest of the common good. Vance's alignment is documented by his own choices: in October 2022, mid-campaign, he left the trail to speak at the postliberal conference at Franciscan University of Steubenville, organised by Ahmari, keynoted by Deneen and Pappin; in 2023 he appeared alongside Deneen to praise *Regime Change* and described his goals as "explicitly anti-elitist, explicitly anti-regime." His conversion story runs through Thiel's 2011 Yale lecture and through Girard — a chain Vance himself described in his 2020 essay "How I Joined the Resistance."

The scholars who study the movement add a caution that fairness requires repeating: Vance does his own thinking, has not called himself an integralist, and postliberalism's adherents are few. The point here is not that a small school commands a government. The point is that a vocabulary built for seminar rooms — common good, regime, the human person, the errors of liberalism — is now spoken from the second highest office of the United States, and that this vocabulary and Grey's vocabulary are drawn from the same well.

6. What "overruling science" precisely means

It is tempting to summarise all this as religion trying to overrule science. The summary is almost right, and the "almost" is where the interest lies.

No one in this network disputes measurements. No encyclical denies a spectrum, no Radical Orthodoxy text rejects an experiment. The claim is not about results but about jurisdiction: who owns the meaning of the results, and who administers the load-bearing words — life, consciousness, person, purpose, the human. Milbank's stated ambition is that theology should "position, qualify and criticise" the other discourses. That is not contradicting science. It is filing a claim to be its landlord.

The method of the claim follows from the doctrine. Because the school's language is analogical by conviction, its key terms are never defined; because they are never defined, no finding can ever touch them; because no finding can touch them, every scientific advance can be absorbed as one more tenant paying rent to the frame. And the claim is pressed not by argument but by infrastructure: chairs inside physics faculties (Templeton), institutes inside universities (Nijmegen), encyclicals cited by governments (climate, now AI), and a vice presidency citing Catholic social teaching.

Grey's Financial Times essay, re-read against this background, executes the operation in miniature. It dismisses Anthropic's metaphysics and substitutes its own; it attacks the company's undefined

anthropomorphic vocabulary while deploying the school's undefined vocabulary; it demands attention for power and accountability and delivers an encyclical. Its two genuinely valid observations — that anthropomorphic design is a commercial choice, and that the consciousness debate consumes scarce academic capacity — require no theology at all, and are the reason the rest of the package travels.

7. The moment

Why does this matter now? Because AI has put the network's core product — the question "what is the human?" — on every front page, and because both wings have already taken up position.

The left wing frames: *Magnifica Humanitas* (2026), presented in Rome with Anthropic co-founder Chris Olah on stage, declares that "no computer system, however advanced, can create a heart that gives itself away." The left wing also refuses: Grey's essay, three months later, declines the same company and urges the humanities to keep their distance. Framing and refusing look like opposites; they function as a division of labour, and both direct the public to the same conclusion — the question of AI is the question of the human, and the question of the human belongs to the tradition.

The right wing, meanwhile, governs, financed in part by the very technology capital the left wing warns against.

The reader now has the pieces: a doctrine that cannot be tested, capital that funds the positions from which questions are asked, a politics that speaks the doctrine's vocabulary from high office, and a technology moment that makes the doctrine's product urgent again. Whether this amounts to a danger, an opportunity, or merely a remarkable institutional achievement is a judgment this essay leaves to the reader. It closes instead with the two questions that the material itself suggests. When a text tells you what the human is: who defined the terms? And when a text tells you it is independent: who pays for the chair?

Annotated references

Grey, C., "Waarom deze Nijmeegse filosoof Anthropic afwees," FD/Financial Times, August 2026. The occasion; source of her stated reasons, her metaphysical claims, and the Olah–Leo XIV photograph.

Grey, C., *Theology, Science and Life* (T&T Clark, 2023); Ungureanu, J.C., review, ISCAST/CPOSAT (Feb 2025). Her monograph and a sympathetic chapter-by-chapter review confirming the meta-discourse claim and the "knowing life is knowing God" formula.

