Distribution Agreement

In presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this dissertation.

Signature:

_____ _____

Mark DelCogliano Date

Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names

By

Mark DelCogliano
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Historical Studies in Theology and Religion

_____

Dr. Lewis Ayres
Advisor

_____

Dr. J. Patout Burns
Committee Member

_____

Dr. Philip Reynolds
Committee Member

_____

Dr. Steven K. Strange
Committee Member

Accepted:

_____

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

_____

Date

Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names

By

Mark DelCogliano
B.S., Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1991
M.T.S., Vanderbilt University Divinity School, 2004

Advisor: Lewis Ayres, D.Phil.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Historical Studies in Theology and Religion

2009

Abstract

Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names
By Mark DelCogliano

Basil of Caesarea's debate with Eunomius of Cyzicus marks a turning point in the fourth-century Trinitarian controversies. For the first time in their history the participants acknowledged that more fundamental differences—methodological and epistemological—lay at the core of their specifically theological differences. This dissertation explores one of these fundamental points of contention between Basil and Eunomius: the proper theory of names. A theory of names explains how names operate, which is to say it gives an account of what names signify when they are applied to objects. Eunomius and his teacher Aetius—the leaders of a movement commonly called "Heteroousian"—maintained that those names uniquely predicated of God communicated the divine essence. In response, Basil formulated a general theory of names wherein all names fall short of disclosing essence, but nonetheless provide accurate and useful knowledge of those who bear the names. This dissertation contains two parts. The first offers a revisionist interpretation of the Heteroousian theory of names as a corrective to previous ahistorical approaches and contests the widespread assumption that it is indebted to Platonist sources. It is demonstrated that their theory represents a later stage of a debate over divine names that began in the early fourth century and that it was developed by drawing upon proximate Christian sources. The second part argues that in response to Eunomius Basil developed and consistently applied a "notionalist" theory of names wherein names signify primarily notions and secondarily properties, not essence. It is demonstrated that Basil has a complex account of how names give rise to notions and that his well-known theory of *epinoia* is but one aspect of a wider notionalism. An extensive inquiry into Basil's sources is conducted, revealing that Basil's theory of names draws eclectically upon ancient philosophical and grammatical sources, while at the same time being heavily influenced by previous Christian reflections, particularly those of the ecclesial alliance known as the Homoiousians.

Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names

By

Mark DelCogliano
B.S., Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1991
M.T.S., Vanderbilt University Divinity School, 2004

Advisor: Lewis Ayres, D.Phil.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Historical Studies in Theology and Religion

2009

Acknowledgements

I could not have successfully completed this dissertation without the guidance, assistance, and support of others. Lewis Ayres must be thanked first of all. In his direction of this project from its overly-ambitious beginnings to its unexpected final form, Lewis was a constant sounding-board for my ideas, a perceptive critic of my arguments, a provider of illegible comments on numerous drafts, and an unrelenting prod to the finish line. But Lewis has been much more than a dissertation director. I have had the rare privilege of studying patristics with one of the finest scholars working in the field today. His prodigious expertise is matched only by his mordant sense of humor and unflinching encouragement. He has also tutored me in the arts necessary for any scholar: networking, publishing, academic politics, conference strategizing, and service to the profession. Lewis once joked that he was a purveyor of a "full-service graduate program," and even went so far as to provide me with a recipe for steak that I used to woo the woman who is now my wife. I do not doubt that the orientation of my research and my own identity as a scholar and teacher will forever be shaped by him. For all these reasons I am profoundly grateful to him.

I would also like to thank Steven Strange, whose seminars on ancient philosophy were fundamental to contextualizing Eunomius and Basil within philosophical traditions and whose weekly Greek reading groups have been vital to my facility in Greek. In my own teaching career, I can only hope to achieve Steve's generosity to his students and his excitement over their projects. I was thrilled that Patout Burns agreed to be on my committee, enabling a more formal continuation of an association that began at Vanderbilt. Patout initiated me into the academic study of the patristic period and my own interest in doctrinal theology is due largely to him. He is a teacher whose lessons I am still learning and has become my personal model of effective pedagogy. I am very grateful for all that he has done for me. I also thank Philip Reynolds for his helpful comments as well as for his seminar on Thomas Aquinas which provided me with unanticipated insights into fourth-century theories of names. A word of thanks as well to Hidemi Takahashi who came all the way from Tokyo, via New Haven, to attend my defense and saved me from a mistranscription of Syriac.

I have had the great fortune of studying patristics with peers who are fantastic conversation partners, meticulous critics of my work, hilarious, profound, and the best of friends. What understanding I have of patristic theology I owe as much to them as to my teachers. Andrew Radde-Gallwitz has been my principal colleague and collaborator. As a result of our discussions over the years and our translation work together, I no longer know where his thoughts end and mine begin. Though he was not a member of my committee, Andy graciously read through my dissertation and offered extensive feedback upon it. A thousand thanks to him. Bradley Peper made my education at Vanderbilt all that it could be and his continued support on so many fronts since then has been a boon to me. Our ongoing inquiry into the work of Dennis Kehoe has proved to be invaluable. With Tommy Humphries I have been able to indulge my interest in Latin patristics, particularly Gregory the Great, and to keep reasonably fit through weekly squash games—both crucial to the successful completion of this dissertation. Thanks as well to Townes Van Zandt and Pappy Van Winkle, both of whom I came to know through and with these three men.

Parts of this dissertation were written at the home of Richard and Karen Levad. I thank them for their support of me in many ways. Rich's diligence in completing his book on Black Swifts before his passing in February 2008 and his quiet dignity in the face of his illness continues to inspire me. I owe my parents, Edward and Patricia DelCogliano, more thanks than I can possibly offer here for their love and support throughout my life but especially in the last twenty years as my career has taken innumerable, unexpected twists and turns.

Mention too must be made of Durango, who was a source of joy and a welcome distraction in the final stages of this project.

Finally, words do not suffice to express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Amy Levad. In her I have found what I was always looking for but never thought I would find. Together we went through all the stages of the doctoral program, and I can only hope that I have been as supportive of her as she has of me. I cannot imagine how this dissertation would have been completed without her wicked sense of humor, her knack for knowing when it was time for a break, and her incomparable cooking. Her dedication to academic excellence, her commitment to engaging the world outside the academy, her charm, her goodness, her kindness will never cease to amaze me. Though she thinks me a bit obsessed with all things patristic, her encouragement never flags, her generosity never fails, her love never fades. I dedicate this dissertation to her with all my love.

Contents

Abbreviations

I. Series

ACA	Ancient Commentators on Aristotle
AW	Athanasius Werke
CAG	Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca
CPG	Clavis Patrum Graecorum
FoC	Fathers of the Church
GG	Grammatici Graeci
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
GCS n.f.	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, Neue Folge
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
PG	Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca
PL	Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina
PO	Philonis Opera
SChr	Sources chrétiennes

II. Collections of Texts

Texts in these collections are cited by document number.

Dok.	Hanns Christof Brennecke, Uta Heil, Annette von Stockhausen, and Angelika Wintjes. *Athanasius Werke III/1. Dokumente zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites. 3. Lieferung* (Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).
LS	A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
PC	Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD: A Sourcebook*, 3 vols. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).
SVF	Hans Friedrich August von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1905).
Urk.	Hans-Georg Opitz, *Athanasius Werke III/1. Urkunden zur Geschichte der arianischen Streites 318 – 328. 1-2. Lieferung* (Berlin / Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1934-1935).

Abbreviations for texts cited are listed in the Bibliography of primary sources. Classical and Patristic texts not listed there follow H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), and Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954).

Introduction

The debate between Basil of Caesarea and Eunomius of Cyzicus marks a turning point in the fourth-century Trinitarian debates. The Heteroousian doctrine promoted by Eunomius's teacher Aetius under the aegis of Bishop Eudoxius of Antioch was the impetus for the formation of the Homoiousian alliance in 358 by the bishops Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea. The Homoiousians not only formulated a theology which encapsulated the best of earlier fourth-century currents of thought and was indelibly shaped by the need for a swift refutation of Heteroousian doctrine, but they also were successful in orchestrating the ecclesiastical censure of the principals of the burgeoning Heteroousian movement, at times with actions of dubious legality. But the far more nuanced form of Heteroousianism articulated by Eunomius in the early 360s prompted a different kind of reaction from Basil. Though not as swift and without machinations in the ecclesio-political sphere, it was all the more cutting because of the comprehensiveness of its theological critique. This initial stage of the Eunomian controversy is pivotal because for the first time in the history of the Trinitarian debates the participants acknowledged that more fundamental differences lay at the core of their material differences. Hence in Basil's refutation of Eunomius we see the emergence of dispute over the proper theological methodology. In other words, the key issue becomes formulating a theology of theology.

The central feature of these second-order debates was rival theories of names. A theory of names explains how names operate, which is to say it gives an account of what names signify when they are applied to objects. Aetius and Eunomius maintained that

those names uniquely applied to God disclosed or revealed the divine substance, substance being understood as essence. In other words, the Heteroousians believed that such names permitted access to the highest form of knowledge imaginable in the ancient world, knowledge of essences. Basil denied that God's names allowed such knowledge. In contrast, he formulated a theory of names in which not only divine names but all names fall short of disclosing essence, but nonetheless express accurate and useful knowledge of those who bear the names. In response to Eunomius's limited theory of divine predication, Basil articulates a general theory of how all names operate.

It is this central point of contention between Basil and Eunomius that this dissertation explores. It offers a revisionist interpretation of the Heteroousian theory of names as found in early Heteroousian writings and uses this revised understanding to elucidate the theory of names that Basil developed in response to Eunomius. Only with an accurate reconstruction of the theory to which Basil responded can Basil's own theory be properly understood. Unlike the Heteroousian theory of names, Basil's theory of names has not been studied as a whole. Hence this dissertation is the first comprehensive study. Some aspects of Basil's theory have received attention in compartmentalized studies, particularly his theory of *epinoia*, translated here as "conceptualization." It is commonly assumed in scholarship that all names for Basil correspond to conceptualizations. In contrast, I argue here that Basil's theory of conceptualization is but part of a larger "notionalism," in which all names signify primarily notions, which in their turn provide information about non-essential properties of the objects that bear the names. Hence instead of the close connection that Eunomius posits between the

ontological and nominal orders, Basil inserts a notional order between them, wherein the human mind plays an active and even creative role in theological epistemology.

Historical setting

Though this dissertation concerns itself with intellectual developments, their significance can only be fully appreciated when situated within the wider context of the fourth-century Trinitarian controversies. The vigor of the debate between Basil and Eunomius is due as much to the prior history of these controversies as to a concurrence of several contemporary factors, imperial, ecclesiastical, theological, and personal. In what follows I give a brief overview of how Basil and Eunomius were participants in the wider conflicts and aspirations of their age. This survey has the additional purpose of introducing and contextualizing many of the councils, figures, and documents discussed in this dissertation.

Traditional accounts of the fourth-century Trinitarian controversies have tended to corral participants into two competing camps: those in support of the Council of Nicaea and its term *homoousios* and those opposed to it, the "Arians." Revisionist scholarship of the last few decades has done much to deconstruct this bifurcated categorization and to uncover the plurality and complexity of fourth-century theology. Arius and Athanasius are no longer seen as the fountainheads of two irreconcilable and long-lasting streams of theology. It is now recognized that the Trinitarian controversies arose in the fourth century when pre-existing theological trajectories clashed.[1] The dispute that arose in

[1] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 31–76.

Alexandria around 318 between the bishop Alexander and Arius, one of his presbyters, occurred within this context of theological diversity.[2]

Many Christians throughout the eastern Mediterranean shared Arius's theology of the unique status of the Father as unbegotten. Prominent eastern bishops supported him against Alexander, such as Eusebius of Nicomedia, Eusebius of Caesarea, Theodotus of Laodicea, Paulinus of Tyre, Athanasius of Anazarbus, Theognis of Nicaea, and Narcissus of Neronias—an ecclesiastical alliance commonly called the "Eusebians" after its two most prominent leaders.[3] In the following pages the views of several of these Eusebian bishops are examined at length. These bishops did not agree with Arius's theology in every detail. Though there were theological differences between them, they rallied around Arius in common cause against what they deemed to be Alexander's doctrinal innovations and his mistreatment of Arius. In the ensuing years, the Eusebian alliance

---

[2] For discussion of Alexander's theology, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 43–45; John Behr, *The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 124–9; and R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 AD* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 138–45. On Arius's theology, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 54–57; Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 130–49; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 5–27 and 60–128; and Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

[3] "Eusebian" is a problematic term, as recently discussed by David M. Gwynn, *The Eusebians. The Polemic of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Construction of the 'Arian Controversy'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). I use "Eusebian" here in contrast to the Athanasian usage deconstructed by Gwynn and in line with other recent usage to name the *ad hoc* alliance of eastern bishops and theologians initially formed around the figures of Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea that lasted from *c.* 320 to *c.* 350. For a definition of the category, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 52, and Joseph T. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum. Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 34–5.

was animated by a common set of values and a shared agenda in the ecclesiastical sphere, but displayed considerable diversity in theology.[4]

The emperor Constantine convened the Council at Nicaea in 325 to resolve the controversy between the supporters of Alexander and Arius, now spread throughout the East. The council ratified a creed designed to exclude the theology of Arius and to secure his excommunication and exile.[5] Thereafter Arius was marginal. Constantine recalled him from exile a few years after Nicaea but the Alexandrian church repeatedly refused him re-admission to communion. He died outside of the church in the mid-330s, having long ceased to be a factor in ongoing theological debates. He was not the founder of "Arianism" as a theological system nor as an ecclesiastical movement.

The fifteen year period after Nicaea was the golden age of Eusebian theological development. Lingering Eusebian questions over the meaning of the Nicene Creed and the emerging debate between the Eusebians and Marcellus of Ancyra produced a flurry of documents, which unfortunately survive only in fragments.[6] At the forefront of this

---

[4] See my research on the theological and ecclesio-political cohesiveness of the Eusebians: "Eusebian Theologies of the Son as Image of God before 341," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14.4 (2006): 459–484; and "The Eusebian Alliance: the Case of Theodotus of Laodicea," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 12 (2008): 250–66.

[5] On the events from the outbreak of the controversy to the Council of Nicaea, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 15–20 and 85–100; Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 62–69; and Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 129–78.

[6] On Marcellus's theology, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 62–9; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 217–35; Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 49–68; and Markus Vinzent, *Markell von Ankyra: Die Fragmente [und] Der Brief an Julius von Rom* (Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1997). On Marcellus's career, see Sara Parvis, *Marcellus of Ancyra and the lost years of the Arian controversy, 325-345* (Oxford and New York : Oxford University Press, 2006).

theological renaissance stood Eusebius of Caesarea[7] and Asterius the Sophist, a layman from Cappadocia who was permanently debarred from clerical status because of his lapse in the Great Persecution.[8] The achievements of this initial period of Eusebian reflection influenced the course of eastern theology for another twenty or thirty years, and the Heteroousian theology of Aetius and Eunomius owes a great deal to it.

In the late 330s Athanasius and Marcellus joined forces in the execution of an anti-Eusebian agenda. As a deacon Athanasius had attended the Council of Nicaea in Alexander's entourage and succeeded him as bishop in 328.[9] In the early years of his episcopacy Athanasius struggled with the Melitians, and soon was charged with violence and other crimes. He was tried and convicted at the Council of Tyre in 335, and exiled to Gaul. For the remainder of his ecclesiastical career, these charges would dog Athanasius, rendering him suspect and tainted in the eyes of many eastern bishops. In contrast, Marcellus was deposed and exiled in 336 specifically for his theological opinions. Both wound up in Rome in 340, where they made common cause against the Eusebians.

Athanasius's *Orationes contra Arianos*, written in the years 339 to 345, marks the transformation of his ecclesio-political struggles with the bishops of the Eusebian alliance into a quest for orthodoxy against the "Arianism" of his opponents. In this

---

[7] On Eusebius's theology, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 58–60; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 46–59; and Holger Strutwolf, *Die Trinitätstheologie und Christologie des Euseb von Caesarea* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

[8] On Asterius's theology, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 53–4; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 32–8; Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 89–100; and Markus Vinzent, *Asterius von Kappadokien: Die theologischen Fragmente* (Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1993). Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979), 29–34, gives a summary of Asterius's theological differences from Arius.

[9] On Athanasius's career, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

treatise, which Lewis Ayres calls "one of the key early anti-Eusebian theological manifestos,"[10] Athanasius sets out to refute the tenets of "Arianism" as taught by Arius, Asterius, and other Eusebians. It is now recognized that his depiction of the fourth-century church as polarized between his own "orthodoxy" and the "Arianism" of his Eusebian enemies is a polemical misrepresentation aimed at pleading his own case against his many detractors.[11] Despite his distorted polemics, Athanasius is a significant theologian in his own right, and his writings represent a considerable theological achievement that had immediate and long-lasting influence, though perhaps not as pervasive as previous generations of scholars have believed. [12]

In this initial period of anti-Eusebian collaboration between Athanasius and Marcellus, their opponents were not idle. They held a council in 341 in conjunction with the dedication of the church in Antioch—the so-called Dedication Council—which in many ways set their theological agenda for the next twenty years. The Eusebians rejected the idea that their theology could be described as "Arian," considering themselves as representatives of the mainstream tradition of theological orthodoxy in the east that avoided the extremes of Arius, on the one side, and Athanasius and Marcellus, on the other. The Dedication Council produced a number of creeds. The Second Creed is a bold

---

[10] Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 117.

[11] Gwynn, *The Eusebians.*

[12] For overviews of Athanasius's Trinitarian doctrine, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 45–8, 110–17, and 140–44; Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 163–259; and Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 417–58. Of the many more detailed treatments of his theology, I list those I have found particularly helpful in this dissertation: J. Rebecca Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Peter Widdicome, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); and Xavier Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006).

statement of Eusebian theology, echoing the theology of Asterius. The Fourth Creed was drawn up a few months after the Dedication Council to summarize the Second Creed and was brought to the West. The Fourth Creed became standard in the East for more than twenty years and was reissued at many subsequent eastern councils.

The Dedication Council marks the beginning of a period that lasted through the late-350s, in which various councils sought to achieve theological consensus by eliminating the extreme views of Arius, Athanasius, and Marcellus. But the situation reached a nadir before the serious work of consensus-building began in earnest: the debacle of the Council of Serdica in 343. Western and eastern bishops refused to meet with each other in the same place due to political maneuvering on both sides, mutual distrust, and irreconcilable theologies. But the failure of Serdica prompted attempts of rapprochement.[13] The so-called "Macrostich" ("long-lined") creed of 345 is the best example. Responding to western Serdican theology, it attempts to moderate the Eusebian theologies of the Dedication Creed and the eastern Serdican statement in order to find common ground with western bishops. Another key council took place at Sirmium in 351. Here Basil of Ancyra (Marcellus's Eusebian replacement) managed to have Photinus of Sirmium, an adherent of Marcellan views, deposed on theological grounds.

The year 353 can be considered a turning point. In this year the emperor Constantius attained undisputed mastery of the Roman world when the usurper Magnentius committed suicide. Constantius now had the power and the means to shape the empire according to his own agenda without impediment. One of the issues that threatened the stability and cohesiveness of the empire was of course Christian division

---

[13] Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 306–14.

over Trinitarian doctrine, which his father had attempted but ultimately failed to resolve. Nonetheless, modeling his rule on his father's, Constantius adopted Constantine's programme of binding the empire together religiously. From the mid-350s onward, he convened a series of ecclesiastical councils, orchestrated key changes in personnel, secured the condemnations of Athanasius, Marcellus, and Photinus, and involved himself otherwise in the internal affairs of the church in an effort to unify the church doctrinally.

The period in which Constantius was trying to bring about doctrinal consensus coincided with the collapse of broad Eusebian alliance that had united many eastern bishops over the past twenty or so years, precipitating an upsurge in theological debate. In the councils of the 350s, one can trace an increasing reluctance to use 'substance' (*ousia*) language, viewed as problematic because of its associations with the positions of Marcellus and Photinus. It was over this issue that the Eusebian alliance was splintering. Some rejected *ousia* language altogether. Adherents of this approach are generally called "Homoians" because they affirmed that the Son was like (*homoios*) the Father without specifying anything about the *ousia* of either. Others endorsed the use of *ousia*, although differently than first generation Eusebians like Asterius and Eusebius of Caesarea. Adherents of the Nicene theology had of course always used *ousia* language in their defense of "same in substance" (*homoousios*).

At a small gathering of bishops at Sirmium in 357, a confession of faith was produced that condemned all use of *ousia* language when speaking about the relation between the Father and the Son, and rejected the Dedication Creed of 341, that classic

statement of Eusebian theology that had found widespread use throughout the east.[14] The Sirmium Confession of 357 sent shockwaves throughout the east due to its stark subordinationist agenda and its proscription of terminology deemed essential for the correct understanding of God. It catalyzed all participants in the Trinitarian debates to take stock of their own positions and to formulate responses.

Soon thereafter Eudoxius of Antioch convened a synod that voiced its approval of the Sirmium Confession of 357. He also welcomed Aetius to his see, where he propagated his Heteroousian teaching. For many churchmen at that time, the teaching of Aetius would have appeared to be the logical conclusion of the broadly Homoian theology of the Sirmium Confession of 357. Indeed, in this period there was no clear line of demarcation between Homoian and Heteroousian theology. The reticence of Homoian theology allowed for various—and at times widely divergent—interpretations of it.

George of Laodicea was alarmed at Eudoxius's promotion of Aetius and his teaching, and together with Basil of Ancyra he formed what has come to be called the Homoiousian alliance. Around Easter 358, Basil of Ancyra and other bishops produced a long doctrinal statement that constitutes the initial statement of Homoiousian theology.[15] After the conclusion of the council, Basil of Ancyra headed a delegation to Constantius in Sirmium to secure the deposition and banishment of Eudoxius, Aetius, and Aetius's pupil Eunomius. The Homoiousians were successful and had the support of Constantius.[16]

---

[14] On this council, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 137–40; and Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 343–7.

[15] Preserved in Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.2-11.

[16] Sozomen, *h.e.* 4.13.4-14.7; Philostorgius, *h.e.* 4.8. On Basil's response to Aetius, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 149–53; and Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 349–57.

Thinking that Homoiousian theology could achieve lasting consensus, Constantius planned a large double-council to secure its empire-wide endorsement. Before this double-council met, however, Constantius convened another council in Sirmium in early 359 to compose a statement of faith that could be presented to both sessions of the double-council. This statement is called the "Dated Creed" because the date of its promulgation has been preserved: May 22, 359.[17] It was intended to be a document that would find acceptance among Homoiousians and Homoians, but exclude Heteroousian and Homoousian theologies. Since the Dated Creed proscribed the use of *ousia* language, Basil of Ancyra signed it with trepidation, including a note with his signature giving the Dated Creed a Homoiousian interpretation.[18] At this juncture the Homoiousians recognized that Constantius's desire to effect theological consensus threatened to compromise their theology. Hence shortly after this, George of Laodicea, together with Basil, composed a defense of Homoiousian theology against Heteroousian theology, seen as a competing—and mistaken—way of interpreting the Homoian theology of the Dated Creed.[19]

When the twin Councils of Ariminium and Seleucia met in 359, things did not unfold as Constantius had hoped. At the eastern council in Seleucia, the fragile agreement reached between the Homoians and Homoiousians at Sirmium in May, 359 quickly fell apart over political and theological differences. The council devolved into chaos, and ended with bishops of competing alliances deposing one another. Embassies representing

---

[17] Preserved in Athanasius, *Syn*. 8.3-7 and Socrates, *h.e.* 2.37.18-24.

[18] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.22.7-8.

[19] Preserved in Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.12.1-22.4. On its date, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 158 and Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 365–7.

the various positions were then sent to Constantius at Constantinople. Through coercion and trickery Constantius got the Homoiousians to subscribe to a modified version of the Dated Creed, sometimes called the Creed of Niké because of its place of original composition. While the Dated Creed had declared the Son "like the Father in all respects (ὅμοιον κατὰ πάντα), as the holy Scriptures also declare and teach" and condemned the use of all *ousia* language, the Creed of Niké omitted the phrase "in all respects," an omission that excluded the very possibility of its Homoiousian interpretation. Thus the Homoians now had the backing of Constantius; the Homoiousians had been out-maneuvered. The Homoiousian embassy in Constantinople signed the Creed of Niké on December 31, 359.

The twin Councils of Ariminium and Seleucia in 359 brought Constantius to the threshold of achieving what Constantine could not. In January 360 he convened a small council in Constantinople to ratify the decisions of the two councils that had taken place a few months earlier, and thereby intended to bring years of concentrated efforts to their conclusion. It was an august gathering of the most prominent churchmen and theologians of the day, though not as large as other councils of the era. The council president was Acacius, the longtime bishop of Caesarea in Palestine and now the leader of the Homoian faction. Since the Homoians had gained the support of the emperor at the councils held in the previous year, upon them the emperor now pinned his hopes for theological consensus in Trinitarian matters. Acacius and his fellow Homoians, such as Eudoxius of Antioch, George of Alexandria, Maris of Chalcedon, Uranius of Tyre, and Patrophilis of Scythopolis, were determined to parlay their newly-acquired imperial backing into permanent ascendancy. Acacius ruthlessly prosecuted his opponents. He fixed his

attention first on the Homoiousians, the Homoians' chief rivals for the ear of the emperor during the past few years. Acacius managed to depose nearly all leading Homoiousian bishops such as Basil of Ancyra, Eleusius of Cyzicus, Eustathius of Sebasteia, Sophronius of Pompeiopolis, Macedonius of Constantinople, Silvanus of Tarsus, and Cyril of Jerusalem.[20] He also secured the banishment of Aetius, who had so annoyed the emperor at a colloquy the previous month that he had had him thrown out of the palace.[21]

The Council of Constantinople was a success in every way. Unanimity of doctrine had at long last been achieved in the empire, at least officially. It was a time for Constantius to celebrate. Soon after the council, he presided over the dedication of the original Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and no doubt participated in the installation of Macedonius's replacement as bishop of Constantinople, Eudoxius formerly of Antioch. But the long-desired achievement would be ephemeral. Concurrently with these joyful events in Constantinople, in far off Gaul disgruntled soldiers proclaimed Constantius's nephew, Julian, as Augustus. The news reached the emperor in the middle of spring as he was marching across Asia Minor for war with the Persians. The emperor had just begun his return journey west to face Julian when he contracted a fever and died. The new emperor—later given the epithet "the Apostate" because he renounced Christianity—actively pursued a policy of religious disunity among Christians in direct contradiction to the previous rulers of the Constantinian dynasty. Julian's subtle maneuvers to let the church destroy itself from within, coupled with liberation from the coerced unity of Constantius, encouraged Christians to resume their squabbles with renewed vigor.

---

[20] Socrates, *h.e.* 2.42; Sozomen, *h.e.* 4.24-26. See also Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 164–65 and Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 380–82.

[21] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.3.7-10; Philostorgius, *h.e.* 4.12.

This is the ecclesiastical context that gave rise to the controversy between Basil of Caesarea and Eunomius of Cyzicus. Their paths crossed for the first time at the Council of Constantinople. Eunomius, then a deacon, attended along with Aetius, whose disciple he had been from the late 340s. Basil, then at most a reader, may have attended in the entourage of Dianius, the bishop of Basil's hometown of Caesarea. If so, Dianius most likely wanted to take advantage of both Basil's theological advice and his superior rhetorical power.[22] Basil also may have been drawn to the proceedings because of his theological and ascetical sympathies with Eustathius of Sebasteia, his mentor in these matters since the mid-350s.[23] In any event, both Basil and Eunomius were bit players on a stage packed with many leading men.

Basil seems to have attracted no attention at the council and played a negligible role. It is unlikely that he participated in the debates.[24] Once it became clear to Basil that

---

[22] On Basil's reputation for rhetorical skill, see Philostorgius, *h.e.* 4.12.

[23] On Eustathius's mentoring of Basil, see Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley / Los Angeles / London: University of California Press, 1994), 72–76; and Anna M. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 56–60. On the possibility that Basil attended the council with Eustathius, see Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 361; and Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 98–101.

[24] Gregory of Nyssa says that he and his brother "were present at the time of the contest and did not mingle with the contestants" (*Eun*. 1.82). Basil's non-participation is also noted by Philostorgius, who attributed it to timidity (*h.e.* 4.12). It is often claimed that the young Basil was chosen as the spokesman for the Homoiousians at the council but when faced with debating the deacon Aetius (the spokesman for the Heteroousians), he declined out of fear. See, for example, Stephen M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 21 and 214; Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 300–1 and 361–2; Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 263; and Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 119–20. But this claim is based on a misinterpretation of Philostorgius, *h.e.* 4.12; the historian refers to Basil, the bishop of Ancyra, as the representative of the Homoiousians. This interpretation is corroborated by the fact that the Basil in question declined to debate with Aetius because it was inappropriate for a bishop to dispute with a deacon. At most a reader, Basil of Caesarea could not have

the Homoiousians had lost the contest and were doomed to deposition and banishment, he fled Constantinople and returned home.[25] Because of this Basil was later accused of cowardice; while Gregory defends his brother against the charge, he does not deny that Basil left the proceedings early.[26]

While Basil was so minor a player that he could easily slip away to his Cappadocian homeland, Eunomius's strong connections with Aetius left him suspect to the newly-ascendant Homoians. Near the conclusion of this council, Eunomius probably delivered the speech that would later be issued as his *Apologia* in order to demonstrate his agreement with the Homoian theology endorsed at it.[27] He did not merely avoid the fate of his teacher successfully; he was in fact rewarded for his carefully-crafted speech with appointment as bishop of Cyzicus. However, soon after taking up his post, Eunomius enraged the Christians of Cyzicus and never again exercised the pastoral oversight of that church or any other church. Aetius returned from banishment when

---

lodged such complaint. Thus the spokesman must have been Basil of Ancyra. See also Raymond Van Dam, *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 197 n. 22.

[25] Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* 1.79. Here Gregory summarizes the account of Eunomius, who said that Basil was present when the bishops were debating and encouraged them, but does not mention Basil actually participating.

[26] Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun*. 1.79-90.

[27] See Lionel R. Wickham, "The Date of Eunomius' Apology: a Reconsideration," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 20 (1969): 231–40; Richard Paul Vaggione, *The Extant Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5–9; and idem, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 226–7. It is sometimes said that situating the *Apologia* of Eunomius at Constantinople in January 360 is made difficult by Basil's denial in *Eun.* 1.2 of its delivery there, especially since Basil himself attended the council. But Basil did not deny that Eunomius delivered his *Apologia* at Constantinople; rather, he denied that there was a need for Eunomius to make a defense there. Based on the lack of need for defense at Constantinople Basil dismisses Eunomius's *Apologia* as a fiction. See Wickham, "The Date of Eunomius' Apology," 238.

Julian became emperor, and was even made a bishop (though without a see). But after the Council of Constantinople, Eunomius eclipsed him as the leader of the Heteroousians.

There is no record of Basil and Eunomius meeting at the Council of Constantinople, though Eunomius is our source for Basil's early departure from it. Basil never mentions any personal knowledge of his opponent. But soon enough Basil came to know Eunomius's name all too well. Eunomius's publication of his *Apologia* in 360 or 361 enhanced his reputation as a theologian and contributed to the spread of Heteroousian theology. In fact, under Julian, the Heteroousian movement thrived.

It was this growth of Heteroousianism that prompted Basil to issue a refutation of Eunomius in the mid-360s. Some scholars hold that he composed *Contra Eunomium* during the period of his third stay at Annisa, probably in its initial form rather hastily dictated to Eustathius in preparation for the Council of Lampsacus held in autumn of 364, or at least resulting from conversations between the two churchmen.[28] Raymond Van Dam has suggested that Basil wrote *Contra Eunomium* soon after the accession of Valens (which occurred in 364) to ingratiate himself with the new eastern emperor whose opponent, the usurper Procopius (proclaimed emperor in 365), was supported by

---

[28] Jean Gribomont, "Notes biographiques sur s. Basile le Grand," in Paul Jonathan Fedwick, ed., *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteenth-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium* (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981), 35–8 (the year 364); Paul J. Fedwick, "A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea," in idem, ed., *Basil of Caesarea*, 10–11 n. 57 (the second half of 364); Bernard Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome suivi de Eunome Apologie*, SChr 299 (Paris: Cerf, 1982), 42–5 (before 366, possibly in 364); Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea,* 102 follows Fedwick; Volker Henning Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea: Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 45–6 and 145–6 (Bks. 1-2 in 364; Bk. 3 in 365). Other scholars place *Contra Eunomium* a few years earlier: Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 364–72 (360-361) and Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea*, 214–8 (360-362).

Eunomius.[29] Hence a date of 364 or 365 is most likely for the publication of *Contra Eunomium*. And so, thus did the Eunomian controversy begin: Basil, a presbyter of Caesarea since 362, taking on the prominent Eunomius, the quondam bishop of Cyzicus and leader of the Heteroousians.

Basil and Eunomius in recent scholarship

Only in the past thirty or so years have scholars working on the development of Christian doctrine begun to recognize Basil and Eunomius as theologians of great significance and interest in their own right. Since the late 1970s scholars have turned their attention to the writings of the Eunomian controversy as crucial for understanding the fourth-century Trinitarian debates, and have come to view Basil and Eunomius as figures pivotal for the direction they took. The study of the rival theories of names developed by Basil and Eunomius that is undertaken in this dissertation both builds upon and critiques Basilian and Eunomian scholarship of the past few decades. The following historiographical survey is meant to introduce those scholars with whose work I interact most and demarcate where my approach differs.

I begin my survey in 1979, a watershed year for the study of the debate between Basil and Eunomius.[30] The celebration of the sixteen-hundredth anniversary of Basil's death in this year was critical to the resurgence of academic interest in Basil, inspiring a symposium dedicated to this anniversary and the publication of two volumes of papers

[29] *Becoming Christian*, 27–28.

[30] Studies of Basil and Eunomius previous to 1979 that retain value are: Bernard Charles Barmann, "The Cappadocian Triumph over Arianism" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1966); Manlio Simonetti, *La Crisi Ariana nel IV secolo* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum «Augustinianum», 1975), esp. 455–525; and Elena Cavalcanti, *Studi Eunomiani* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1976), esp. 23–46.

delivered at it.[31] One of these was Milton Anastos's summary of the *Contra Eunomium*, which attempted to arouse interest in the text.[32] In the same year, Thomas A. Kopecek published his two volume *A History of Neo-Arianism*, a valuable and at times controversial discussion of the origins, history, and theology of the movement now more commonly called Heteroousianism.[33]

The study of debate between Basil and Eunomius was for a long time hampered by the lack of critical editions and translations into modern languages. In the 1980s, this situation was greatly remedied. In 1982 and 1983, Bernard Sesboüé and his collaborators published the first critical editions of Eunomius's *Apologia* and Basil's *Contra Eunomium* in the Sources chrétiennes series, with informative introductions and accompanying French translations.[34] In 1987, Richard Paul Vaggione published critical editions and English translations of Eunomius's *Apologia*, *Expositio fidei*, and numerous Eunomian fragments.[35] In this dissertation I employ Vaggione's edition of the *Apologia* rather than Sesboüé's. Vaggione's otherwise excellent volume contains only an outline of Eunomius's fragmentary *Apologia apologiae*. While Bernard Pottier has since published

---

[31] Paul Jonathan Fedwick, ed., *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteenth-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium* (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981).

[32] Milton V. Anastos, "Basil's *Κατὰ Εὐνομίου*, A Critical Analysis," in Fedwick, *Basil of Caesarea*, 67–136.

[33] Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979).

[34] Bernard Sesboüé, Georges-Matthieu de Durand, and Louis Doutreleau, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome suivi de Eunome Apologie*, SChr 299 and 305 (Paris: Cerf, 1982-1983).

[35] Richard Paul Vaggione, *The Extant Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

a French translation of the fragments of this last work of Eunomius,[36] we still lack an edition and English translation.[37]

Since the 1990s Basil and Eunomius have attracted sustained attention in monographs dedicated to their Trinitarian theology. In 1996, Volker Henning Drecoll published a chronological study of the development of Basil's Trinitarian theology from his earliest through his latest writings.[38] In 1998, Sesboüé published a systematic study of Basil's Trinitarian theology, elaborating many of the ideas initially expressed in his edition as well as in his 1980 dissertation.[39] In 2000, Vaggione published a study of the fourth-century Trinitarian controversies that focused on Aetius and Eunomius.[40] Stephen Hildebrand's 2007 book is the first English monograph devoted to Basil's Trinitarian thought.[41] The first English translation of Basil's *Contra Eunomium* produced by Andrew Radde-Gallwitz and myself should contribute to the emerging discussion of Basil's Trinitarian thought, not least with respect to *Contra Eunomium* itself.[42] And we eagerly

---

[36] Bernard Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse: Étude systématique de «Contre Eunome» avec traduction des extraits d'Eunome* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994).

[37] Of course one can consult the editions and translations of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*, which preserves the fragments of the *Apologia apologiae*. Nonetheless, a separate edition and translation of the fragments remains highly desirable.

[38] Volker Henning Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

[39] Bernard Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité: Un acte théologique au IV^e^ siècle* (Paris: Descleé, 1998). See also Bernard Sesboüé, "L'*Apologie* d'Eunome de Cyzique et le *Contra Eunome* (L. I-III) de Basile de Césarée. Présentation, analyse théologique et traduction française," (Ph.D. diss., Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana, 1980).

[40] Richard Paul Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[41] Stephen M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

[42] Mark DelCogliano and Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea: Against Eunomius,* FoC (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, forthcoming).

await Radde-Gallwitz's forthcoming Oxford University Press monograph, a revision of his doctoral dissertation, on the transformation of divine simplicity in the Eunomian controversy, which devotes three chapters to Eunomius and Basil.[43]

For too long Basil's theology was studied as part of a more or less monolithic "Cappadocian" theology rooted in Athanasian thought, which is to say that Basil's thought was most often considered along with and inseparably from that of his fellow Cappadocians Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus. While the usefulness of the category of the "Cappadocian Fathers" has rightly come under suspicion, there is still a tendency in scholarship to analyze Basil's anti-Eunomian theology in concert with Gregory of Nyssa's, as if his theology is nothing but an elaboration and continuation of his older brother's. I believe this approach is potentially mistaken and distorting, and does justice neither to Basil's nor to Gregory's thought.[44] Accordingly, the approach I take is to study Basil's anti-Eunomian writings on their own terms, without reference to his first and greatest interpreter lest it prejudice my own interpretation of Basil. This is not to say that I do not draw upon Gregory when appropriate. But as a matter of methodological principle, I prefer to interpret Basil in the light of his opponent's writings and his proximate theological context.

---

[43] Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "'Seek and You Shall Find': Divine Simplicity and the Knowledge of God in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007); idem, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[44] Of course I do not mean to imply that Basil did not influence Gregory; far from it! Gregory's anti-Eunomian theology was consciously a defense and clarification of Basil's, and much can be learned from analyzing how Gregory interpreted and used Basil. Nonetheless, Gregory did not simply repeat or flesh out Basil, but made a distinct contribution. I distance myself from that trend in scholarship which tends to blur the lines of difference between Basil and Gregory.

Another trend in the study of Basil that I seek to depart from in this dissertation is the concern with his usage or non-usage of technical terms like *homoousios* and his contribution to the development of technical Trinitarian terminology, such as in the phrase "one *ousia*, three *hypostases*."[45] Sometimes these projects are aimed at pigeon-holing Basil within ecclesiastical alliances or theological trajectories. While such scholarship is helpful, I believe it is ultimately of limited value for truly understanding Basil's Trinitarian theology and his place within the fourth-century Trinitarian conflicts.[46] The debate between Basil and Eunomius hardly dealt with such issues. This dissertation takes a different approach to Basil: it identifies and explores a key area of conflict between him and Eunomius on the supposition that this will provide greater insight into Basil than studies of technical terminology.

A large part of this dissertation is focused upon detecting possible sources for the ideas of Aetius, Eunomius, and Basil. The source-claims made in this dissertation have the primary purpose of illuminating a theologian's teaching. As every scholar of antiquity knows, ancient authors can at times be frustratingly reticent or unclear when articulating their views. Interpreting their statements in the light of their identifiable sources often brings greater insight into what they are trying to say. As such, the identification of sources serves the task of historical theology itself.

But in making source-claims I have a subsidiary goal of clarifying and complexifying traditional assumptions about lines of theological influence in the fourth

---

[45] See Joseph T. Lienhard, "*Ousia* and *Hypostasis*: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of 'One *Hypostasis*,'" in Stephen T. Davis, et al. (eds.), *The Trinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 99–121; Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 187–229; and Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 263–324.

[46] The monographs of Drecoll and Hildebrand take this approach.

century. Until recently, it was commonplace to tar Aetius and Eunomius as more-or-less dialecticians rather than theologians because of purported indebtedness to Aristotelian or Platonist philosophy.[47] Though the monographs of Kopecek and Vaggione have done much to deconstruct this interpretation of the Heteroousian project, even they ascribe the Heteroousian theory of names to philosophical sources. In contrast, I see this theory as firmly embedded within the preceding Christian tradition, being particularly indebted to the Eusebians, but also having unexpected commonalities with the thought of Athanasius.