Primary chain: Plato, *Phaedo* 99–100, *Republic* 509b; Acts 17:28; John 1:1–3; Plotinus, *Enneads* V.1–2; Augustine, *Confessions* 7; *Corpus Dionysiacum*, *Mystical Theology*; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I qq. 2, 13, 104; Scotus, *Ordinatio* I d.3. The doctrine's sources, quoted in section 3; the full station-by-station documentation, including the experiential record, is given in the Appendix below.

Milbank, J., *Theology and Social Theory* (1990); Milbank/Pickstock/Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy* (1999); Žižek & Milbank, *The Monstrosity of Christ* (MIT Press, 2009). The school's founding texts; the last supplies the explicit defence of paradox and analogical language.

Radboud University, chair announcement (Oct 2024). Documents the Nijmegen institute (founded Dec 2023 with think-tank Socires) and the chair's funders: Porticus, Fundatie Charitas Roosendaal, RC Maagdenhuis, Kansfonds, Stichting BKBO.

Brenninkmeijer/Porticus: family and foundation self-descriptions (porticus.com, constanter.org); public reporting on family assets (~€35bn, Cofra, Zug), church donations (>€1bn), CDA financing, 1985 papal visit; Follow the Money, "Philanthropy allows the rich to influence Europe's policy agenda." The Catholic-Dutch capital stream.

John Templeton Foundation: foundation reports; Inside Higher Ed (2013) on the philosophy-funding controversy, incl. Jason Stanley's remark; Bains, S., *Evolutionary Psychology* 9(1) (2011); reporting on Templeton-funded posts at Cambridge and Oxford. The Protestant-American capital stream and the agenda-setting mechanism.

Vance and the postliberals: Vance, "How I Joined the Resistance" (The Lamp, 2020); AP/PBS reporting on Vance's postliberal ties, the 2022 Steubenville conference, and his 2023 appearance with Deneen; Deneen, *Regime Change* (2023); Vermeule's common-good constitutionalism; Irish Times / Studies (D. Roantree) on the Thiel–Girard–Vance chain and Prevost's pre-papal criticism of Vance. The political wing, documented from mainstream and Catholic press.

Francis, *Laudato Si'* (2015); Leo XIV, *Magnifica Humanitas* (2026). The two campaign encyclicals; the second quoted from the FD publication.

Appendix: The Source Line, Station by Station

What follows is the documentary basis for section 3. Each station gives the text, its date, the key passages in literal translation (key terms in the original language in brackets), and a one-line note on what the passage contributes to the finished doctrine. A separate column at the end records, for each station, whether the sources contain a first-person report of the experience the doctrine talks about. Interpretation is kept to the contribution notes; the passages can be read against them. Quotations follow standard editions in the author's rendering; for formal publication each should be checked against a critical edition (numbering of Plotinus and Dionysius varies by edition).

A.1 Plato (ca. 428–348 BC)

Phaedo 100c: "If anything is beautiful besides the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful for no other reason than that it partakes [metechei] of that Beautiful." — Contribution: the master word. Partaking, methexis, later Latinised as participatio, names the relation between the two levels of reality.

Republic 509b: the Good is "not being, but still beyond being [epekeina tēs ousias], exceeding it in dignity and power"; knowable things receive from it "not only their being known, but their being [einai] and essence [ousia]." — Contribution: the upper level outranks being itself.

Timaeus 28a–29a: the craftsman [dēmiourgos] forms the cosmos after an eternal model; the world is "a generated image of the eternal." — Contribution: the maker-and-model picture.