In this dissertation I analyze Basil's theory of names in relation to possible philosophical and grammatical sources. Though scholars have long recognized Basil's use of philosophical sources without impugning his orthodoxy, Hildebrand in his recent monograph is disturbed that Basil's appropriation of his Hellenistic heritage somehow makes his theology less Christian and more Greek, and devotes much energy to proving that this is not so.[48] I do not follow him in this judgment. I believe his approach is based on a false dichotomy between Christianity and Greek thought, and that Basil's appropriation of the resources of his culture does not need to be defended. I also make source-claims with regard to Basil in order to contribute to recent scholarship that has increasingly contested the traditional assumption that Athanasius was a major influence upon him.[49] Building upon the work of Jaakko Gummerus[50] and Jeffrey Steenson,[51] I

---

[47] The two articles consistently cited in support of this portrayal are: E. Vandenbussche, "La part de la dialéctique dans la théologie d'Eunomius 'le technologue'," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 40 (1944-45): 47–52; and Jean Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle," *Revue des Études grecques* 69 (1959): 412–32.

[48] See my review of Hildebrand's monograph in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16.1 (2008): 108–9.

[49] See Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 221, and Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea*, 80 n. 10. Marina Silvia Troiano, 'Il *Contra Eunomium* III di Basilio di Cesarea e le *Epistolae ad Serapionem* I-IV di Atanasio di Alessandria: nota comparativa,'

maintain that Basil is influenced by the Homoiousians in significant ways but not beholden to all features of their thought. In addition, while Basil engaged Athanasius directly, the Athanasian tradition is for the most part mediated to him through the modifications of the Homoiousians. And so, while there is a stream of thought flowing from Athanasius to Basil, it runs through the filter of the Homoiousians.

Plan of chapters

This dissertation is divided into two main parts. The first part spans Chapters One through Three and explores the Heteroousian theory of names. In Chapter One I offer a revisionist interpretation of the theory, highlighting what I think are its central features and its intended scope. Using this new reading of their theory of names, the next two chapters investigate its sources, a question that has generated considerable scholarship. In Chapter Two I refute the widespread assumption that the Heteroousian theory of names is heavily indebted to some form of Platonism, whereas in Chapter Three I argue that their theory is best viewed within the context of earlier fourth-century Trinitarian debates and as one attempted resolution to some of the most pressing theological concerns of the era. The habit of positing Platonist sources for the Heteroousian theory of names—which has become almost a commonplace in scholarship—has obscured the Christian roots of the

---

Augustinianum 41.1 (2001), 59–91. She refutes the claims of Athanasian influence in *Eun*. 3 made by Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea*, 138f.

[50] Jaakko Gummerus, *Die homöusianische Partei bis zum Tode des Konstantius* (Leipzig: Helsingfors, 1900).

[51] Jeffrey N. Steenson, “Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy” (DPhil. diss., Oxford, 1983).

theory and led to a distorted understanding of the theological project of Aetius and Eunomius.

Chapters Four through Seven comprise the second part, which focuses upon Basil's theory of names. Chapter Four summarizes Basil's critiques of Eunomius's theory, which I contend indicates his understanding of what features a good theory of names should have. The next three chapters are devoted to setting forth how Basil articulates these features in his own theory. Chapter Five argues that notions play a central role in Basil's understanding of how names operate, being the means of linking names and the objects that bear them. Basil recognizes two basic kinds of notions, only one of which are *epinoiai*, here translated as "conceptualizations." Because of the key role that notions play in Basil's theory of names, I call it "notionalist." In Chapter Six I turn to one of Basil's tactics for his decentralization of the name for God favored by the Heteroousians, 'unbegotten', namely, his argument for the primacy of the name 'Father'. Here I demonstrate how Basil's argumentation is drawn variously from Athanasius of Alexandria and George of Laodicea. In Chapter Seven I analyze Basil's discussion of four basic kinds of names and how they operate: proper names, absolute names, relative names, and what I call "derived names," which is to say those names that are based on conceptualizations. I argue that one can detect in these discussions a consistent theory in which names signify primarily notions and secondarily properties of the objects they name. I situate Basil's discussions within preceding philosophical, grammatical, and Christian thought in order to gain new vistas on his thought.

Sense and reference

In analyzing the theories of names advanced by Aetius, Eunomius, Basil, and others in this dissertation, it is helpful to employ a modern distinction usually blurred in ancient philosophical and theological discourse and only rarely, albeit inchoatively, made. I mean here the Fregean distinction between the reference (*Bedeutung*) and sense (*Sinn*) of proper names. This is roughly equivalent to the distinction between a term's denotation and connotation, which is analogous to the medieval Latin distinction between the *res significata* and the *modus significandi*. Frege said that a name *expresses* its sense, but *stands for* or *designates* its reference.[52] Therefore, the *reference* of a name is that thing to which the name refers, or points to. In contrast, the *sense* of a name is "its contribution to the thought (proposition) expressed by a sentence in which it occurs."[53] In other words, it is what we grasp when we understand a name.[54] A sense is said to determine its reference because it presents the thing it expresses under some aspect. A name's sense, then, contains what Frege called its "mode of presentation."

This distinction is significant because two names can have the same reference but need not necessarily have the same sense. But if two names do have the same sense, they cannot have different references. Classic examples are the names 'the Morning Star' and 'the Evening Star'. While both names refer to the planet Venus, the contribution that each makes in sentences in which they occur is not the same. For example, someone could

---

[52] Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference," in A. W. Moore, ed., *Meaning and Reference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 27.

[53] Sam Cumming, "Names," in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2009 Edition)*, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/names/>.

[54] A. W. Moore, "Introduction," in idem, ed., *Meaning and Reference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 2.

think that, “the Morning Star is the Morning Star” is true, but hold that, “the Morning Star is the Evening Star” is false. This is only possible if the two name for the planet Venus have different senses.

Aetius and Eunomius consistently blur this distinction: names that have the same reference also have the same sense. Athanasius and Basil have an incipient understanding of the distinction, recognizing that names can refer to the same thing without having the same sense. Despite this realization on their part, neither has the vocabulary to express the distinction clearly. It is Gregory of Nyssa who articulates the distinction most clearly, and he recognizes the insufficiency of his vocabulary for expressing it.[55] Nonetheless, the distinction is helpful for understanding the theories of names developed in this period.

A note on style, translations, and references

This dissertation is principally concerned with explicating two rival theories of names, each of which explains how names relate to the things or notions to which they refer. Accordingly, I have thought it helpful to indicate that I mean the name rather the thing or notion that bears the name by using inverted commas (‘,’). For example, ‘Father’ refers to the name by which God can be called rather than the reality that God the Father is.

All translations from Basil’s *Contra Eunomium* are taken from the previously mentioned translation of the work produced by Andrew Radde-Gallwitz and myself that is forthcoming in the Fathers of the Church series. All other translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. There are three terms I wish to highlight at the outset. The

[55] Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, “*Ad Eustathium de sancta trinitate*,” in *Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*. Leiden: Brill, forthcoming.

first is ἀγέννητος, which I render as ‘unbegotten’. I depart from this practice only in Chapter Three, for reasons explained there. The second term is οὐσία, which I generally translate as ‘substance’ rather than ‘essence’. The authors discussed in this dissertation do not distinguish between substance and essence, and it was felt that the former rendering better captured their thought than the latter. Finally, I render ἐπίνοια as ‘conceptualization’. This is a notoriously difficult term to translate, but ‘conceptualization’ covers its use for the intellectual process of breaking down a simple item into its various aspects as well as for the notion that results from that process. In addition, the oddness of ‘conceptualization’ underscores its status as a technical term.

Finally, when quoting from critical editions I only provide an abbreviated source reference in the notes. The complete biographical information can be found in the bibliography of primary sources. The abbreviated references have the following form: first, the series and number within the series (if any), followed by a colon; then, the page number of the edition and line numbers (if any), followed by the editor’s name. For example, when quoting lines from Basil’s *Contra Eunomium* 1.12 in Sesboüé’s edition, the reference would be: Basil, *Eun.* 1.12, 32-35 (SChr 299: 214 Sesboüé). If I have employed an English translation, I indicate this by “trans.” followed by the translator’s last name and page number.

Chapter One

The Heteroousians on Names and Naming

The Heteroousians are frequently presented as formulating a general theory of language.[1] This is inaccurate not least of all because they concerned themselves only with articulating a theory of names, not also of the other parts of speech which comprise language. By 'name' (ὄνομα) the ancients understood proper names, common nouns, and adjectives. A theory of names explains the relationship between names and the objects to which they refer. Two basic theories were debated in antiquity. In a "naturalist" view of names, there is a natural connection or correspondence between names and their objects such that names can disclose the natures of the their bearers. To use a modern example of the naturalist position, when the neologism 'telephone' was coined in the 19th century from Greek words to label the recent invention that allowed communication over vast distances, the word was intended to give a sense of what the device did, that it produced "sound from far away" (*tēle phōnē*). Thus 'telephone' tells us something about the object that bears that name. The naturalist view is contrasted with the "conventionalist" theory,

[1] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 149; Michel R. Barnes, *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 202–6; John Behr, *The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 274; R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 AD* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 630–2; Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979), 266–77 and 328–32; Manlio Simonetti, *La Crisi Ariana nel IV secolo* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum «Augustinianum», 1975), 462–8; Richard Paul Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 233–65; Lionel R. Wickham, "The Syntagmation of Aetius the Anomean," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 19 (1968): 560.

in which names are used merely as references to objects and thus have no natural connection with them, making them useless for inquiry into the natures of their bearers. On the conventionalist view, names are tags for objects but do not provide any information about the object to which they are applied. For example, everyone would agree that the English word 'cow' seems to be an utterly arbitrary designation for the farm animal that bears that name. The word gives us no insight into the nature of that farm animal, but because all agree that 'cow' is the word for that animal, it allows us to refer to the animal successfully. Because the Heteroousians believed that certain divine names like 'unbegotten' revealed the divine substance—that is, that the names applied to God granted knowledge of the divine essence, the highest form of knowledge conceivable in the ancient world—it is widely assumed that the Heteroousians endorsed a version of the naturalist theory of names.

The view that the Heteroousians had both a general and a naturalist theory of names is based on the evidence of the Aetian fragments preserved in the Homoiousian defense from 359,[2] Aetius's *Syntagmation*, and Eunomius's *Apologia* (ca. 360-361) as well as his later *Apologia apologiae* (378-381). I suggest, however, that interpreting the theory of names elaborated in the earlier Heteroousian documents through the lens of the much later *Apologia apologiae*, or at least in concert with it, results in a distorted understanding of the theory in its initial formulation. Reading a document like the *Apologia* in light of the *Apologia apologiae* fails to highlight adequately both the central concerns of the early Heteroousian theory of names and its limited scope, as well as how Eunomius's theory in the *Apologia* is marred by inconsistencies. Such an ahistorical

[2] See Appendix A, Texts 8-13.

reading obscures the fact that in these early texts there is scant evidence for a theory that accounted for how all names operated when applied to objects; rather, the exclusive concern of the Heteroousians in this era was to make sense of certain divine names. Hence initially the Heteroousians did not have a general theory of names, but only a theory of divine names. Furthermore, such an interpretation is insensitive to the fact that Eunomius only expressed a general theory of names in the *Apologia apologiae* in response to Basil's attacks on his theory as presented in the *Apologia* and thus represents a polemical recontextualization of the original theory. Finally, it is only in the *Apologia apologiae* that Eunomius articulates a theory of names that can be called naturalist. The earlier Heteroousian theory of names does not merit that description.

In this chapter I offer a revised interpretation of the initial Heteroousian theory of names as it was articulated in the *Syntagmation* and especially in the *Apologia*, for the latter is the version against which Basil reacted in his *Contra Eunomium*. I will first demonstrate two key features of the early Heteroousian theory that reveal the absence of a general theory of names: (1) the primary concern with the significance of the divine names, particularly 'unbegotten' on the part of both Aetius and Eunomius, and (2) the centrality of the doctrine of divine simplicity in Eunomius's theory. These two features of the early theory indicate that it was conceived as explanatory of what the divine names signified when applied to simple beings, and was not intended to give an account of how all names in general relate to their bearers. Second, I will point out inconsistencies in Eunomius's theory to demonstrate that even in its limited scope it lacks integrity. I will show that Eunomius's theory "works" only when applied to names for the Father but falls apart when applied to names for the Son, and that he effectively conflates name,

meaning, and substance despite claims to the contrary. Third, I will illustrate how Eunomius formulated a general, naturalist theory of names in the *Apologia apologiae* by grounding his original theory in a theory of the divine origin of all names in order to refute Basil's objections to the initial formulation of his theory in the *Apologia*.

I. The early Heteroousian theory of names

The primary concern that drives the initial formulation of the Heteroousian theory of names in the writings of Aetius and the *Apologia* of Eunomius is making sense of the name 'unbegotten'. This concern is linked with a theological epistemology and, in Eunomius, a doctrine of divine simplicity. I begin with analysis of several of Aetius's obtuse syllogisms to demonstrate the centrality of 'unbegotten' in his theory of names, then turn to Eunomius's more explicit presentation of the theory of name that he inherited from his teacher.

Aetius and the centrality of 'unbegotten'

One of the central concerns of Aetius in the *Syntagmation* is to demonstrate that 'unbegotten' is the proper term for God that discloses his substance. He argues this principally by eliminating other possibilities of the term's significance: that it is a mere name derived by human reflective processes,[3] or that it is revelatory of privation[4] or cause.[5] Thomas Kopecek has identified *Syntagmation* 12-18 as the key section within the treatise that aims to prove that 'unbegotten' is not a human invention but reveals God's

[3] *Synt*. 12-18.

[4] *Synt.* 19-20 and 24-25.

[5] *Synt.* 27-30.

substance.[6] It is thus the best place to gain insight into Aetius's theory of names. Since Aetius's complicated syllogisms have been little studied and are not well understood, my analysis will be more detailed than elsewhere.[7]

Let us begin by citing five relevant texts:

> (12) If 'unbegotten' does not communicate the subsistence of God, but the incomparable name is due to human conceptualization, on account of the conceptualization 'unbegotten' God gives thanks to those who have conceived it since in his substance he lacks the superiority that the name implies.[8]
>
> (13) If 'unbegotten' is considered in God from an external point of view, those doing the considering are better than what they are considering, having given him a name superior to his nature.[9]
>
> (16) If 'unbegotten' is revelatory of substance, it makes sense to contrast it with the substance of the begotten-thing. But if 'unbegotten' signifies nothing, so much the more does 'begotten-thing' reveal nothing. And how could nothing be contrasted with nothing? But if the utterance

---

[6] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 266–8.

[7] Besides Wickham's indispensable edition and commentary, to my knowledge only the following discuss Aetius's syllogisms at any length: Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 225–97; Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1986), 2.128–35, and Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 272–3.

[8] *Synt.* 12 (541–2 Wickham): εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀγέννητον τὴν ὑπόστασιν τοῦ θεοῦ παρίστησιν, ἀλλ' ἐπινοίας ἐστὶν ἀνθρωπίνης τὸ ἀσύγκριτον ὄνομα, χάριν τοῖς ἐπινοήσασι γινώσκει ὁ θεὸς διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀγεννήτου ἐπίνοιαν, τὴν ὑπεροχὴν τοῦ ὀνόματος οὐ φέρων ἐν οὐσίᾳ.

[9] *Synt*. 13 (542 Wickham): εἰ ἔξωθεν ἐπιθεωρεῖται τῷ θεῷ τὸ ἀγέννητον, οἱ ἐπιθεωρήσαντες τοῦ ἐπιθεωρηθέντος εἰσιν ἀμείνους, κρεῖττον ὄνομα τῆς φύσεως αὐτῷ πορισάμενοι.

'unbegotten' is contrasted with the utterance 'begotten', and there is silence after the utterance, then it turns out that the hope of Christians comes and goes, being based on a distinct utterance, but not on natures that are what the meaning of their names implies.[10]

(17) If 'unbegotten' contributes nothing at all to the superiority of substance with respect to the begotten-thing, the Son who is surpassed only in utterance will know that it is those who coined this designation that are superior to him, not the one who is designated his God and Father.[11]

(18) If the unbegotten substance is superior to generation, having its superiority from its own resources, it is unbegotten substance itself. For it is not by willing that he wills to be superior to generation, but that he is by nature. So then, God, being self-existent unbegotten substance, entrusts to no power of reasoning the conceptualization of his generation, thrusting aside from begotten beings all inquiry and all rationalization.[12]

---

[10] *Synt*. 16 (542 Wickham): εἰ τὸ ἀγέννητον οὐσίας ἐστὶ δηλωτικόν, εἰκότως πρὸς τὴν τοῦ γεννήματος οὐσίαν ἀντιδιαστέλλεται• εἰ δὲ μηδὲν σημαίνει τὸ ἀγέννητον, πολλῷ μᾶλλον οὐδὲν δηλοῖ τὸ γέννημα. μηδενὶ δὲ μηδὲν πῶς ἄν ἀντιδιασταλείη; εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀγέννητος προφορὰ πρὸς τὴν γεννητὴν προφορὰν ἀντιδιαστέλλεται, σιωτῆς τὴν προφορὰν διαδεχομένης, γίνεσθαι συμβαίνει καὶ ἀπογίνεσθαι τὴν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐλπίδα, ἐν διαφόρῳ προφορᾷ κειμένην, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν φύσεσιν οὕτως ἐχούσαις ὡς ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων βούλεται σημασία.

[11] *Synt*. 17 (542 Wickham): εἰ μηδὲν πλέον νέμει εἰς ὑπεροχὴν οὐσίας τὸ ἀγέννητον πρὸς τὸ γέννημα, προφορᾷ μόνον ὑπερχόμενος ὁ υἱὸς βελτίους ἑαυτοῦ γνώσεται τοὺς προσαγορεύσαντας, οὐ τὸν προσαγορευθέντα θεὸν καὶ πατέρα.

[12] *Synt*. 18 (542 Wickham): εἰ ἀγέννητος οὐσία κρείτων ἐστὶ γενέσεως, οἴκοθεν ἔχουσα τὸ κρεῖττον, αὐτὸ οὐσία ἐστὶν ἀγέννητος. οὐ γὰρ βουλόμενος ὅτι βούλεται γενέσεώς ἐστι κρείττων, ἀλλ' ὅτι πέφυκεν. αὐτὸ οὖν ὑπάρχουσα οὐσία

The syllogisms cited here are premised on a disjunction between names that are revelatory of substance and names that are based on human reflective processes. Aetius believes, as Eunomius believes, that names derived from human reflection result in mental fabrications that do not have substantial existence.[13] They are "mere names" that do not correspond to any mind-independent, substantial reality.[14] This is explicitly seen in *Syntagmation* 16, but it is also evident in *Syntagmation* 12-13 and 17-18. Aetius identifies human conceptualization (12), external observation (13), coining (17), and inquiry and rationalization (18) as analogous mental processes that result in names that do not disclose the divine substance. He thinks that if 'unbegotten' is a name that results from such activities of human reflection upon the divine substance that it is basically revelatory of nothing, that is, it is a mere utterance that has no substantial existence, that does not point to any mind-independent reality.

In these syllogisms, Aetius employs a distinction between *de dicto* superiority and *de re* superiority. Human reflective processes result in names that merely attribute *de dicto* superiority to God, unlike names that disclose substance which accurately reveal God's *de re* superiority. If 'unbegotten' is derived by human reflective processes, it reveals a non-existent reality—nothing—and thus attributes to God a *de dicto* superiority that has no ontological basis. In fact, Aetius makes the sarcastic claim that in this case human beings, as the namegivers, have *de re* superiority over God (*Synt.* 12 and 17)!

ἀγέννητος ὁ θεὸς οὐδενὶ λόγῳ ἐπιτρέπει καθ' ἑαυτῆς γένεσιν ἐπινοῆσαι, ὠθοῦσα φέρεσθαι παρὰ τῶν γεννητῶν πᾶσων ἐξέτασιν καὶ πάντα λογισμόν.

[13] Though he does not state it as explicitly as his disciple, Aetius seems to have the same understanding of conceptualization that Eunomius did, that it is the kind of mental reflection that invents fictions, concepts that have no reality outside of being pronounced, like 'hippocentaur' and 'pigmy'; see *Apol*. 8.3-5 and Gregory Nyssa, *Eun*. 2.179.

[14] See *Synt*. 8 and 26.

Another syllogism helps clarify why Aetius thought that humans would be superior to God if they coined 'unbegotten':

> (26) If 'unbegotten' is a mere name for God, and merely uttering it elevates the subsistence of God over all the begotten beings, then this human utterance is of greater worth than the subsistence of the Almighty, since it has adorned God Almighty with incomparable superiority.[15]

Lionel Wickham notes that here the very utterance of 'unbegotten' is superior to the divine substance, not the human namegivers as in *Syntagmation* 12 and 17.[16] Kopecek sees here only exaggerated sarcasm of the point made in *Syntagmation* 12 and 17, and I think he is correct.[17] Raoul Mortley apparently thinks the same when he suggests that here Aetius advances the view that human namegivers exercise power over God's substance through the medium of the names they use. He identifies the disjunction that Aetius employs as follows: "either God's essence causes the name, or the name causes his essence."[18] Of course all would agree that the latter is absurd, but, as Mortley admits, it is difficult to make sense of what Aetius thinks would allow names to have such power over being.[19]

---

[15] Aetius, *Synt*. 26 (543 Wickham): εἰ ψιλὸν ὄνομα ἐστιν ἐπὶ θεοῦ τὸ ἀγέννητον, ἡ δὲ ψιλὴ προφορὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπαίρει κατὰ πάντων τῶν γεννητῶν, τιμιωτέρα ἄρα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνθρώπων προφορὰ τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτοπος ὑποστάσεως, ἀσυγκρίτῳ ὑπεροχῇ καλλωπίσασα θεὸν τὸν παντοκράτορα.

[16] Wickham, "The Syntagmation," 565

[17] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 289.

[18] Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, 2.134.

[19] Mortley suggests that Aetius is implying that "orthodox confidence in theological discourse" makes it appear "as if they want to *make* the deity" (*From Word to Silence*, 2.134). But this is pure conjecture.

I suggest another interpretation. Since a "mere name" does not disclose substance, if 'unbegotten' is a mere name, God's substance is not unbegottenness. Hence calling God 'unbegotten' gives him merely *de dicto* superiority over created things. The name is "of greater worth than the subsistence of the Almighty" and "has adorned God Almighty with incomparable superiority" because it overstates what God really is. So 'unbegotten' is not causing the divine substance (as Mortley thinks) but presenting it as something that it is not by deceptive embellishments (which is what the word καλλωπίσασα, "has adorned," connotes). Therefore, if God's names are not revelatory of substance, the superiority of human beings over God when naming him 'unbegotten' consists in their ability to make God greater than he is in actuality. This represents the primary reason why Aetius rejects that God is called 'unbegotten' by way of human conceptualization and its related reflective processes.

By ruling out these processes as responsible for 'unbegotten', Aetius implies that this name has a special characteristic vis-à-vis the divine substance that enables it to disclose it. I suggest that he views it as an 'intrinsic' name in contrast to 'extrinsic' names derived by human reflective processes, a distinction most clearly seen in *Syntagmation* 13. I follow Kopecek in not accepting Wickham's suggestion that this syllogism "rejects the supposition that ingeneracy might be a non-essential relational property" such as was advanced by Basil of Caesarea in *Contra Eunomium* 2.28.[20] Rather, Aetius is making the same general point as in *Syntagmation* 12. But unlike that syllogism, here Aetius hints at a difference between an 'extrinsic' name, that is, a name derived by considering God's name from an *external* point of view—the only human point of view of God—and the

[20] Wickham, "The Syntagmation," 558; Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 269 n. 1.

divine substance's 'intrinsic' name. In other words, the divine names reveal substance because this substance has its name intrinsic to it regardless of external observation. Expressing a similar idea, Eunomius would later say that "God, whether [the sounds of the name 'unbegotten'] are silent or uttered or have come into existence, and before the beings were brought into existence, was and is unbegotten."[21] God is what he is prior to any human reflection upon him or any activity of namegiving. Therefore, extrinsic names given to God from external observation are at best superfluous[22] and at worst inaccurate. And so, because 'unbegotten' is intrinsic to God, it can reveal the divine substance. Names derived by conceptualization and similar processes, being by definition extrinsic, are incapable of being revelatory of substance.

Therefore in the *Syntagmation* Aetius is trying to make sense of the divine name 'unbegotten'. Aetius considers 'unbegotten' revelatory of the divine substance because it is intrinsic to that substance. Hence it is not something that can be assigned to the divine substance based on human observation. In fact, Aetius altogether removes humans from giving names to God. Accordingly, human beings do not *give* the name 'unbegotten' to God, but must have 'unbegotten' *revealed* to them, by which they then come to know God's substance. His syllogisms aim to show that all kinds of absurdities result when 'unbegotten' is not understood as revelatory of the divine substance. The theory of names that he employs in his arguments is focused solely upon 'unbegotten' (and its related term 'begotten-thing'). Aetius gives no hint of having in mind a more comprehensive theory of names; his theory is limited to divine predication. It is not a general theory of names that

---

[21] Eunomius, *Apol*. 8, 5-7 (42 Vaggione).

[22] Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, 2.134.

accounts for how all names operate. The arguments of his theory of names focus on the special character of 'unbegotten' that is the basis for its ability to disclose substance.

Eunomius: an untraditional and illogical interpretation of 'unbegotten'?

Eunomius accepted Aetius's understanding of 'unbegotten' and its centrality to his theory of names, but significantly improved upon his teacher's argumentation for it. After his introduction, Eunomius's first order of business in the *Apologia* is to establish that when God is called 'unbegotten', the term names the divine substance itself. He begins by saying that, on the basis of our natural notion of God and the teaching of the fathers, we know that God "did not come into existence either from himself or from another."[23] This is a non-controversial statement to which all would have agreed; nonetheless, he proceeds to demonstrate how both alternatives are impossible. That done, he uses what he has demonstrated as the premise of a syllogism that draws upon Aetius:

> So then, if it has been demonstrated that God neither pre-exists himself nor that anything else pre-exists him, but that he is before all things, then it follows from this that he is unbegotten, or rather, that he is unbegotten substance.[24]

Eunomius draws two conclusions from the fact that God has no prior cause: (1) that God is unbegotten, and (2) that God is unbegotten substance. The first conclusion is uncontroversial, and Eunomius acknowledges the established custom of calling God

---

[23] Eunomius, *Apol*. 7, 1-3 (40 Vaggione).

[24] Eunomius, *Apol.* 7, 9-11 (40 Vaggione); Cf. Aetius, *Synt*. 28: "If everything that has come to be has come to be from another but the unbegotten subsistence (ὑπόστασις) has not come to be either from itself or from another subsistence, then unbegottenness must reveal substance (οὐσίαν)" (543 Wickham).

'unbegotten'.[25] But the second conclusion is controversial. Traditionally, 'unbegotten' named one of many divine characteristics. In contrast, Eunomius identifies divinity with this single characteristic, thereby re-interpreting the tradition: whenever God is called 'unbegotten', it means that his substance is unbegottenness.[26]

The second conclusion is not only controversial, but it also does not follow from its premise. Similarly to Aetius, then, Eunomius only proves that God is unbegotten; yet both claim as well that unbegottenness is the substance of God. Are Aetius and Eunomius simply guilty of a logical gaffe? I suggest that Eunomius and Aetius think it follows from God's having no prior that God is unbegotten *and* that unbegottenness is God's substance because of their theory of names and the theological epistemology that this theory supports.

The Heteroousian theory of names and their theological epistemology

The Heteroousians state their theory of names clearly. Aetius says that the name 'unbegotten' "communicates the subsistence of God" (τὴν ὑπόστασιν τοῦ θεοῦ παρίστησιν),[27] "is revelatory of substance" (οὐσίας δηλωτικόν or similar phrases),[28] and "signifies subsistence" (ὑπόστασιν σημαίνει).[29] Eunomius never says that 'unbegotten' reveals the divine substance as clearly as Aetius does, though it is the main

[25] Eunomius, *Apol*. 7, 13-15 (40 Vaggione): "To some people it will seem useless and superfluous to develop an argument for things that are commonly acknowledged as though they were subject to doubt" (trans. Vaggione 41).

[26] Barnes, *The Power of God*, 174–5.

[27] Aetius, *Synt.* 12.

[28] Aetius, *Synt.* 16, 28, and 30.

[29] Aetius, *Synt.* 27.

point of *Apologia* 7-11. Yet when speaking of the name 'something begotten' for the Son, Eunomius say that "it is the subsistence itself that his name signifies, since the designation truly applies to the substance."[30] Elsewhere Eunomius states with regard to 'creature' that he has already shown that "the designations signify the substances themselves."[31] Note that to state that which the divine names reveal, both Aetius and Eunomius use the terms ὑπόστασις ("subsistence") and οὐσία ("substance"), which they regarded as interchangeable.[32] In this they reflect a usage that was widespread in the early fourth century.[33] According to the Heteroousians, then, the divine names reveal substance, understood as essence.

The Heteroousian theory that names specifically disclose substance is the basis of their theological epistemology.[34] The Heteroousians are heirs of a long philosophical tradition that understood real knowledge of things to be a comprehension of their essences. According to the Heteroousians, names are the means by which such real knowledge of God is attained. Hence 'unbegotten' reveals God as he truly is. If the divine names do not objectively refer to the divine substance, then knowledge of God is impossible and theology is a mere game played with meaningless words in futility. As

---

[30] Eunomius, *Apol.* 12, 9-10 (48 Vaggione): αὐτὴν εἶναι τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἥν σημαίνει τοὔνομα, ἐπαληθευούης τῇ οὐσίᾳ τῆς προσηγορίας. I believe that Vaggione has mistranslated this passage. Its structure parallels the citation in the next note, and is translated similarly.

[31] Eunomius, *Apol*. 18, 19-20 (56 Vaggione): αὐτῶν εἶναι τῶν οὐσίων σημαντικὰς τὰς προσηγορίας..

[32] Wickham, "The Syntagmation," 552; Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 165.

[33] For example, the Nicene Creed anathematizes "those who claim that the Son is from a different subsistence or substance" (ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας φάσκοντας).

[34] Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "'Seek and You Shall Find': Divine Simplicity and the Knowledge of God in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa," (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007), 114–33; Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 245–58.

Aetius said, if 'unbegotten' does not signify substance, "then it turns out that the hope of Christians comes and goes, being based on a distinct utterance, but not on natures that are as the meaning of their names implies."[35]

The theory of names that the Heteroousians employed also furnished them with a basic epistemological principle: a difference in names implies a difference in substance. A statement of this principle is found in a fragment of a document that Aetius produced probably during the Council of Seleucia in the autumn of 359.[36] Of the two extant versions, Basil of Caesarea's preserves the fullest summary:

> Somewhere in his letters [Aetius] wrote, saying: "Things unlike in nature are expressed in unlike ways." And vice versa: "Things expressed in unlike ways are unlike in nature." Furthermore, for testimony of this rationale he drew upon the apostle, who said: *One God and Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things* [1 Cor 8:6]. "So, then," he says, "as the terms are related to each other, so too will the natures signified by them be related to each other. Now the *through whom* is unlike the *from whom*. Therefore, the Son is also unlike the Father."[37]

This passage is notable because it is the only extant instance of Aetius's syllogistic use of scripture. The Father relates to all things as the *from whom* while the Son as the *through whom*. The different ways of speaking about each in relation to all things indicates their different natures. The same principle is seen in Epiphanius's summary of the main thesis

---

[35] Aetius, *Synt.* 16 (542 Wickham).

[36] See Appendix A, Text 14.

[37] Aetius, Text 14a. Theodoret also preserves the text; see Aetius, Text 14b.

of Aetius's *Syntagmation*, which he puts into the mouth of Aetius himself: "The unbegotten cannot be like the begotten. For they differ in name: the one is unbegotten and the other begotten."[38] Here Epiphanius rightly picks up on the names 'unbegotten' and 'begotten', which are central to Heteroousian theology. The principle is frequently invoked by Eunomius as well.[39]

The centrality of divine simplicity

Above I mentioned that Aetius argued that 'unbegotten' referred to God's substance by eliminating other possibilities; Eunomius does the same thing. Both Aetius and Eunomius argued that 'unbegotten' was not said by way of conceptualization or by way of privation.[40] But Eunomius also advances upon Aetius by arguing that this theory of names is a consequence of divine simplicity.[41] He writes:

> So then, as the preceding argument has shown, if his unbegottenness is neither by way of conceptualization, nor by way of privation, nor in part (for he is without parts), nor as something else in him (for he is simple and incomposite), nor as something else alongside him (for he is the one and only unbegotten), then it must be unbegotten substance.[42]

---

[38] Aetius, Text 24.

[39] Eunomius, *Apol*. 12, 3-4 (48 Vaggione); 18, 13-14 (56 Vaggione)

[40] Aetius, *Synt.* 12-13, 16-17, 19-21, 24-26; Eunomius, *Apol*. 8, 1-14. For discussion, see Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 117–25.

[41] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 115–6. See also G. C. Stead, "Logic and the Application of Names to God," in Lucas F. Mateo-Seco and Juan L. Bastero. *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la Produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1988), 318–9.

[42] Eunomius, *Apol.* 8, 14-18 (42 Vaggione). See Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 125–28 for a discussion of the arguments in this citation.

Here Eunomius intends to rules out the view that 'unbegotten' names something other than God himself and concludes that it must be an essential predication that refers to God's substance.

While Eunomius's opponents will claim that he has not eliminated all possibilities by this disjunction, ancient summaries of his theory recognize the centrality of divine simplicity in it. At the beginning of the second book of his *Contra Eunomium*, Gregory of Nyssa sums up his opponent's theory as follows:

> God is named 'unbegotten'. But that which is divine is simple by nature, and what is simple admits of no composition. So then, if God is uncompounded in nature, and the name 'unbegotten' applies to him, then 'unbegotten' would be the name of his very nature, and his nature is nothing other than unbegottenness.[43]

Gregory cuts to the heart of the matter: Eunomius's claim that 'unbegotten' names the substance of God is rooted in his doctrine of divine simplicity. A similar argument is made in a Eunomian fragment cited by Cyril of Alexandria:

> The name 'unbegotten' is either understood as something indicative of the substance of God or signifies something accidental to it. But nothing can

[43] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.23-24 (GNO I: 233 Jaeger): Φασὶν ἀγέννητον τὸν θεὸν ὀνομάζεσθαι, ἁπλοῦν δὲ εἶναι τῇ φύσει τὸ θεῖον, τὸ δὲ ἁπλοῦν μηδεμίαν ἐπιδέχεσθαι σύνθεσιν· εἰ οὖν ἀσύνθετος κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ᾧ τὸ τοῦ ἀγεννήτου ἔπεστιν ὄνομα, αὐτῆς ἂν εἴη τῆς φύσεως ὄνομα τὸ ἀγέννητον, καὶ ἔστιν οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ ἀγεννησία ἡ φύσις. In his edition Jaeger presents these lines as a fragment of Eunomius's *Apologia apologiae*; he is followed in this by Bernard Pottier Bernard, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse: Étude systématique de «Contre Eunome» avec traduction des extraits d'Eunome* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), 473. I follow Richard Paul Vaggione, *The Extant Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 105, who sees it as a summary.

> be accidental in the divine substance. For it is perfect in itself. Therefore 'unbegotten' is revelatory of substance.[44]

It is unclear whether this is a fragment of Eunomius or a report on Eunomian teaching. In any event, it retrieves (and simplifies) the disjunction of Eunomius cited above: 'unbegotten' is said of God either by way of essential predication or not. Divine simplicity eliminates non-essential predication. Therefore, 'unbegotten' reveals God's substance. Thus divine simplicity entails that all predication of God be essential.

This centrality of divine simplicity explains the seeming logical gaffe mentioned above. According to both Aetius and Eunomius, it follows from God's having no prior that God is both unbegotten *and* that unbegottenness is the substance of God because there is nothing else that 'unbegotten' can name in God. While this interpretation of 'unbegotten' is surely not traditional, it is a logical consequence of their theory of names and theological epistemology.[45]

The Heteroousian theory of names, their theological epistemology, and their doctrine of divine simplicity are deeply intertwined. They are the three legs of the tripod that supports the rest of Heteroousian theology. Just as the entire edifice of Heteroousian theology would collapse if any of these three legs were removed, so too the viability of each depends upon the others. One of the tasks of their opponents would be to undermine this close logical connection between the three.

---

[44] Cyril, *Thesaurus* assertio xxxi (PG 75.445d): τὸ ἀγένητος ὄνομα, φασὶν, ἤ τι παραστατικὸν τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ νοηθήσεται, ἤ σημαίνει τι τῶν συμβεβηκότων αὐτῇ. Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲν τῇ θείᾳ συμβέβηκεν οὐσίᾳ. τελεία γὰρ ἐξ ἑαυτῆς. τὸ ἀγένητον ἄρα τῆς οὐσίας ἔσται δηλωτικόν. On the origin of Cyril's Eunomian citations, see Vaggione, *Extant Works*, 180.

[45] I discuss traditional interpretations of 'unbegotten' in Chapter Three.

II. Eunomius's theory of names: implications and inconsistencies

Even in its limited scope, Eunomius's theory of names had unintended implications and is marred by inconsistencies. It is the purpose of this part to demonstrate these in order to prove how far the early Heteroousian theory of names is from being a general theory of names. Not only is Eunomius solely concerned with how names operate when applied to God, his account of divine attribution lacks integrity. It holds together best when explaining the names used for the unbegotten God, but this same rationale does not apply in every way to the names for the begotten God.

Homonymy and synonymy

The Heteroousian theory of names, as formulated by Eunomius in the *Apologia*, really only pertains to simple beings. There are two consequences of his theory: (1) names used of both simple and non-simple beings are homonymous, and (2) all names used of simple beings are synonymous. Richard Vaggione noted, "it is the absence of matter or any another pre-existent substratum which distinguishes the meaning of ordinary words used in a divine context from that of their normal usage."[46] But the homonymy and synonymy mentioned above cannot simply be due to divine incorporeality. It is also—and I would suggest, more fundamentally—due to divine simplicity. Eunomius this affirms when speaking of God's begetting of the Son: "We neither ascribe parts (μέρη) to God nor indeed do we root either his begetting in his own substance or his creating in [pre-existent] matter; it is from these that the difference [in

[46] Vaggione, *Extant Works*, 55 n. 10.

the use] of the names ['thing-made and 'thing-begotten'] naturally arises."[47] Vaggione translates μέρη as "bodily members." If this interpretation is correct, then Eunomius is rooting equivocity when speaking of God's begetting of the Son solely in his incorporeality, at least in this passage. But given Eunomius's emphasis on simplicity, his denial that God has parts in this passage seems rather an affirmation of this doctrine and that the incorporeality of the divine begetting is a consequence of it. In this case, the simplicity of the God would *ipso facto* preclude corporeality. Eunomius appears to believe the God's simplicity is logically prior to his incorporeality. In any event, it is simplicity as well as incorporeality that accounts for homonymy of names said of God and creatures, an interpretation that other passages cited below will support.

On the subject of homonymy and synonymy in the predication of names for the unbegotten God, Eunomius writes:

> What person of sound mind would not confess that some names have only their pronunciation and utterance in common, but not their meaning? For example, when 'eye' is said of a human being and God, for the former it signifies a certain part while for the latter it signifies sometimes God's care and protection of the righteous, sometimes his knowledge of events. In contrast, the majority of the names [used of God] have different pronunciations but the same meaning. For example, *I Am* [Ex 3:14] and *only true God* [John 17:3].[48]

---

[47] *Apol*. 17, 14-17 (54 Vaggione).

[48] *Apol*. 16, 9 – 17, 3 (53–55 Vaggione): τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ὁμολογήσειεν τῶν εὐφρονούντων ὅτι τῶν ὀνμάτων τὰ μὲν κατὰ τὴν ἐκφώνησιν καὶ προφορὰν τὴν κοινωνίαν ἔχει μόνον, οὐκ ἔτι δὲ κατὰ τὴν σημασίαν; ὡς ὀφθαλμὸς ἐπὶ τε ἀνθρώπου καὶ θεοῦ λεγόμενος, τοῦ μὲν γὰρ σημαίνει τι μέρος, τοῦ δὲ ποτὲ μὲν

Names applied only to God, like 'I Am' and 'only true God' therefore mean the same as 'unbegotten'. For if God is simple, they cannot name anything but God's unbegotten substance. But names common to the unbegotten God and human beings, like 'Father' and 'eye', have different meanings and do not name substance, but rather divine activities. Hence names unique to God name his substance; all other names do not. Other unique names that Eunomius uses for God are 'incomparable', 'creator, 'unmade', and 'uncreated'.[49]

Eunomius also states that the synonymy of the divine names is due to simplicity when arguing that terms like 'light', 'life', and 'power' mean different things when applied to the Father and the Son: "If every word that is used to signify the substance of the Father is equal in force of meaning to the 'unbegotten' because of his partlessness and lack of composition, then when the same word is also used for the Only-Begotten, it is equivalent to 'begotten-thing'."[50] Hence Eunomius intends the names of both God and the Only-Begotten to exhibit synonymy because of their simplicity.

But Eunomius's theory turns out to be muddled for the names of the Son. He affirms that names common to the begotten God and human beings, like 'thing-made', 'thing-begotten',[51] and 'creature', have different meanings in each case.[52] Yet for

---

ἀντίληφιν καὶ φυλακὴν τῶν διλαῖων, ποτὲ δὲ τὴν πραττομένων γνῶσιν• τὰ δὲ πολλὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐκφώνησιν κεχωρισμένα τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει σημασίαν, ὡς τὸ ὢν καὶ μόνος ἀληθινὸς θεός.

[49] *Apol*. 11, 15-16; 16, 4; 17, 10; and 18, 11.