Phaedo 96a–100d: Socrates recounts abandoning "that wisdom called inquiry into nature," which sought "the causes [aitiai] of each thing: why each thing comes to be, why it perishes, why it is" (96a). On explaining his sitting in prison by his bones and sinews: "to call such things causes is too

absurd; (...) they confuse the cause with that without which the cause would never be a cause" (99a–b). Then: "nothing else makes it beautiful other than the presence [parousia] of, or communion [koinōnia] with, that Beautiful itself, however that relation may be named; (...) this seems to me the safest answer [asphalestaton]" (100d). — Contribution: the explicit rejection of causal explanation in favour of an unnamed, simultaneous relation. Note that Plato leaves the relation itself open — "however it may be named."

A.2 Aristotle (384–322 BC)

Physics II.3 (194b16–195a3): the four causes [aitiai]: that out of which (material); the form [eidos]; "that whence the first origin of change or rest" (the mover); the end [telos, hou heneka]. — Contribution: the rival programme.

Posterior Analytics I.2 (71b9–12): "We think we understand [epistasthai] a thing simpliciter when we think we know the cause [aitia] on account of which the thing is, that it is its cause, and that it cannot be otherwise." — Contribution: knowledge itself redefined as knowing causes.

Metaphysics I.9 (992a24 ff.): criticism of his teacher's Forms — they explain no motion and no change. — Contribution: the demand for explanation directed against the participation picture; from this point both programmes exist side by side in writing.

Metaphysics XII.7 (1072b3): the first mover moves "as the beloved moves [kinei hōs erōmenon]," itself unmoved. — Contribution: the causal ladder given a top; later scaled up by Aquinas into proofs of God.

A.3 Paul and the Gospel of John (ca. 50–100)

Acts 17:28 (Paul in Athens): "For in him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said: for we are also his offspring." The verse itself marks its second half as a quotation of Greek poets (attributed to Aratus, *Phaenomena* 5; the first half is linked in the scholarship to Epimenides). — Contribution: the fusion point of Greek architecture and the God of Israel, with the borrowing acknowledged inside the verse.

John 1:1–3: "In the beginning was the Word [logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (...) All things were made through him." — Contribution: the impersonal upper level becomes a person who speaks and makes.

A.4 Plotinus, *Enneads* (ca. 250, edited by Porphyry ca. 300)

V.2.1: "The One is all things and not a single one of them." V.1.6: what is produced is "a radiance [perilampsis] out of the One, while the One abides — like the brilliant light that runs round the sun, eternally generated from it while the sun abides." VI.9.9: "All that is, is through the One." — Contribution: the dynamics. The lower level continuously receives its existence from the upper, pictured as light from an abiding source. Structural terms: procession [proodos], return [epistrophē], abiding [monē]; the ladder One → intellect [nous] → soul [psychē] → matter. The church adopted the picture with one amendment: the flow became a free act of will rather than a necessary emanation.

A.5 Augustine (354–430)

Confessions 7.9: he read "books of the Platonists [libri Platoniorum], translated from Greek into Latin," and found there "not in these words, but entirely to the same effect" the content of John's prologue. — Contribution: the documented import of the Platonic construction into the church, stated by the importer himself.

Confessions 7.12: "Everything that is, is good; and evil (...) is not a substance [malum non est substantia], for if it were a substance, it would be good." — Contribution: evil demoted from thing to lack; the ground of reality can then be narrated as peace, since only the good and its absence exist.

City of God 14.28: "Two loves have built two cities: the earthly city by love of self unto contempt of God, the heavenly by love of God unto contempt of self." — Contribution: history as the conflict of two loves; the direct ancestor of the modern school's "narrative of peace" against "original violence."

A.6 Corpus Dionysiacum (ca. 485–530)

Writings under the name "Dionysius the Areopagite" (Paul's Athenian convert, Acts 17:34). The dating around 500 rests on the texts' demonstrable dependence on the pagan Neoplatonist Proclus (†485), shown independently by H. Koch and J. Stiglmayr in 1895; Lorenzo Valla first publicly doubted the attribution in 1457. For roughly a millennium the texts carried near-apostolic authority.