[50] *Apol.* 19, 16-19 (58 Vaggione):

[51] See *Apol*. 12, 6-10 (48 Vaggione): "Therefore, we say that the Son is 'something begotten' in accordance with the teaching of the scriptures. We do not conceive of his substance as one thing and what his name signifies as something else alongside of it. Rather, it is the subsistence that his name signifies, since the designation truly applies to the substance."

Eunomius these designations—as well as the name 'Son'—name the begotten God's substance.[53] Because of the simplicity of the Son, these names are equivalent to 'begotten'. Hence he upholds the principle that names used of simple beings are synonymous. But these same names are also used of non-simple, created beings, albeit homonymously. In the case of the unbegotten God, homonymous names designated God's activities; in the case of the begotten God, his substance. Therefore, there is an inconsistency in his theory. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that there are no unique names for the begotten God. Every name scripture uses for the Son can also be applied to human beings or other created beings.

Despite this inconsistency, Eunomius explains this homonymy in more detail when he argues that we can call the Son a 'creature':

> No attempt should be made to make meanings completely equivalent to names, and even less to have different meanings when names are different. Rather, attentive to the notions of the objects they refer to, we should adapt the designations accordingly. For the natures of realities do not naturally follow upon the terms for them; rather, the force of the names is adapted to the realities in accordance with their dignity.[54]

---

[52] *Apol*. 17, 8-17. This passage was partially cited above.

[53] *Apol*. 12, 2-4; 18, 9-20; 24, 20-21; and 28, 20-24.

[54] *Apol*. 18, 4-9 (54–6 Vaggione): μήτε πάντῃ τοῖς ὀνόμασι συνεξομοιοῦν πειρᾶσθαι τὰς σημασίας, μήτε μὴν παραλλάττειν παρηλλαγμένων, ταῖς δὲ τῶν ὑποκειμένων ἐννοίας προσέχοντας ἀκολούθως ἐφαρμόττειν τὰς προσηγορίας (ἐπεὶ μηδὲ ταῖς φωναῖς πέφυκεν ἀκολουθεῖν τῶν πραγμάτων ἡ φύσις, τοῖς δὲ πράγμασιν ἐφαρμόζεσθαι κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων δύναμις). Note that my translation and thus interpretation of this passage differs significantly from Vaggione's.

Eunomius begins by making two points about the relationship between a name and its meaning. First, names and their meanings are distinct. Eunomius allows for both multiple meanings of a single name and multiple names for a single meaning. The second point reinforces this: different names can have the same meaning. Each different name need not have a different meaning. The remainder of this passage provides the basis for the distinction between names and meaning. The meaning of names is a function of the object that bears the name. Natures are primary; names are secondary. Each name takes on meaning according to the dignity of its bearer. So when 'eye' is said of a human being, it indicates a bodily part. But when the same word is said of God, whose nature far exceeds the dignity of human nature, it means something else. Similarly with names like 'Father', 'Son', 'creature', and so forth. The "dignity" of the reality to which such names are applied is at least a function of its simplicity or complexity: God is higher in dignity because he is simple, whereas creatures are lower in dignity because of their composition. While the divine dignity vis-à-vis creatures is surely not limited to simplicity, we have seen how this doctrine plays a central role in Eunomius's theory of names.

As seen in the passages cited above, Eunomius alludes to what certain names signify when used in ordinary contexts in order to highlight that the same names are equivocally said of God, either the unbegotten or the begotten. But the purpose of his theory of names remains the explanation of how names are applied to God. Eunomius is not interested in formulating a theory of what names said equivocally of God signify in mundane contexts, though for a few select names like 'Father' and 'Son' he reveals that he thinks they are hopelessly materialistic.[55] Yet Eunomius does give a hint of his later

[55] *Apol.* 16.

theory when he states that natures are primary and names secondary. But he does not at this point take the crucial step of asserting that names in general reveal the nature of their bearers. Accordingly, his theory of names remains limited to explaining divine names.

Blurred distinctions

Despite Eunomius' distinction between name, meaning, and object in the passage from *Apologia* 18 cited above, I argue that in the case of God he effectively collapses them into a single reality. In other words, 'unbegotten', unbegottenness, and God all refer to the same reality.[56] This appears to have been Gregory of Nyssa's interpretation: "Eunomius promises to demonstrate that the name [sc. 'unbegotten'] is identical with its bearer, since he defines 'unbegottenness' as substance."[57] Because Eunomius *defines* the divine substance as unbegottenness, the name 'unbegotten' is the same as God. Eunomius viewed the name γέννημα similarly: "We do not think of his substance as one thing and the meaning of the term for it as something else."[58] 'Begotten', begottenness, and the begotten God all have the same sense and reference.

When ruling out that God is called 'unbegotten' by way of human conceptualization, Eunomius says:

---

[56] Aetius is guilty of the same conflation. He frequently uses τὸ ἀγέννητον in his *Syntagmation*. Yet it is often difficult to decide whether he means the name 'unbegotten' or its meaning, unbegottenness. The fact that his syllogisms work with either interpretation of the term indicates his conflation of name and meaning.

[57] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.178 (GNO I: 276 Jaeger): δείξειν οὗτος κατεπαγγέλλεται ταὐτὸν εἶναι τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ τὸ ὄνομα. οὐσίαν γὰρ εἶναι τὴν ἀγεννησίαν ὁρίζεται. See also 2.377-386.

[58] Eunomius, *Apol*. 12, 7-8 (48 Vaggione): οὐχ ἕτερον μὲν τὴν οὐσίαν νοοῦντες, ἕτερον δέ τι παρ' αὐτὴν τὸ σημαινόμενον.

> things said by conceptualization, you see, have an existence in name alone and when they are being pronounced, and by nature are dissolved together with the sounds used to say them. But God, whether the sounds are silent or uttered or have come into existence, and before the beings were brought into existence, was and is unbegotten.[59]

Names said by way of human conceptualization subsist only insofar as their sounds linger in the air. In contrast, 'unbegotten' confesses "that he is what he is," which God is intrinsically and before all else. It is not an ordinary name. Eunomius is expressing here the same thing as Aetius's notion of an intrinsic name. This statement also reveals the strong connection that Eunomius posits between God's name and its referent, God himself. If 'unbegotten' is said by way of conceptualization, it signifies an evanescent reality and thus surely cannot be used of God. God's name must be as permanent and substantial as God himself is. The correspondence between God's name and its referent is so strong for Eunomius that they are interchangeable: God is his name; God is unbegotten substance.[60] Since God is simple, his name cannot be something alongside of him; therefore, God is his name.

III. Eunomius on the origin of names

One of the principal concerns of Eunomius in *Apologia apologiae*—as gleaned from Gregory of Nyssa's citations and reports in the second book of his *Contra*

---

[59] *Apol*. 8, 3-7 (42 Vaggione).

[60] Cf. Wickham, "The Syntagmation," 560: "Essence, concept, and real name are hence the same thing—the Ingenerate essence, ingeneracy, and the Ingenerate are, rightly considered, one and the same."

Eunomium—is to argue that God gave names to all the things he created and taught these names to human beings. He presumably made this argument to contradict Basil's wholesale rejection of Eunomius's theory of names in his *Contra Eunomium*—to be discussed in Chapters Four through Seven—and his claim that 'unbegotten' is said of God by way of conceptualization. In answer to Basil, Eunomius asserted that not only does God's name reveal his substance, but in fact every name reveals substance. He grounds this general theory of names in the fact that God is responsible for all names. Accordingly, he denies that human beings have ever played any role in namegiving, especially by conceptualization, in order to undermine Basil's account. Hence it is only in the *Apologia apologiae* that Eunomius articulates a theory of names that is both general and naturalist.

Eunomius's theory of the origin of names also needs to be described at this point because of its importance as the basis of various source claims made about his theory of names, which are discussed in Chapter Two. But it is necessary to note that these two theories attempt to resolve two distinct problems that were often conflated in Greek thought. While a theory of names describes the relation between names and things, a theory of the origin of names accounts for how names came to used for things. The two theories can be connected, but a theory of names is not necessarily dependent upon a theory of the origin of names.[61] Eunomius provides an example of the conflation of the

[61] Jan Pinborg, "Classical Antiquity: Greece," in Thomas A. Sebeok, *Current Trends in Linguistics. Volume 13: Historiography of Linguistics* (The Hague / Paris: Mouton, 1975), 70; and Peter Matthews, "Greek and Latin Linguistics," in Giulio Lepschy, ed., *History of Linguistics. Volume II: Classical and Medieval Linguistics* (London / New York: Longman, 1994), 21–5.

two theories, as he articulates a theory of the origin of names as way of transforming his original, limited theory of names into a general theory of names.

The primary concern of Eunomius is to deny that human beings ever played any role in namegiving. He claims that the invention of words is due to neither the poets nor the biblical saints.[62] Eunomius does not even accept that Adam named the animals. He seems to have interpreted Adam's naming of the animals in Genesis 2:19-20, not as an activity accomplished by the first human being, but, using the Pauline identification of Adam as a type of Christ (1 Cor 15:45), as Christ's activity.[63] Furthermore, Eunomius appears to have made much of the common sense belief that the namegiver must pre-exist the things he names. For he argues that if human beings give names, they must be "closer to the beginning" (ἀρχηγικωτέρους) than God, who is the origin of all things.[64] In addition, as the Genesis account makes clear, names were given to things before God made the first human being; therefore human beings cannot be responsible for names.[65] Echoing the *Apologia*, Eunomius also argues that human beings cannot be responsible for the name of God since God is unbegotten even before human beings were created.[66]

Therefore, if it was impossible for humans to give any names, then God must responsible for all namegiving. This is the second step of Eunomius's argument. Eunomius based this claim on the cosmogony in Genesis. He appears to have appealed to Genesis 1:3-10, where Moses recounted that God made the light, the firmament, the dry

---

[62] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.414-416.

[63] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.444.

[64] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.284 and 289.

[65] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.198 and 262.

[66] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.153, 159, and 170.

land, and the waters, and called them by certain names.[67] This passage seems to have been the scriptural foundation of Eunomius's theory of the divine origin of all names.[68] "The writing of Moses does not lie," writes Eunomius, "where it is declared that God has said something."[69] Eunomius seems to have extrapolated from Genesis 1, arguing that God did not merely give the names that Moses recorded God giving, but all names in general. Accordingly Eunomius can remark that "God ordains the words of human beings"[70] and is responsible for inventing words.[71]

Third, in addition to articulating a theory of the divine origin of all names, Eunomius used this theory as the basis for a general naturalist theory of names. Eunomius asserts that, when God gave names to the things he made, the names given to things were suited to their natures. Eunomius writes: "It is clear that God assigned names that were appropriate for and corresponded to their natures."[72] God's giving of names in accord with nature reveals his wisdom: "not only is the majesty of the creator manifested in the things made, but also the wisdom of God is revealed in their names, since he adapted, in a proper and naturally suitable way, the designations to each thing that has come to be."[73]

---

[67] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.205 and 269-270.

[68] Eunomius also appeals to the witness of David, understood to be composer of the psalms; see Gregory, *Eun*. 2.423.

[69] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.219 (GNO I: 289 Jaeger): ἀλλ' οὐ ψεύδεται, φησίν, ἡ τοῦ Μωϋσέως γραφή, δι' ἧς τὸ εἰρηκέναι τι τὸν θεὸν ἀποφαίνεται.

[70] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.263 (GNO I: 302 Jaeger): θεὸς διαθεσμοθετεῖ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὰς ῥήσεις.

[71] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.265.

[72] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.408 (GNO I: 345 Jaeger): δηλοῦται τὸ τὸν θεὸν ταῖς φύσεσι πρεπούσας καὶ καταλλήλους τὰς κλήσεις.

[73] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.403 (GNO I: 344 Jaeger): μὴ μόνον τοῖς ποιήμασιν ἐμφαίνεσθαι τὴν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ μεγαλοπρέπειαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι διαδείκνυσθαι τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ σοφίαν οἰκείως καὶ προσφυῶς ἑκάστῳ τῶν γενομένων τὰς

And so, in Eunomius's general naturalist theory of names, the natural connection between name and thing is guaranteed by God's namegiving.

Finally, Eunomius maintains that God teaches human beings the names he has given to the things he made. Eunomius interprets the testimony of Moses in Genesis 1 as saying that "the use of things named and of names was granted to human beings by the one who created their nature."[74] Eunomius seems to have imagined the divine instruction in names as a kind of conversation between God and the first human beings. Eunomius writes: "those who were first created by God, or those immediately born from them, if they had not been taught how each thing is spoken of and named, would have lived together speechless and dumb."[75] Elsewhere he says: "Since God does not spurn conversation with his own servants, it is consistent to think that from the beginning he has given designations that were naturally suited to the reality."[76] Since God gave all names to human beings, there was no need for human beings to coin names for things, least of all 'unbegotten' for God.

προσηγορίας ἁρμόσαντος. See also Eun. 2.335 (GNO I: 324 Jaeger): "God himself, who created the universe, adapts the designations of every named thing in a naturally suitable way to the limits and laws of relation, of activity, and of analogy." See also *Eun*. 2.417, translated below.

[74] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.262 (GNO I: 302 Jaeger): παρὰ τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος τὴν φύσιν δεδωρῆσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τῶν τε ὀνομαζομένων καὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων τὴν χρῆσιν.

[75] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.398 (GNO I: 342 Jaeger): αὐτοὺς τοὺς πρώτους ὑπο τοῦ θεοῦ πλασθέντας ἢ τοὺς προσεχῶς ἐξ ἐκείνων φύντας, εἰ μὴ ἐδιδάχθησαν ὡς ἕκαστα τῶν πραγμάτων λέγεταί τε καὶ ὀνομάζεται, ἀλογίᾳ καὶ ἀφωνίᾳ συζῆν; trans. Hall 149.

[76] Gregory, *Eun*. 2.417 (GNO I: 348 Jaeger): ἐπειδή οὐκ ἀναίνεται ὁ θεὸς τὴν πρὸς τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ θεράποντας ὁμιλίαν, ἀκόλουθόν ἐστιν οἴεσθαι αὐτὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὰς προσφυεῖς τῷ πράματι τεθεῖσθαι προσηγορίας.

And so, Eunomius sought to salvage his original theory of names by recontextualizing it within a general naturalist theory of names. In response to Basil's claim that no name—whether applied to God or creatures—revealed substance, Eunomius countered by asserting that all names were indicative of the natures of their bearers. This was but an instance of the wisdom of God, who in his omniscience insured that every name corresponded to the nature of the objected called by it. Eunomius used a theory of the divine origin of names as the guarantee of the naturalness of names: God himself is responsible for the natural connection between name and thing, even his own name 'unbegotten'. While conflating a theory of names with a theory of the origin of names is typical of Greek thought, Eunomius also exhibits some ingenuity in making this move. Basil's own theory of names is not linked to a theory of the origin of names. Gregory of Nyssa must have felt that Eunomius's tactic had some merit, since in his defense of Basil and refutation of Eunomius he offers an alternative theory of the origin of names.[77]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated how the early Heteroousian theory of names was focused upon explaining the significance of the term 'unbegotten', as well as other divine names. Eunomius made the doctrine of divine simplicity central to his theory, advancing significantly upon the argumentation of Aetius. These two features of the early Heteroousian theory, I contend, show that they did not originally envision it as a general theory. Furthermore, I have pointed out two areas in which Eunomius's theory lacks

[77] See *Eun.* 2.237-293.

internal consistency: his theory is seamless when explaining ‘unbegotten’ and other unique names for God the Father, but comes apart when used to explain the significance of names applied to God the Son. These inconsistencies militate against Eunomius’s theory being a general theory of names, to say nothing of a successful and self-consistent theory. Finally, I have illustrated how Eunomius’s recontextualization of his earlier theory of names within a more general naturalist theory of names is a response to Basil’s critique of his theory and is grounded in a theory of the divine origin of names. Interpreting the early Heteroousian theory in the light of this later theory only obscures the central features and limited scope of theory in its initial formulation and distorts our understanding of the theory to which Basil responded.

Chapter Two

The Heteroousians and Philosophical Theories of Names

Ancient debates over the character of names had their origins in the contrast between nature (φύσις) and convention (νόμος) that was promoted by the Sophists in the fifth century B.C.E. While the Sophists exploited this antithesis principally in the realm of morality within society, it was extended to other areas of life, including language.[1] Others took up the issue. For example, the pre-Socratic Democritus of Abdera, according to Proclus, formulated four arguments for the conventionality of names.[2] But the *locus classicus* of this debate is Plato's *Cratylus*, where the merits of naturalist and conventionalist theories of names are compared and dissected. While conventionalism always had its advocates (particularly among Aristotelians), the naturalist theory came to be the accepted view in antiquity, advocated in both technical and popular forms by Platonists, Epicureans, Stoics, and Christians alike.[3]

---

[1] Jan Pinborg, "Classical Antiquity: Greece," in Thomas A. Sebeok, *Current Trends in Linguistics. Volume 13: Historiography of Linguistics* (The Hague / Paris: Mouton, 1975), 69; A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy,* 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 132–3; Peter Matthews, "Greek and Latin Linguistics," in Giulio Lepschy, ed., *History of Linguistics. Volume II: Classical and Medieval Linguistics* (London / New York: Longman, 1994), 15–16; Peter Schmitter, "Sprachbezogene Reflexionen im frühen Griechenland," in Sylvain Auroux, E. F. K. Koerner, Hans-Josef Niederehe, and Kees Versteegh, eds., *History of the Language Sciences* (Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 356–60; and David Sedley, *Plato's Cratylus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 67.

[2] Proclus, *in Crat.* 16, 23-47 (6 Pasquali). On Democritus's views, see Schmitter, "Sprachbezogene Reflexionen," 354–56.

[3] John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, Rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 181.

The assumption that the Heteroousian theory of names is naturalist has inspired a variety of scholarly attempts to connect it with philosophical discussions of the theory, particularly those from the Platonist school. In this chapter I will argue that the Mesoplatonist and Neoplatonist writings suggested by some scholars as the sources for the Heteroousian theory had only a very remote influence upon them. I contend that if Platonist speculations on names had any influence on the Heteroousians, it was mediated through Philo of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea. Yet even in these cases there are only scattered points of contact, and these not without considerable modification. I argue that neither Philo nor Eusebius had any influence on the Heteroousians in the initial formulations of their theory of names. Yet I do suggest that Eunomius's later theory of the origin of names is an adaptation of Philo's similar theory. In the next chapter I argue that in formulating their initial theory of names the Heteroousians were attempting to offer solutions to the theological dilemmas of their era by drawing upon proximate Christians sources. Attributing their earlier theory of names to philosophical sources simply obscures this fact.

I. The quest for the sources of Eunomius's theory of names

The quest for the sources of Eunomius's theory of names begins with Gregory of Nyssa. In the second book of his *Contra Eunomium*, he suggested that Eunomius derived his theory that God "properly and naturally fitted the designations to each thing that has come to be" from the *Cratylus*, whether directly or indirectly.[4] Hence Gregory attributed Eunomius's theory of the divine origin of names to the *Cratylus*, the addition to

[4] *Eun*. 2.403-404 (GNO I: 344 Jaeger).

Eunomius's original theory that transformed it into a general naturalist theory of names. In a classic essay Jean Daniélou, picking up on Gregory's accusation, argued that Eunomius's view of the origin of names—not his theory of names in general—was influenced by the Neoplatonist commentary tradition on the *Cratylus*.[5] Other scholars connect the Heteroousian theory of names itself with Platonism. Without specifically mentioning Daniélou, Thomas Kopecek argued against him that the Heteroousian view of names finds direct precedent in the Mesoplatonist view of names presented by Alcinous in his second-century *Handbook of Platonism*.[6] Raoul Mortley claimed that Aetius was influenced by Dexippus.[7] Most recently, Michel Barnes has suggested that Eusebius of Caesarea's discussion of names at *Praeparatio evangelica* 11.6, which engages the *Cratylus*, is the immediate precedent for Eunomius.[8] Hence Heteroousian view of the naturalness of names has been consistently attributed to Platonist sources, whether Plato himself, or his Mesoplatonist, Neoplatonist, and Christian heirs.

It is an attractive thesis. From the time of its composition, the *Cratylus* was viewed as one of the principal texts on the philosophy of language. The Stoic recourse to etymology and their concept of elementary sounds have rightly been assumed to be

---

[5] Jean Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle," *Revue des Études grecques* 69 (1959): 412–32.

[6] Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979), 122, 269–5, 321, and 331. In line with older scholarship, Kopecek mistakenly identifies Alcinous with Albinus.

[7] Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1986), 2.130f. Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "'Seek and You Shall Find': Divine Simplicity and the Knowledge of God in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007), 109–12, denies the influence sufficiently.

[8] Michel R. Barnes, *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 203 n. 132.

influenced by the dialogue, and A. A. Long has argued that parts of the Stoic linguistic theory represent a revisionist reading of the *Cratylus.*[9] There is admittedly little evidence for engagement with the *Cratylus* on the part of Platonists themselves until the second century C.E., but this of course does not preclude a wider readership. Our only hint of its usage in the Academy comes from Polemo, Plato's third successor at the Academy (314-276 B.C.E.). John Dillon maintains that Polemo's doctrine is recoverable from the exposition of the Academic philosophy in Cicero's *Academica posteriora*.[10] Here it is said that the Academicians "approved of the analysis of words, that is, the statement of the reason why each class of things bears the name that it does—a subject they call *etymologia*."[11] Etymology, then, was viewed as one methodology among others (definition, dialectic, and rhetoric) that was helpful for explanation. Dillon notes that "the method envisaged is doubtless that of the *Cratylus*."[12]

Nonetheless, starting in the second century C.E., the *Cratylus* takes center stage in Platonist reflections upon names and naming. This is best seen in Alcinous's second-century handbook of Platonism, which summarizes the *Cratylus*.[13] The high estimation of the *Cratylus* in this period comes as no surprise since the dialogue formed part of the standard curriculum of Plato's works: it appears on the syllabi found in both Albinus's

---

[9] A. A. Long, "Stoic Reactions to Plato's *Cratylus*," in Monique Canto-Sperber and Pierre Pellegrin, eds., *Le style de la pensée. Recueil de textes en hommage à Jacques Brunschwig* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002), 395–411.

[10] John Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347-274 BC)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 156–77.

[11] Cicero, *Acad. post.* 32 (LCL 268: 440 Rackham).

[12] Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 175 n. 60.

[13] Alcinous, *Did.* 6.10-11 (159, 45 – 160, 41 Whittaker).

Introduction to the Platonic Dialogues from the second-century C.E.[14] and the later anonymous *On Platonic Philosophy*.[15] At least from the time of Iamblichus, the *Cratylus* was one of the twelve dialogues in the Neoplatonist curriculum of Plato's works.[16] While the *Cratylus* features prominently in many Neoplatonist works not specially devoted to it, we possess only one extant commentary on it, the fifth-century commentary of Proclus.

And so, by the fourth century there was a strong tradition of Platonist interpretation of the *Cratylus* and it is hard to imagine that fourth-century Christians were unaware of it. Unfortunately Eusebius of Caesarea's use of the *Cratylus* is unique among Christians. It is debatable to what extent other Christians of the fourth century viewed the *Cratylus* as Eusebius did. Yet Gregory of Nyssa's suggestion alerts us to the possibility that churchmen of the fourth century were aware of its basic themes. And so, the suggestion that the Heteroousians are indebted to the tradition of Platonist interpretation of the *Cratylus* is both plausible and attractive.

II. The Platonist tradition: the *Cratylus* and its interpretation

In this part I discuss the naturalist theory of names advanced in Plato's *Cratylus* and the subsequent Platonist interpretations of this theory by Alcinous and Proclus. I argue that these Platonist theories bear little resemblance to the theory of names formulated by either Aetius or Eunomius. I highlight two features (more precisely, one feature and the absence of another) of the Platonist interpretation of this dialogue that

---

[14] *Introductio in Platonem* 3.

[15] *De philosophia Platonica* 26.

[16] See John Dillon, "Iamblichus of Chalcis," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 36.2 (1987), 872; John Dillon and Lloyd P. Gerson, *Neoplatonic Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), xv.

militate against its use by the Heteroousians: (1) the centrality of etymological analysis of names in determining the natures of the objects that bear them, and (2) the utter insignificance of simplicity in accounting for how names signify nature.

Plato's Cratylus *on names and naming*

Gregory of Nyssa accused Eunomius of deriving his theory of the origin of names from the *Cratylus*, which theory he correctly recognized as the basis of Eunomius's position on the naturalness of names. In this section I explore the features of the naturalist theory of names expressed in the *Cratylus* more broadly than strictly necessary to respond to Gregory's claim, for two reasons. First, this will allow for a more comprehensive denial that the *Cratylus* itself is a source for the Heteroousians. Second, understanding the naturalist theory in the *Cratylus* is a prerequisite for appreciating its use by the subsequent interpreters, which are discussed in the following sections.

In the *Cratylus* Socrates has two interlocutors, Hermogenes and Cratylus.[17] Hermogenes advocates a conventionalist view wherein names are contentless tags whose sole purpose is reference, a reference entirely determined by convention (e.g. 384c10-d8). On the conventionalist view, names lack all descriptive content (Fregean sense) and the correctness of a name consists in using it according to agreed usage. In contrast, Cratylus holds to a naturalist view wherein names are keys that convey information about their bearers because they are naturally fitted to them (e.g. 383a4-b2). They are tools of

[17] The literature on the *Cratylus* is vast. In interpreting the *Cratylus*, I have been particularly helped by Norman Kretzmann, "Plato on the Correctness of Names," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1971): 126–38; Allan Silverman, "Plato's *Cratylus*: the Naming of Nature and the Nature of Naming," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1992): 25–71; David Sedley, *Plato's Cratylus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

instruction (388b).[18] Names can thus be analyzed to learn the nature of their bearers. This sort of analysis is posited on the belief that names were purposely constructed long ago by certain wise namegivers who had insight into the nature of the things they named. These namegivers gave names to each thing as encoded descriptions of the nature of their bearers. As a result "names can be successfully decoded as messages about the nature of their nominata."[19] On the naturalist view, the correctness of a name consists in divulging what sort of the thing it is (οἷόν ἐστι τὸ πρᾶγμα) (428e1-2).

Plato has Socrates point out the incompatibility of Hermogenes's Sophist-inspired conventionalism with his realist view of things and gets him to endorse, at least provisionally, the naturalist view (385e4-391b). It is noted that not all names are correctly given such that they communicate the natures of their bearers; the things that by nature exist always are most likely to have correct names (397b). When Socrates debates the naturalist view with Cratylus, they come to acknowledge that convention has a role to play even when names are natural (435c2-6). John Dillon claims that the most influential passage of the *Cratylus* for Platonist speculations on language comes from the point in the debate between Socrates and Cratylus (430a-431e) where it is advanced that, though things were assigned their names by a namegiver (a type of conventionalism), the names

[18] I borrow "tag" and "key" from C. D. C. Reeve, *Plato: Cratylus* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), xiii-xiv. Plato himself speaks of names as tools.

[19] Sedley, *Plato's Cratylus*, 23.

thus given were correct, that is, true representations of the nature of their bearers.[20] G. C. Stead calls it a "compromise theory."[21]

The naturalist theory debated in the *Cratylus* can be called "formal" because each name has a form (εἶδος) that communicates the nature of the bearer regardless of the actual syllables or language used (389d-390a). The *Cratylus* speaks of two ways in which the namegiver can achieve the proper form of a name in any language: by combining the appropriate words or the appropriate letters. When this is done by a prudent namegiver, analysis of the words or letters used to construct a name reveals the nature of the bearer. Hence on the basis of either a "etymological" or "phonetic" naturalist theory, a name embodies the proper form that gives access to the nature of its bearer.[22]

When a name is etymologically natural, it is understood to be derived from other words whose corresponding natures are already known. Hence etymological analysis of the name reveals the nature of the bearer as disclosed by the names' roots (390e-422b). For example, *anthrōpos* is the correct name for humans because he is the only animal that "observes closely what he has seen" (*anathrōn ha opōpe*)—that is, he reasons (399c). The bulk of the *Cratylus* is taken up with such etymological analysis of names. But in order to avoid an infinite regress, certain primary names are posited which are not derived from others but of a self-evident nature due to their elements: these fall into the next category, names that are phonetically natural. Here the very elements from which

---

[20] John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 181.

[21] G. C. Stead, "Logic and the Application of Names to God," in Lucas F. Mateo-Seco and Juan L. Bastero. *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la Produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1988), 313.

[22] I adopt the labels "formal," "etymological," and "phonetic" naturalness from Long, "Stoic Reactions to Plato's *Cratylus*," 395–411.

names are constructed—the letters—represent properties that correspond to the nature of the name's bearer (422c-427d). In a phonetic theory, then, a name imitates, by the letters that comprise it, the being (οὐσία) of the entity named and expresses the entity as it is (423e7-9). For example, the Greek letter rho connotes motion, as in *rhein* ('flowing') and *rhoē* ('flow') (426d).

The crucial point for a formal naturalist theory is that when names have the proper form they communicate the nature of their bearers. And so, on the one hand, it is acknowledged that the natures that names reveal transcend their specific etymological derivation and phonetic representation. But on the other hand Plato only speaks of two ways of doing this: etymological and phonetic analysis. In any given language, then, whether due to etymological or phonetic elements, different names can have the same form and thus disclose the same nature in different entities. For example, Plato speaks of how the names 'Hector', 'Astyanax', and 'Archepolis' signify the same thing (ταὐτὸν σημαίνει; δηλοῖ … τὸ αὐτό), namely, the nature of a king (393a-394c). What is important here is the "force of the name" (ἡ τοῦ ὀνόματος δυνάμις) that is embodied in the letters of the name, which must mean something like the meaning of the name as determined by etymological analysis (394b).

In the *Cratylus*, the nature that names reveal through etymological or phonetic analysis is some distinctive property, quality, activity, or power of the bearer of the name. For example, 'Demeter' is given that name because she gives (*didousa*) nourishment like a mother (*mētēr*) and 'Hera' is so-named because she is loveable (*eratē*) (404b). The name 'Apollo' reveals the powers of the god (medicine, archery, music): (1) he washes away (*apolouōn*) and releases (*apoluōn*) us from impurities; (2) he always (*aei*) makes

his shots (*bolōn*); and (3) he brings about harmony (*homopolōn*) (404e-406a). The *Cratylus* is a treasure-trove of such information. Hence the nature revealed by names is basically some fact about the name bearer.

The kinds of naturalness found in the *Cratylus* and in the Heteroousians have a mostly superficial resemblance in their shared belief that a name reveals the nature of its bearer. The differences between them are patent. There is nothing in Plato that even approaches the Heteroousian claim that names reveal essence. The nature revealed by names according to the *Cratylus* falls far short of the essence of the namebearer that the Heteroousians wanted names to reveal. There is no trace of formal naturalness, either etymological or phonetic, in the Heteroousians. The doctrine of simplicity plays no role in the naturalist theory of names of the *Cratylus*.

Yet there is one resemblance that may be more substantial. In both the *Cratylus* and the *Apologia apologiae* the natural correctness of names is insured by the prudence of the namegiver. Even though Plato attributes namegiving to wise human beings, whereas Eunomius in the *Apologia apologiae* ascribes this activity wholly to God, the mechanism that guarantees that names naturally correspond to things is more or less the same. Hence Gregory displayed some acuity in saying that Eunomius derived his theory that God was responsible for the naturalness of names from the *Cratylus*.[23] But I will suggest below that this particular feature of Eunomius's theory owes more to others than to Plato. Eunomius himself is not responsible for identifying God as the namegiver of the *Cratylus*.

---

[23] *Eun*. 2.403-404 (GNO I: 344 Jaeger).

Every other aspect of the Eunomius's theory of names lacks parallels with the naturalist theory of the *Cratylus*. Hence it is unlikely that Eunomius's general naturalist theory of names is indebted to the *Cratylus* itself, despite Gregory's charge. In the fourth century, accusing one's theological opponent of indebtedness to philosophical rather than scriptural sources was a fairly common tactic. Thus while Gregory of Nyssa' allegation of Eunomius's use of the *Cratylus* may have been effective as polemic, it is incorrect as a source claim.

A Mesoplatonist theory: Alcinous

As mentioned above, Thomas Kopecek argued that Alcinous's summary of the *Cratylus* in his second-century manual of Platonism was the direct precedent for the Heteroousian theory of names. But a careful analysis of what Alcinous says reveals that the resemblances are superficial, much as was the case between the *Cratylus* itself and the Heteroousians. This section of the *Handbook* has in fact been little studied. John Dillon has remarked that Alcinous's discussion, while derived principally from the *Cratylus* itself, is "overlaid by Stoic theorizing."[24] Despite this Stoicizing, Alcinous's reading of the dialogue is our earliest witness to the Platonist tradition of commentary upon it.

Alcinous introduces his readers to the doctrines of Plato divided into the three classic branches of philosophy, logic, physics, and ethics. Though adopted by the Stoics,[25] this division was actually formulated in the Old Academy by Xenocrates of

[24] John Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), xvi; see also 85–6.

[25] LS 26.

Chalcedon and may go back to Plato himself.[26] Alcinous's discussion of the *Cratylus* forms part of the section on logic, appended to his explanation of syllogisms. He views the subject matter of the dialogue as an inquiry into whether names arise from nature or from convention.[27] He endorses the view that John Dillon claimed was most influential for subsequent Platonist speculations, G. C. Stead's compromise theory, that names fundamentally express the nature of their bearers, though conventionalism has a role to play. He summarizes Plato as follows:

> His view is that the correctness of names is a matter of convention, but not absolutely or as the result of chance, but in such a way that convention arises from the nature of a given thing. Indeed, the correctness of a name is nothing else than a convention which is in accord with the nature of the given thing. For neither is the arbitrary postulation of a name adequate and sufficient for its correctness, nor yet its nature and its first utterance, but rather the combination of both, so that the name of every object is fixed by its proper relationship to the nature of the given thing.[28]

Alcinous attempts to mediate between radical conventionalism wherein names are totally arbitrary and the kind of naturalness seen by the Epicureans as the first stage of the origin

---

[26] A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1.160; Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 98–9.

[27] Alcinous, *Did.* 6.10.

[28] Alcinous, *Did.* 6.10 (160 Whittaker): ἀρέσκει δὲ αὐτῷ, θέσει ὑπάρχειν τὴν ὀρθότητα τῶν ὀνομάτων, οὐ μὴν ἁπλῶς οὐδὲ ὡς ἔτυχεν, ἀλλὰ ὥστε τὴν θέσιν γενέσθαι ἀκόλουθον τῇ τοῦ πράγματος φύσει· μὴ γὰρ ἄλλο τὴν ὀρθότητα εἶναι τοῦ ὀνόματος ἢ τὴν σύμφωνον τῇ φύσει τοῦ πράγματος θέσιν. Μήτε γὰρ τὴν θέσιν τὴν ὁποιάνποτε τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτάρκη εἶναι καὶ ἀποχρῶσαν πρὸς ὀρθότητα, μήτε τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν πρώτην ἐκφώνησιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, ὥστε εἶναι παντὸς ὄνομα κατὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον τῇ τοῦ πράγματος φύσει κείμενον; trans. Dillon 12.

of language wherein humans utter sounds upon receiving impressions of sense-objects similarly to animals.[29] Indeed, giving of names is not a random process, but requires an insightful namegiver: "Naming rightly and wrongly would not come about according to any random arrangement, but according to the natural affinity of the name to the thing; and he would be the best namegiver who indicates through the name the nature of the thing."[30] Thus it is the namegiver who enables names to disclose their natures. This makes names be tools of instruction, as Plato's *Cratylus* had taught:

> For the name is an instrument corresponding to a thing, not attached to it at random, but appropriate to it by nature. It is by means of this that we teach each other things and distinguish them, so that the name is an instrument which teaches about and distinguishes the essence of each thing.[31]

---

[29] The Epicureans rejected a strict conventualist view of language (LS 19B3-4, 19C), but their theory of the origin of language has three stages that actually combine naturalist and conventualist viewpoints. First, when experiencing particular feelings or presented with various impressions, primitive humans uttered sounds in reaction to each of them by a kind of natural instinct, similarly to animals. These sounds constituted primitive words and were used to denote sense-objects and feelings. Next, new coinages were adopted by convention within particular languages to reduce ambiguity and improve concision. Finally, terms for abstract ideas derived from the previous two stages were introduced by intellectuals (LS 19A2-5 [=PC III 7c3], 19B1-2 [=PC III 7c4] and 19B6-7). Hence words are fundamentally natural for the Epicureans, though refined by convention. This refinement was aimed at producing a one-to-one correspondence between words and their meaning. Accordingly, there is a single natural meaning for each word. See Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1.100–1; and Dirk A. Schenkeveld and Jonathan Barnes, "Language," in Keimpe Algra et al., *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 179–80.

[30] Alcinous, *Did.* 6.10 (160 Whittaker): τὸ ὀρθῶς καὶ μὴ ὀρθῶς ὀνομάζειν οὐ κατὰ θέσιν ὁποιανοῦν γένοιτ᾽ ἄν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν φυσικὴν τοῦ ὀνόματος οἰκειότητα πρὸς τὸ πρᾶγμα, καὶ οὗτος ἂν εἴη ὀνοματοθέτης ἄριστος, ὁ σημαίνων δι᾽ ὀνόματος τὴν φύσιν τοῦ πράγματος; trans. Dillon 13.

[31] Alcinous, *Did.* 6.10 (159 Whittaker): Ἔστι γὰρ τὸ ὄνομα ὄργανον πράγματος οὐχ ὃ ἔτυχεν, ἀλλὰ τὸ κατάλληλον τῇ φύσει· καὶ διὰ τούτου διδάσκομεν ἀλλήλους τὰ

Therefore, according to Alcinous, the *Cratylus* teaches that names reveal the οὐσία of their bearers when a namegiver is responsible for them, making them tools of instruction.

Alcinous's naturalist theory wherein names reveal οὐσία may seem to anticipate the Heteroousians. Nonetheless, the full significance of Alcinous's theory only comes to light when it is viewed within the context of his handbook. I mentioned above how the summary of the *Cratylus* is part of his treatment of dialectic. He opens his discussion of the dialogue by saying: "in the *Cratylus* he [sc. Plato] goes thoroughly into the whole topic of etymology."[32] This is a crucial point: Alcinous views the subject of the *Cratylus* to be etymology conceived of as a dialectical methodology. The primary piece of evidence that Dillon provides for Stoic influence upon Alcinous is the use of the "not Platonic, but probably Stoic" term 'etymology'.[33] While the term itself may be lacking in Plato, the methodology is thoroughly Platonist, as we saw in the last section, and was used in the Old Academy, as noted above. Alcinous says that "it is dialectic which has the job of using names rightly. …the dialectician, once the namegiver has laid down the name, would be the one to use it properly and fittingly."[34] In other words, the dialectician knows how to use etymology to discern the natures of things under examination. However, Alcinous qualifies this viewpoint: "Even so, the namegiver would perform his

---

πράγματα καὶ διακρίνομεν αὐτά, ὥστε εἶναι τὸ ὄνομα διδασκαλικόν τι καὶ διακριτικὸν τῆς ἑκάστου οὐσίας ὄργανον; trans. Dillon 13.

[32] Alcinous, *Did.* 6.10 (159 Whittaker): τὸν ἐτυμολογικόν τε τόπον ὅλον ἐν τῷ Κρατύλῳ διεξέρχεται; trans. Dillon 12.

[33] Dillon, *Alcinous*, 85.

[34] Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 6.11 (160 Whittaker): Περὶ τὸ διαλεκτικὸν δὴ καὶ τοῦτο ὑπάρξει τὸ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν ὀρθῶς χρῆσθαι· ὡς γὰρ κερκίδι χρήσαιτ᾽ ἂν ὑφαντικὸς ἀνήρ, εἰδὼς αὐτῆς τὸ προσῆκον ἔργον, τέκτονος αὐτὴν δημιουργήσαντος, οὕτω καὶ ὁ διαλεκτικός, ὀνοματοθέτου θέντος τοὔνομα, χρήσαιτ᾽ ἂν αὐτῷ κατὰ τρόπον καὶ προσφόρως; trans. Dillon 13.

fixing of names best if he did this, as it were, in the presence of the dialectician, who would know the nature of the referents."[35] This accords perfectly with the teaching of the *Cratylus* itself, which suggests that a dialectician and namegiver collaborate in coining names (390cd). Nonetheless, the point is clear: Alcinous is interested in the naturalist theory of names as the theoretical basis for etymological analysis. As was the case for Plato, the naturalness of names and etymology go hand in hand.

Hence it is unlikely that Alcinous has influenced the Heteroousians. Once again, the centrality of etymology for the Platonists finds no analogue in the Heteroousians. The Heteroousian limitation of namegiving to God has little correspondence to the Platonist belief in collaboration between a dialectician and namegiver. The simplicity of the bearers of the names plays no role in the Platonist theory. There is a superficial similarity between Alcinous and the Heteroousians in that names disclose natures, but methodologically they are quite different.

The Neoplatonist interpretation of the Cratylus

Jean Daniélou's classic essay on Eunomius from 1959 is often cited as an investigation of the Neoplatonist sources of Eunomius's theory of language, or of his theology in general, though not always with complete agreement.[36] With the exception of

---

[35] Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 6.11 (160 Whittaker): οὕτω γάρ τοι καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ ὀνοματοθέτης καλῶς ἂν χρήσαιτο τῇ θέσει, εἰ ὡς διαλεκτικοῦ παρόντος ποιοῖτο τὴν θέσιν, τὴν φύσιν τῶν ὑποκειμένων ἐπισταμένου; trans. [slightly modified] Dillon 13.