Divine Names I.1: God is "beyond-being [hyperousios], beyond-divine, beyond-good." *Mystical Theology* I.2: "We pray to come into this darkness above light, and through not-seeing and not-knowing to see and to know what is above seeing and knowing." *Mystical Theology* V: the Cause of all "is not soul, not intellect (...) not being [oude ousia estin], not eternity, not time (...) and the negations [aphaireseis] are here true above the affirmations." — Contribution: the rule of language. About the highest, indefinability is not a defect but the criterion. Every later refusal to define load-bearing terms has its licence here.

A.7 Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)

De ente et essentia ch. 4: in all creatures essence [essentia] differs from being [esse]; there must be something "whose essence is its own being" — God. *Summa Theologiae* I q.3 a.4: "In God essence and being are identical [sua essentia est suum esse]"; God as "subsistent being itself [ipsum esse subsistens]." — Contribution: the ineffable of the previous stations receives a technical name: being itself.

ST I q.104 a.1: "The being of every creature so depends on God that it could not subsist for a moment, but would fall away into nothingness, unless it were conserved in being by the operation of the divine power." — Contribution: the Plotinian flow, now as continuous conservation.

ST I q.13 a.5: names are said of God and creatures "neither univocally [univoce] nor purely equivocally [aequivoce], but according to analogy [secundum analogiam], that is, proportion." — Contribution: the language law. No word — being, good, life — ever means the same on both levels; every statement about the relation is thereby untestable in principle.

ST I q.2 a.3 (the five ways): the first way "from motion [ex parte motus]" concludes to "a first mover moved by nothing"; the second "from the notion of efficient cause [ex ratione causae efficientis]" to "a first efficient cause." Thomas standardly calls Aristotle "the Philosopher [Philosophus]." — Contribution: the system holds both ancient programmes at once — Platonic participation for the

vertical relation, Aristotelian causation for the proofs. Aquinas comments on the Dionysian corpus throughout his work (some 1,700 references by standard counts), believing its author to be Paul's disciple.

After 6 December 1273 Thomas wrote nothing more; the tradition (via his secretary Reginald of Piperno and the canonisation acts) records his words: "All that I have written seems to me straw [mihi videtur ut palea] compared with what I have seen [respectu eorum quae vidi]."

A.8 Duns Scotus (ca. 1266–1308) and William of Ockham (ca. 1287–1347)

Scotus, *Ordinatio* I d.3: the concept of being [ens] is univocal [univocum] for God and creatures — "I call that concept univocal which is one in such a way that its unity suffices for contradiction when it is affirmed and denied of the same thing"; without such a concept, he argues, no natural knowledge of God is possible. — Contribution (to the modern school's narrative): the designated turning point. The school reads univocity as the invention of the flat, secular world from which modern science, liberalism and the market descend. Scotus' own argument — that analogy without a fixed proportion leaves every statement about God indeterminate — is rarely restated by the school that condemns him.

Ockham, *Summa Logicae* I.14–15: "No universal is a substance outside the soul"; the universal is an intention of the soul, a sign; only singulars exist. — Contribution (to the narrative): the second designated culprit.

Experiential reports at these stations and at every later station of the chain: none.

A.9 Nouvelle théologie (France, ca. 1930–1965)

Blondel, *L'Action* (1893): analysis of human action concluding that the will in all its acts intends more than any finite goal can fulfil. De Lubac, *Surnaturel* (1946): the concept of "pure nature" [natura pura] — a human nature with merely natural ends — is a construction of later commentators; in the Fathers and in Thomas there is one concrete order in which spirit has a natural desire [desiderium naturale] for the vision of God. Pius XII, *Humani Generis* (1950) §26, states the opposing position, against those who "destroy the gratuity of the supernatural order." De Lubac lost his teaching assignment in those years, was made a Council adviser by John XXIII in 1960, and a cardinal in 1983. — Contribution: the removal of the last buffer zone. If nature is never without grace, no secular domain exists even provisionally; Milbank's opening sentence radicalises exactly this.