[36] See Lionel Wickham, "The *Syntagmation* of Aetius the Anomean," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 19 (1968): 558 n. 1; Bernard Sesboüé et al., *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome suivi de Eunome Apologie,* SChr 305 (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 193; R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 AD* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 630 n. 143; Richard Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*

John Rist's denial of Neoplatonist influence upon Eunomius,[37] there has been no sustained critique of Daniélou's thesis. Accordingly, this is the purpose of the present section. And so, unlike in the previous two sections of this part, my denial of Neoplatonist influence upon Eunomius will be conducted by directly engaging the arguments of its principal proponent.

Daniélou's article actually has three parts: (1) an exposition of Eunomius's thought on names as recoverable from the second book Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*, (2) any inquiry into Eunomius's sources for this teaching—it is here that Daniélou's argues that his view of the divine origin of names is Neoplatonist—, and (3) a brief survey of Eunomius's familiarity with the Neoplatonist milieu and his indebtedness to Neoplatonist doctrine. While one may quibble with certain points of interpretation in the first part, it is more or less a straightforward summary of the material. Therefore, I will not engage it. In addition, the third part is tacked on to the second to make the claims advanced therein more plausible. But Daniélou's claim that Eunomius's theology is Neoplatonism in Christian dress takes Gregory of Nyssa's polemics too seriously,[38] and John Rist has pointed out other problems with Daniélou's conclusions.[39] Such a view is furthermore no longer tenable given the work of Kopecek and Vaggione, among others,

---

and the Nicene Revolution (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 239 n. 262; Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 149 n. 50; and John Behr, *The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 274 n. 43.

[37] John Rist, "Basil's Neoplatonism," in Paul J. Fedwick, ed., *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteenth-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium* (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981), 137–220 at 185–8.

[38] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 428: "Le système d'Eunome est en fait un système nèo-platonicien, une explication de la genèse du multiple à partir de l'Un. … Sous un revêtement chrétien, il s'agit d'un système platonicien."

[39] Rist, "Basil's Neoplatonism," 185–8.

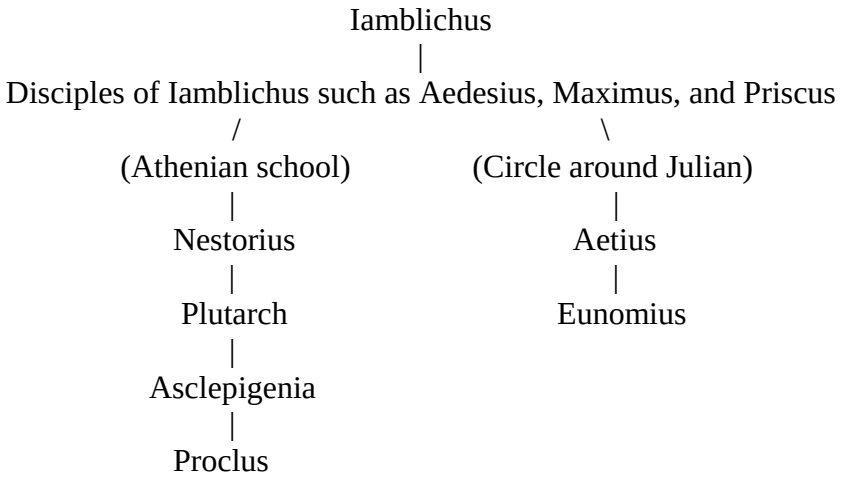
which reveals how deeply embedded the Heteroousians were in the Christian milieu. Therefore, my attention will be focused on the second part, which is the meat of the article.

In the second part, Daniélou argues that Eunomius's view of the divine origin of language reflects Neoplatonist discussions stemming from the era between Iamblichus and Proclus. He sees Eunomius and the Neoplatonists as adherents of a "mystical and supernatural" view of language that arose in the second century and which is also found in Clement and Origen. But Daniélou discounts Clement and Origen as Eunomius's precedents, and sees the influence of the *Chaldaean Oracles* upon Eunomius as the most decisive, even if mediated.[40]

The use of the *Chaldaean Oracles* in post-Porphyrian Neoplatonism is well-known, and turns up in Iamblichus, Julian (the Apostate), Proclus, and many others. Daniélou detects a general correspondence of ideas among Eunomius, Iamblichus, and Julian. But he finds the doctrinal resemblance between Eunomius and Proclus in his commentary on the *Cratylus* striking. Since Eunomius (died ca. 396-7) lived before Proclus (born ca. 410), he estimates that Eunomius is drawing on fourth-century Neoplatonists, disciples of Iamblichus, such as Aedesius, Maximus, and Priscus, whose work presumably also eventually influenced Proclus. On the one hand, Daniélou identifies Nestorius, the father of Plutarch of Athens, as the initiator of the Athenian

[40] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 424: "Mais y a-t-il lieu de supposer aussi et plus directement une influence, directe ou indirecte, des *Oracles Chaldaïques*, en dehors de celle qu'il a pu subir à travers Origène? Nous pensons qu'il en est ainsi. Et que c'est même cette influence qui est la plus importante."

Neoplatonist tradition of using the *Chaldaean Oracles* to which Proclus was indebted.[41] For Plutarch in his turn was, along with Syrianus, one of the principal teachers of Proclus. Hence Daniélou implies that Proclus was influenced by the disciples of Iamblichus through Nestorius. On the other hand, Daniélou identifies the essential link between Eunomius and the disciples of Iamblichus as Aetius, who had connections with Julian, who surrounded himself with disciples of Iamblichus.[42] Therefore, Daniélou's lines of influence have the following form:



But there are several problems with Daniélou's historical reconstruction. In order to explain the parallels between Proclus and Eunomius, Daniélou posited a number of proximate connections between each of them and the disciples of Iamblichus. Yet the chain established in each case has a very weak or indemonstrable link at the most crucial point—the point which is the lynchpin Daniélou's historical reconstruction—namely, the link on the one hand between Nestorius and the disciples of Iamblichus, and on the other hand between Aetius and the same group.

---

[41] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 424. In *Vita Procli* 28 Marinus reports that Proclus learned theurgic practices from Asclepigenia, the daughter of Plutarch, who had taught her the theurgic system he learned from "the great Nestorius."

[42] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 428–9.

First of all, Daniélou's historical claims are hindered by the fact that there is scant evidence for the character of the philosophy taught in Athens between the mid-360s (for which we have Eunapius's record of the intellectual life there) and Plutarch's headship of the Neoplatonist school in Athens in the early fifth century. Iamblichus himself had no connections with Athens during his life. In his twilight years he established himself in Syria, either at Apamea or Daphne (a suburb of Antioch), where he attracted a number of students.[43] Foremost among these were Sopater the Syrian, Aedesius and Eustathius, both of Cappadocia, Theodorus of Asine, and Euphrasius.[44] Aedesius later established a philosophical school in Pergamum.[45] His most prominent students were Maximus of Ephesus, Chrysanthius of Sardis, Priscus, and Eusebius of Myndus.[46] Priscus lived in Athens in the latter part of the fourth century, and may have been there from the 350s.[47] In the late 350s Theodorus of Asine appears to have also been active in Athens, teaching a version of Neoplatonism that was critical of Iamblichus.[48] These two figures are our only evidence for Athenian philosophy in the dark period before Plutarch. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to suppose that forms of Neoplatonism both in favor of and hostile to Iamblichus were available in Athens from the 350s onward in the persons of Priscus and

---

[43] Dillon, "Iamblichus of Chalcis," 869–70.

[44] Eunapius, *VPS* 458.

[45] Eunapius, *VPS* 465.

[46] Eunapius, *VPS* 474. On Aedesius and his disciples, see Robert J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), 63–78.

[47] Rist, "Basil's Neoplatonism," 184.

[48] Julian, *Ep*. 12 B. / *Ep.* 2 W. On Theodorus, see R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), 95; and Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists*, 62.

Theodorus.[49] It is well-established that later on, in the fifth century and beyond, Iamblichaean Neoplatonism came to dominate in Athens, and so it is likely that the roots of this predominance were planted earlier.

Yet there is no evidence that explicitly links Nestorius with Priscus, the more likely candidate as a teacher of the doctrine of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, let alone any evidence for the content of the teaching that may have been conveyed. All we know about the philosophy of Nestorius was that he was interested in theurgy, as mentioned above.[50] The sources for his knowledge of theurgy are not known. Even though Iamblichus and some of his disciples were theurgists, Daniélou's assertion of a connection between them and Nestorius is circumstantial and speculative, being based on the mere presence of Priscus and Nestorius in the same city at the same time. The kind of details that Daniélou would have needed to demonstrate his claim are lacking: the link between Nestorius and the disciples of Iamblichus is ultimately indemonstrable.

Daniélou's linking of Eunomius with the Neoplatonists through Aetius's connection to Julian is similarly problematic. While Aetius's connections with Julian are well-established, the link between Aetius and Julian circle of Neoplatonist disciples of Iamblichus is very weak. We first need to establish who was part of Julian's Neoplatonist circle. In 351 Julian went to Pergamum, where he studied briefly with the aged Aedesius of Cappadocia, then more extensively with his disciples Chrysanthius of Sardis and Eusebius of Myndus, before moving on to Ephesus, where he studied with Maximus, who

---

[49] Rist, "Basil's Neoplatonism," 184.

[50] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 28. Note that there is some debate over whether the hierophant Nestorius who saved Athens from an earthquake in 375 (Zosimus 4.18.2-4) should be identified with Nestorius the father of Plutarch of Athens; see Polymnia Athanassiadi, *Damascius: The Philosophical History* (Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999), 173 n. 149.

converted him to paganism.[51] He spent less than a year (355) studying in Athens, where he met Priscus.[52] The Neoplatonists Maximus and Priscus, along with the physician Oribasius, constituted Julian's inner circle, and they remained intimate with him, either in person or by letter, until his death.

Aetius first had contact with Julian in the early 350s, when he attracted the attention of Caesar Gallus (Julian's brother) in Antioch, and was sent repeatedly to dissuade Julian from his new-found paganism.[53] Upon becoming emperor, in late 361 through early 362 Julian wrote to a number of prominent intellectuals in attempt to win their support and form a circle of advisors.[54] Among those invited to court were Maximus,[55] Aetius,[56] and Basil of Caesarea.[57] Maximus joined Julian in Constantinople and Basil clearly declined. Aetius not only accepted Julian's invitation to visit him, and used the public conveyance to get there, but also received from Julian an estate in Lesbos

---

[51] Eunapius, *VPS* 473-475. On Julian's philosophical education, see Joseph Bidez, *Le vie de l'empereur Julien* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930), 67–72; Robert Browning, *The Emperor Julian* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 55–9 and 64–66; G. W. Bowerstock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 28–9; Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 30–41 and 46–50; and Rowland Smith, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 29–33.

[52] During his residence in Athens, Julian would have met, or at least learned of, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus, who were also studying in Athens in this period.

[53] Philostorgius, *h.e.* 3.27; cf. Sozomen, *h.e.* 3.15.8. For discussion, see Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 106–13; and Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 160–1.

[54] Bowerstock, *Julian the Apostate*, 62f.

[55] Julian, *Ep.* 26 B. / *Ep.* 8 W.

[56] Julian, *Ep.* 46 B. / *Ep.* 15 W.

[57] Julian, *Ep.* 32 B. / *Ep.* 26 W.

near Mytilene.[58] But there is no indication that Aetius became a confidant of Julian and part of his inner circle.[59] Aetius did not travel with Julian as part of his entourage as did Maximus, Priscus, and Oribasius when the emperor left for Antioch in the summer of 362, and then for Persia in March 363. During the reign of Julian, Aetius seems to have wholly pre-occupied with the expansion of Heteroousianism from his base in Constantinople.[60]

There is no doubt that Aetius visited Julian on several occasions in the years 351-355 (when Julian went to Gaul) and at least once in 362. But it is unlikely that these early visits were of such a duration that Aetius could have learned the Neoplatonist doctrine of the *Chaldaean Oracles* from Maximus or Priscus. There is no explicit record of Aetius meeting directly with either of them. Indeed, Aetius was sent to Julian to *dissuade* him from his associations with these philosophers. This makes it all the more implausible that Aetius developed an interest in Neoplatonism from contact with these philosopher-friends of Julian. As emperor, Julian appears to have esteemed Aetius because of his support of Gallus, for whom Aetius had suffered,[61] not because of any shared interest in Neoplatonist philosophy. Therefore, the link the Daniélou posits between Aetius and the disciples of Iamblichus in Julian's circle is very weak, again circumstantial and speculative, merely based on Aetius's occasional visits to Julian.

One more comment can be made on the implausibility of Daniélou's historical reconstruction. It requires an excessive number of intermediate figures to connect both

---

[58] Sozomen, *h.e.* 5.5.9; Philostorgius, *h.e.* 6.7, 6.7b, and 9.4. See also Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 414–6 and Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 272.

[59] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 272.

[60] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 416–7

[61] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 272.

Proclus and Eunomius with Iamblichus. First of all, he need not have posited Aetius as the link between Eunomius and the disciples of Iamblichus in Julian's circle. Eunomius became a disciple of Aetius in the late 340s, and so could have accompanied his teacher upon his visits to Julian in the early 350s. But there is no evidence for this, and Daniélou was right not to suggest it. Yet the problem of excessive levels of mediation remains. Eunomius is connected to Iamblichus through four levels of mediation: Iamblichus → Aedesius → Maximus and/or Priscus → Aetius → Eunomius. Proclus is connected to Iamblichus by even more levels of mediation, six: Iamblichus → Aedesius → Priscus → Nestorius → Plutarch → Asclepigenia → Proclus. It is hard to believe that the detailed parallels between Eunomius and Proclus which Daniélou adduces, such as shared technical terms (discussed below), could have been passed down by means of an oral tradition through so many levels without substantial modification.

Even if Daniélou's historical reconstruction were not so problematic, it still could not be claimed that Eunomius acquired a knowledge of the Neoplatonist doctrine of the *Chaldaean Oracles* through his own education. While we know that Eunomius's education included shorthand (in Cappadocia), basic instruction in literature (in Constantinople), and rhetoric (in Antioch), there is no evidence that he ever studied philosophy, even though he resided in Alexandria for a period.[62] His education in theology seems to have come to him almost exclusively through Aetius, whose own education was at the hands of Christians, aside from a brief period of study with a grammarian in Anazarbus.[63] As far as we know, neither Aetius nor Eunomius ever studied philosophy, let alone visited Athens. Therefore, if my critique of Daniélou's

[62] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 6–14 and 35, especially n. 29.

[63] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 14–24.

historical reconstruction is accepted, it is still unclear how Eunomius would have come to know the teaching of the disciples of Iamblichus.

I turn my attention now to a critique of the doctrinal resemblances between Eunomius and Proclus that Daniélou proposed. As mentioned above, at the core of Daniélou's thesis is the category of "the mystical and supernatural" view of language. He borrows the category from Heymann Steinthal, the late nineteenth-century historian of linguistics, who used it to describe one of three fifth-century Neoplatonist views on the nature of language. Steinthal links the mystical and supernatural position with the view that "Ammonius attribue faussement à Cratyle et à Héraclite" and reports that "elle apparaît vers la fin du second siècle après le Christ."[64] Daniélou asserts: "La conception mystique est celle d'Eunome" and "voit dans les mots des institutions divines, sacrées, immuables."[65] For Daniélou, the mystical and supernatural position amounts to the view that God alone is responsible for language.

Yet there are problems with this category. First of all, the view that Ammonius attributes to Cratylus makes no mention of a divine origin of names:

> Some of those who think that they (sc. names) are by nature say 'by nature' opining that they are products of nature, as Cratylus the Heraclitean thought when he said that a fitting name had been assigned by <the agency of> nature to each thing. … And this is the job of the

[64] Cited by Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 415.

[65] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 416 and 422.

> knowledgeable man, to hunt down the fitting name provided by nature for each thing.[66]

Ammonius has not picked up on Cratylus's comment that "a more than human power gave the first names to things, so that they are necessarily correct" and Socrates' response that the namegiver is therefore "a daimon or a god" (438c1-6). The *Cratylus* does not develop this observation. Nonetheless, it was latent with the Platonic tradition from the beginning. Iamblichus seems to have developed the possibilities of *Cratylus* 438c1-6 when he describes Pythagoras as "he who is said to be wisest of all, having structured human speech and generally having become the discoverer of names, whether god, daemon, or some divine man."[67] Daniélou cited this line as an example of the doctrine of the *Oracles*.[68] But another version of the same story recorded by Diogenes Laertius is directly preceded by the report that Pythagoras's disciples believed him to be Apollo.[69] Hence Iamblichus is not offering a "mystical" view of names inspired by the *Chaldaean Oracles*, but employing ancient traditions about Pythagoras and possibly connecting them with a minor point in the *Cratylus*. Therefore, it is clear that the so-called mystical view

---

[66] Ammonius, *in Int.* (CAG 4.5: 34, 22-25 and 30-31 Busse): τῶν μὲν γὰρ φύσει αὐτὰ εἶναι ἀξιούντων οἱ μὲν οὕτω τὸ φύσει λέγουσιν, ὡς φύσεως αὐτὰ οἰόμενοι εἶναι δημιουργήματα, καθάπερ ἠξίου Κρατύλος ὁ Ἡρακλείτειος ἑκάστῳ τῶν πραγμάτων ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀφωρίσθαι τι λέγων οἰκεῖον ὄνομα. ... καὶ τοῦ ἐπιστήμονος τοῦτο ἔργον εἶναι, τὸ θηρᾶν τὸ ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως κατεσκευασμένον οἰκεῖον ἑκάστῳ ὄνομα; trans. Blank 43.

[67] Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorica* 56 (80 Dillon / Hershbell); trans. Dillon / Hershbell 81.

[68] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 424.

[69] Diogenes Laertius, *VP* 8.11 (LCL 185: 330 Hicks): "Indeed, his bearing is said to have been most dignified, and his disciples held the opinion about him that he was Apollo come down from the far north. There is a story that once, when he was disrobed, his thigh was seen to be of gold; and when he crossed the river Nessus, quite a number of people said they heard it welcome him." Trans. Hicks 331.

predates the second century and that it always remained a possibility among Platonists. Hence the category, at least as defined by Steinthal and used by Daniélou, should be discarded.

This is not to deny that there was a tradition of attributing names to God. The pre-Eunomian examples cited by Daniélou are Origen, the *Chaldaean Oracles*, and Iamblichus.[70] There are two features of these passages: (1) names, when used in their original, sacred languages, are deemed to have efficacious power in rituals and spells, and (2) such names must be kept in their original, "barbarian" language, and not translated in Greek (or any other language), lest they lose their efficacy. The oracle adduced by Daniélou sums this up: "'Never change foreign names,' for names are given by God to each people and have an ineffable power for ritual."[71] The discussions by Origen and Iamblichus make the same point vis-à-vis Hebrew names and Egyptian names, respectively. Both argue against their opponents (Celsus and Porphyry, respectively) that it does in fact matter what names are used for God, that one cannot address God by just any name. The difference between these views and Eunomius is patent: Eunomius does not discuss the efficacy of names for rituals and spells, nor does he advocate calling God by any "barbarian" (i.e. Hebrew) name, but the very Greek ἀγέννητος. Eunomius is clearly not part of this tradition.

---

[70] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 422–4 and 425. See also Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD: A Sourcebook* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 3.220, and John Dillon, "The Magical Power of Names in Origen and later Platonism," in Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel, *Origiana Tertia* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985), 203–16. The relevant passages are: Origen, *Cels.* 1.6, 1.24-25, and 5.45 [=PC III 7d1]; *Homilies on Joshua* 20.1 (apud *Philocalia* 12) and Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* 7.4-5 [partially=PC III 7d3].

[71] PC III 7d2 (=*Chaldaean Oracles*, Fr. 150 Des Places).

But the pivotal element of Daniélou's case for Eunomius's indebtedness to the Neoplatonist view on the divine origin of names is the correspondence between Proclus and Eunomius. He places significant weight on the following passage:

> The assimilative activity of the demiurgic Intellect is two-fold (*Crat*. 389A): there is the one with which the Intellect, looking to the intelligible model, institutes the whole cosmos; and the other with which it assigns (ἐπιφημίζεσθαι) names proper to each object. Timaeus gave a brief exposition of these matters (*Tim*. 36C), but the theurgists and the utterances from the gods themselves teach us more distinctly: "But the holy name even with unresting whirl leapt into the stellar sphere because of the rushing command of the Father,"[72] and another oracle says: "The paternal Intellect sowed symbols in the cosmos, by which it contemplates the intelligible things and is made one with ineffable Beauty."[73] The lawgiver too, as he looks to the whole cosmos, both transmits the best polity and puts the names that resemble real beings.[74]

This passage ascribes names to the demiurgic Intellect, one of the divine beings in the Neoplatonist system. Proclus's teaching here is based on the *Cratylus,* which had called the namegiver a kind of maker (i.e. demiurge). Daniélou makes much of the fact that both Proclus and Eunomius appeal to scriptural authorities (the *Chaldaean Oracles* and

---

[72] *Chaldaean Oracles*, Fr. 87 Des Places.