A.10 The founding texts of the present school

Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (1990), first sentence: "Once, there was no 'secular'." The manifesto volume *Radical Orthodoxy* (1999), introduction: all domains are to be read "from the theological perspective of participation," and every discipline must be framed theologically, "because if it is not, these discourses define a zone apart from God." Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (1998): the eucharistic act as the condition of meaning. Žižek & Milbank, *The Monstrosity of Christ* (2009): Milbank defends the "logic of paradox" and analogical language against univocal language and dialectic; Žižek's position from the same engagement (*The Puppet and the Dwarf*, 2003): "to become a true dialectical materialist, one should go through the Christian experience." Hanby, *No God, No Science?* (2013): modern science rests on

theological and metaphysical foundations. Grey, *Theology, Science and Life* (2023): "knowing life is knowing God, and knowing God is knowing life"; theology as the meta-discourse that positions, qualifies and criticises other knowledge. — Contribution: the assembly. Every element has a station behind it: the circle is A.1, the exemption from testing is A.6 plus A.7, the enemy is A.8, the totality is A.9.

A.11 The teaching channel

Rerum Novarum (Leo XIII, 1891): on capital and labour; the social encyclical series begins. *Fides et Ratio* (John Paul II, 1998), opening: "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth." *Laudato Si'* (Francis, 2015): "on care for our common home." *Magnifica Humanitas* (Leo XIV, 2026), subtitle "on the protection of the human in the age of artificial intelligence"; from it (as published in FD, 7 August 2026): "no computer system, however advanced, can create a heart that gives itself away, or a conscience that distinguishes good from evil."

A.12 The experiential record, read down the same chain

For each station: does the text (or its direct tradition) contain a report of first-hand experience of what the doctrine describes?

Plato: the *Seventh Letter* 341c–d (authenticity disputed in the philology; cited as transmitted) describes the core insight as unteachable — arising "suddenly [exaiphnēs], like a light kindled from a leaping spark, in the soul, and thereafter feeding itself"; *Symposium* 210e places the sudden vision of the Beautiful in the mouth of Diotima. Aristotle: only fragment 15 (Rose, via Synesius), on the mysteries — initiates "must not learn [mathein] but undergo [pathein]"; nothing first-person in the main works. Paul: 2 Corinthians 12:2–4, in the third person — "I knew a man in Christ (...) caught up to the third heaven (...) who heard unspeakable words"; the three Damascus accounts are in Acts, which Paul did not write. Plotinus: first person — "Often I have woken out of the body to myself (...) and seen a beauty of wondrous quality, and become one with the divine" (IV.8.1); Porphyry adds: "Four times, while I was with him, he attained that goal" (*Life* 23). Augustine: first person, three times — the unchangeable light (7.10), "I came to That Which Is in the flash of a trembling glance, but could not fix my gaze" (7.17), and Ostia, with his mother: "we touched it slightly with the whole beat of the heart" (9.10). Dionysius: no first-person report; the corpus points to a teacher, Hierotheus, who "not only learned but underwent the divine things [pathōn ta theia]" (*Divine Names* 2.9). Thomas: secondhand and terminal — the 1273 report, after which he stopped writing. Scotus, Ockham, the nouvelle théologie, Radical Orthodoxy, Grey, the encyclicals: no first-person reports in the cited texts. Grey adds, in the 2026 essay, that she tries to avoid interacting with the systems she writes about.

Summarised as bare fact: first-person reports exist at exactly two stations, Plotinus and Augustine, both before the year 430; the *Seventh Letter*, if genuine, adds a third at the start. Everything after 1300 — the era in which the doctrine's modern defenders locate the fall — contains none. The reader may set this column beside the doctrinal column and draw the comparison the appendix deliberately leaves undrawn.