[73] *Chaldaean Oracles*, Fr. 108 Des Places.

[74] Proclus, *in Crat.* 52, 1-15 (20, 22 – 21, 5 Pasquali); trans. Duvick 29ʾ[=PC III 7d5].

Genesis, respectively) and use the term ἐπιφημίζεσθαι.[75] But these are unconvincing connections. First, appeal to scriptural authorities is hardly unique to Eunomius or Proclus; it is a general characteristic of late-antique writers, whether they be Neoplatonist philosophers or Christian theologians. Second, Proclus's use of the term ἐπιφημίζεσθαι is actually a citation of Plato (*Tim*. 36c4-5).[76] This Platonic passage is one of several that Proclus cites to prove that the Demiurge is the primal namegiver.[77] So Eunomius need not be drawing on the same Neoplatonist source that Proclus did; the term's Platonic pedigree is far more ancient. But the word is not necessarily Platonic at all since it is a very common term. Therefore it is useless for demonstrating a link between Eunomius and Neoplatonists.

In addition, Proclus did not ascribe names solely to God. He taught that there were three orders of names: (1) those given by God, (2) those given by particular souls, and (3) those given by humans:

> Therefore, some names are products of the gods, and have come all the way down to soul. Others are the product of particular souls which are able to fashion them through intellect and knowledge and others are instituted through the intermediary genera. * For certain men who have become involved (προοστυχεῖς) with daemons and angels were taught by them names that are better fit to their objects than those which men generally put. * We must recognize their differences which have been

[75] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 427. For Eunomius's use of ἐπιφημίζεσθαι, see Gregory, *Eun*. 2.44.

[76] Proclus does the same elsewhere: *in Crat*. 63, 7-11 (27 Pasquali). See also 71 (33 Pasquali).

[77] See Proclus, *in Crat*. 51 (19–20 Pasquali).

> given from their creative causes, and refer all names to the one Demiurge, the intellectual God.[78]

Daniélou cites only the portion between the asterisks.[79] On the basis of that sentence he argues that Proclus teaches that names are divinely revealed to human beings through daemons and angels, and considers this similar to Eunomius's idea that God had conversation (ὁμιλία) with human beings. But Proclus does not teach that God conversed with human beings. In the second and third orders of names,

> individual souls, whether acting under inspiration from the gods or now operating by [human] knowledge [introduced names] once they either associated their own intellectual thought with the divine light and were perfected from that source, or entrusted the creation of names to the rational power of speech. For it is thus that artisans, such as geometers, doctors and orators, impose names on the various aspects of their art, the aspects whose properties they thoroughly know.[80]

Either God teaches human beings the name for things by inspiring them, or human beings out of the resources of their own knowledge and expertise formulate names that accord with the natures of the objects named. In contrast, Eunomius attributes all names to God alone. If he is following the same source as Proclus, he has modified it considerably.

Though Daniélou did not suggest that Eunomius's general naturalist theory of names was indebted to the Neoplatonist commentary tradition upon the *Cratylus*, such a

---

[78] See Proclus, *in Crat*. 51, 64-69 (20, 11-18 Pasquali); trans. Duvick 28 [partially= PC III 7d4]. Proclus expresses the same idea in *TP* 1.29 (124, 3-12 Saffrey-Westerink).

[79] Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien," 427.

[80] Proclus, *in Crat.* 71 (34, 2f. Pasquali); trans. Duvick 42 [partially=PC III 7d6].

possibility is precluded by the fact that, in line with the Platonist tradition, Proclus devotes much space in his commentary to the etymological analysis of names. He endorses the formal naturalness of the *Cratylus* when he comments:

> Concerning the names 'Astyanax' and 'Hector', the philosopher who looks to the form and the object of signification describes them as nearly the same, but the grammarians, who are drawn down to the matter and the syllables, would say that they are very dissimilar.[81]

The philosopher, through etymological analysis, knows that both names indicate a king; the form of the names reveal this. In contrast, grammarians cannot penetrate the deeper significance of these names and their similarity in object disclosed, since they do not employ etymology. Before launching into his etymological analyses, Proclus even provides a kind of introduction to etymological studies, setting out certain guidelines to be followed.[82]

And so, Daniélou's thesis that Eunomius's theory of the origin of language is indebted to late fourth-century Athenian Neoplatonism is undermined by several issues. First, the historical links that Daniélou attempts to establish between Eunomius and the disciples of Iamblichus and between Nestorius and the same group, are tenuous. Second, the category of the mystical view of language, as Daniélou following Steinthal has defined it, seems to be historically inaccurate. Third, Eunomius's theory of names has nothing to do with the "mystical" view of barbarian names for God found in the *Chaldaean Oracles*, Iamblichus, and Origen. Fourth, the supposed correspondences between Eunomius and Proclus evaporate upon further inquiry. Appeal to scriptural

---

[81] Proclus, *in Crat.* 80 (37 Pasquali); trans. Duvick 46.

[82] Proclus, *in Crat.* 85-86

authorities and the use of the Platonic term ἐπιφημίζεσθαι are insufficient to demonstrate a shared Neoplatonist tradition. Furthermore, Proclus does not attribute names solely to God as Daniélou claims, but accords a creative role to human beings. Therefore, it seems highly unlikely that Eunomius drew upon the Neoplatonist commentary tradition on the *Cratylus* stemming from Iamblichus when he formulated his theory of the origin of names.

Concluding remarks on Platonist influence on the Heteroousians

In the preceding sections I have argued that Platonism, in whatever form, has not influenced the Heteroousian view of names or of the origin of names. While there is a superficial resemblance between the Platonists and Heteroousians in their shared belief that a name reveals the nature of its bearer, they have little else in common. There are three main differences concerning both names and naming. First, Platonist naturalness is 'formal', which means that names have a form that reveals the nature of their bearers through etymological analysis. Heteroousian naturalness is neither formal nor does it employ etymological analysis. Second, the doctrine of simplicity, which as we have seen is central for the Heteroousian theory of names, is not a factor in Platonist discussions of names. Third, while the Platonists and Heteroousians agree that there is a namegiver who insures the natural connection between name and thing, they differ over who the namegiver is: the former, a wise or even inspired human being, or God and wise human beings, and the latter, only God himself. Below I will suggest another more likely source for Eunomius's theory of the origin of names. But all in all, it seems that Platonist

naturalist theories cannot be a source for the Heteroousians, either in their theory of names or theory of the origin of names.

III. Mediated Platonism: Philo and Eusebius

Philo of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea are the two of the most significant appropriators of the Platonist naturalist theory of names. Not philosophers per se, they adopted this theory—explicitly in Eusebius's case—for various non-philosophical projects. In contrast to the Mesoplatonist and Neoplatonists discussed in the previous part, both Philo and Eusebius would seem to be far more likely candidates as sources for the Heteroousians, given the esteem accorded to both by fourth-century theologians.[83] Yet only Eusebius has been suggested as a possible source for Eunomius. And so in this part I explore in detail the possibility of Philonic or Eusebian influence upon the Heteroousians. In fact, there are striking points of contact between Philo and the Heteroousians on the one hand, and Eusebius and the Heteroousians on the other hand. Nonetheless, I argue that these points of connection are insufficient for positing either Philo or Eusebius as the source for the Heteroousian theory of names in its initial formulation. Yet I suggest that Eunomius's later theory of the origin of names is likely an adaptation of a similar theory advanced by Philo.

Philo and the exegesis of Hebrew names

[83] On the use of Philo by fourth-century Christian theologians, see David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), especially pp. 184–271.

John Dillon points to Philo as a representative of the contemporary Platonist compromise theory that, though names are given to things by a namegiver, they reflect the nature of their bearers.[84] Indeed, it is likely that Philo directly engaged the *Cratylus*.[85] Surprisingly, no one to my knowledge has suggested Philo as a source for the Heteroousian naturalist theory, even though Gregory of Nyssa himself vaguely accused Eunomius of borrowing terminology from Philo.[86] Hence this section seeks to determine the likelihood and character, if any, of Eunomius's borrowing from the Alexandrian. I argue that Eunomius's initial theory of names is not indebted to Philo, but that Philo's complex theory of the origin of names is the most likely source for Eunomius's later theory of the origin of names.

It must be noted at the outset that Philo's naturalist view of names differs in an significant way from previous Platonist theories: it is focused upon the Hebrew scriptures.[87] The language of scripture represents a rarified and paradigmatic use of language. Philo writes:

> Every other member of the human race gives names to things that are different from the things themselves, such that what they are is one thing and the names we give them another. But with Moses the names given

---

[84] Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 181.

[85] John Dillon, "Philo Judaeus and the *Cratylus*," *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 3 (1978): 37–42; David Winston, "Aspects of Philo's Linguistic Theory," in David T. Runia, ed., *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism. Volume III* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 109–25.

[86] Gregory, *Eun*. 3.5.24; see also *Eun.* 3.7.8. For discussion, see. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 244–49. Runia opines that Gregory's accusation merits further study (p. 249). Note that Gregory never linked Eunomius's theory of names with Philo's.

[87] Lester L. Grabbe, *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation: The Hebrew Names in Philo* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 19–23, and Mortley, *From Word to Silence,* 1.88–9 and 103–7.

> provide the clearest possible evidence for the things themselves, such that the thing itself is at once necessarily its name and in no way different from the name given it.[88]

According to Philo, then, the names used in scripture are the best at disclosing the nature of their bearers. Such names when given to things "indicate the nature of the things."[89] This is a consequence of the pre-eminent knowledge of the namegiver: "Because his knowledge of things was vastly superior, Moses was accustomed to use names as accurately and clearly as possible."[90] But Philo's naturalist theory of names is not limited to the Hebrew scriptures; he merely emphasizes the "absolute precision of Mosaic name-making" to communicate that scriptural names convey information about their bearers supremely better than others.[91]

Philo identifies Adam as the extra-scriptural namegiver on the basis of Genesis 2:19-20:

> Since the rational nature in his soul was still pure, and no debility or sickness or disturbance had entered into it, Adam received uncorrupted impressions of bodies and things. This enabled him to construct accurate

---

[88] Philo, *Cher*. 56 (PO I: 183, 25 – 184, 4 Cohn): ὁ μὲν ἄλλος ἅπας ἀνθρώπων ὅμιλος ὀνόματα τίθεται πράγμασι διαφέροντα τῶν πραγμάτων, ὥσθ᾽ ἕτερα μὲν εἶναι τὰ τυγχάνοντα, ἑτέρας δὲ κλήσεις τὰς ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς· παρὰ Μωυσεῖ δὲ αἱ τῶν ὀνομάτων θέσεις ἐνάργειαι πραγμάτων εἰσὶν ἐμφαντικώταται, ὡς αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐξ ἀνάγκης εὐθὺς εἶναι τοὔνομα καὶ <τοὔνομα καὶ> καθ᾽ οὗ τίθεται διαφέρειν μηδέν. See also *Agr*. 1-2.

[89] *QG* 2.77.

[90] *Agr*. 2 (PO II: 96, 7-8 Wendland): Μωυσῆς δὲ κατὰ πολλὴν περιουσίαν τῆς ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐπιστήμης ὀνόμασιν εὐθυβολωτάτοις καὶ ἐμφαντικωτάτοις εἴωθε χρῆσθαι.

[91] Winston, "Aspects of Philo's Linguistic Theory," 123–5.

> names for them. He was so good at discerning what their natures revealed that he gave them names as soon as he perceived them.[92]

Similarly to Moses, Adam had unparalleled knowledge, but in this case by virtue of his prelapsarian innocence. Philo also describes Adam as the viceroy of God, to whom, as the specially endowed first created man, God delegated his own namegiving.[93] God stirred up Adam "to coin names spontaneously which were neither unsuitable nor inappropriate, but which very clearly manifested the distinctive features of the various objects."[94] Adam gave names not only to the animals, but to everything; the scripture only records his naming of the animals because they are the most excellent class.[95] And so, Adam is responsible for all names and insures that they correspond to the nature of their referents.

In his identification of Adam as the namegiver, Philo betrays some awareness of the *Cratylus* when he discusses who the namegiver is:

> The Lawgiver attributes the giving of names to the first-created man. Now those among the Greeks who philosophize claim that there were primeval sages who gave the names to things. But Moses has the better account for two reasons. First, he attributes the giving of names, not to some men from

---

[92] *Opif*. 150 (PO I: 52, 15-21 Cohn): ἀκράτου γὰρ ἔτι τῆς λογικῆς φύσεως ὑπαρχούσης ἐν ψυχῇ καὶ μηδενὸς ἀρρωστήματος ἢ νοσήματος ἢ πάθους παρεισεληλυθότος, τὰς φαντασίας τῶν σωμάτων καὶ πραγμάτων ἀκραιφνεστάτας λαμβάνων εὐθυβόλους ἐποιεῖτο τὰς κλήσεις, εὖ μάλα στοχαζόμενος τῶν δηλουμένων, ὡς ἅμα λεχθῆναί τε καὶ νοηθῆναι τὰς φύσεις αὐτῶν. οὕτως μὲν ἐν ἅπασι τοῖς καλοῖς διέφερεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ πέρας φθάνων τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης εὐδαιμονίας. See also *QG* 1.20-21; *Mut.* 64.

[93] *Opif*. 148.

[94] *Opif*. 149 (PO I: 52, 13-15 Cohn): ἵν᾽ ἀπαυτοματίσῃ τὰς θέσεις μήτ᾽ ἀνοικείους μήτ᾽ ἀναρμόστους ἀλλ᾽ ἐμφαινούσας εὖ μάλα τὰς τῶν ὑποκειμένων ἰδιότητας.

[95] *QG* 1.22.

> earlier times but to the first-created man. Hence just as he was formed as the beginning of creation for all others, so too he is considered the beginning of language—for without names there is no language. Second, if many people were to give names, they would be different and unconnected since different people give names differently. But when one person gives names, the name given is guaranteed to be appropriate for the thing named and the same name is a symbol for everyone of thing referred to or its meaning.[96]

Here Philo does not allude to Adam's ability to grasp and express the nature of things due to his prelapsarian perfection. Rather, he makes the common-sense claim that the first man had to coin names and thus devise language if his progeny was to communicate. Of course the Greeks had no notion of a first-created man so Philo's first argument against the Greeks is beside the point. His second reason, however, is even less satisfying. Philo claims that a plurality of namegivers would result in different names for the same thing, whereas a single namegiver (1) insures the appropriateness of names with respect to what they name and (2) provides universal symbols for things. While the second claim is reasonable, the first is problematic. If there is a single namegiver, it makes sense that he provides single token for each thing. But Philo does not explain why a single namegiver necessitates that names be natural. Rather, as Philo said elsewhere, it must be due to the

---

[96] *Leg*. 2.14-15 (PO I: 93, 20 – 94, 1 Cohn): παρόσον τὴν θέσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων προσῆψε τῷ πρώτῳ γενομένῳ ὁ νομοθέτης. καὶ γὰρ οἱ παρ᾽ Ἕλλησι φιλοσοφοῦντες εἶπον εἶναι σοφοὺς τοὺς πρώτους τοῖς πράγμασι τὰ ὀνόματα θέντας· Μωυσῆς δὲ ἄμεινον, ὅτι πρῶτον μὲν οὔ τισι τῶν πρότερον, ἀλλὰ τῷ πρώτῳ γενομένῳ, ἵνα ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ἀρχὴ τοῖς ἄλλοις γενέσεως ἐπλάσθη, οὕτως καὶ αὐτὸς ἀρχὴ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι νομισθῇ—μὴ γὰρ ὄντων ὀνομάτων, οὐδ᾽ ἂν διάλεκτος ἦν—, ἔπειτα ὅτι πολλῶν μὲν τιθέντων ὀνόματα διάφωνα καὶ ἄμικτα ἔμελλεν ἔσεσθαι, ἄλλων ἄλλως τιθέντων, ἑνὸς δὲ ὤφειλεν ἡ θέσις ἐφαρμόττειν τῷ πράγματι, καὶ τοῦτ᾽ εἶναι σύμβολον ἅπασι τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦ τυγχάνοντος ἢ τοῦ σημαινομένου.

specific character of the namegiver that insures the naturalness of names. Otherwise a single namegiver may be either naturalist or conventional. Nonetheless, it is clear enough that Philo endorses the naturalist view of names and roots this in his identification of the namegiver generally as Adam or in the special case of scripture as Moses.

Even though God delegated namegiving to Adam, Philo states that in some cases God named things directly. God, whose omniscience need not be demonstrated as for Adam and Moses, is responsible for names of the realities whose creation is described in Genesis 1, indicating that these names have a special significance. Philo explains how in Genesis 1:3-10 Moses recounted that God made the day, the firmament, the dry land, and the waters, and called them by certain names.[97] Admittedly, God's direct namegiving is not a large feature of Philo's theory of the origin of names, being rather the exception to the rule that Adam named everything.[98] Nonetheless, this feature of Philo's theory of the origin of names is of great importance. The Platonist tradition is consistent in viewing the namegiver as the guarantor of a name's ability to express the nature of its bearer. Others before Philo made the transition from positing multiple namegivers to a single one.[99] But Philo is the first to assign a direct role to God in namegiving based on the cosmogony in Genesis.

I suggest that Eunomius's recontextualization of his earlier theory of names within a theory of the origin of names represents an adaptation of Philo. For Eunomius appealed to the exact same passages in Genesis 1 when asserting that God is both responsible for all names and insures the natural correspondence between name and

---

[97] See especially *Opif*. 15, 35, 37, and 39.

[98] Winston, "Aspects of Philo's Linguistic Theory," 117.

[99] Winston, "Aspects of Philo's Linguistic Theory," 112.

object. Eunomius seems to have zeroed in on this feature of Philo's theory of the origin of names and made it central to his own theory. Eunomius's explicit denial that Adam was a namegiver seems to be a rebuttal of Philo's view of Adam's primal namegiving. Eunomius was so opposed to human beings having any role in naming God that he removed them, even Adam, from all namegiving in direct contradiction to Philo. But since Eunomius eliminated Adam's role as namegiver, he had to devise a way for humans to learn language other than by the first man and chief namegiver teaching it to his progeny. His theory that God conversed with the first humans and taught them language seems to be this alternative way. Therefore, it seems likely that the theory of the origin of names that Eunomius set forth in his *Apologia apologiae* has its origins in Philo, not in a Neoplatonist commentary tradition upon the *Cratylus* that he purportedly learned from the disciples of Iamblichus via Aetius. Not only is the precise argumentation—both scriptural and otherwise—that Eunomius used for the divine origin of names paralleled in Philo, but Eunomius also seems to account for his modifications of Philo.

Even though Eunomius borrowed from Philo's theory of the origin of names, his initial theory of names was not Philonic in inspiration. Philo's naturalist view of names is connected with his use of the etymology of Hebrew names as an exegetical method. Indeed, Philo's etymological analysis must be based on his naturalist view, even if he never explicitly links the two.[100] However, we cannot posit the *Cratylus* as the only source of Philo's etymologizing. Etymology was used as an exegetical method by Greek philologists, such as in the interpretation of Homer. Philo undoubtedly owes something to this philological tradition. Furthermore, the use of etymology is found even in the

[100] Winston, "Aspects of Philo's Linguistic Theory," 109–25.

Hebrew scriptures themselves (e.g. Gen 11:9) and there were other Jewish precedents for it before Philo. Nonetheless, he represents a watershed use of etymology as an exegetical method.[101]

The tradition of using etymological analysis for the exegesis of Hebrew names that first developed in Hellenistic Judaism was later adopted by Christians.[102] It is likely that practitioners of the method had recourse to some sort of "onomastical" list of standard etymologies of Hebrew names; fragments of such lists are extant.[103] Jerome's *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* is the best preserved onomasticon, listing the etymologies of Hebrew and Aramaic place and personal names.[104] The Philonic tradition of etymological exegesis was mediated to Christians chiefly through Origen, though Christians were not wholly indebted to this tradition, since they drew upon other streams of this sort of exegesis.[105]

Though etymological exegesis was usually practiced without a statement of its theoretical foundations, it indicates an acceptance of the naturalness of names, or at least an operative assumption. For example, the name 'Israel' was interpreted as meaning "mind" or "mind that sees God" or "man that sees God" by such authors as Philo, Origen,

---

[101] See Grabbe, *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation*, 49–87. Inscrutably Grabbe fails to consider the *Cratylus* and other philosophical sources.

[102] The classic study is F. Wutz, *Onomastica sacra* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1914).

[103] Grabbe, *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation*, 102–9.

[104] Significantly, Jerome thought he was translating Origen's expansion of a work by Philo.

[105] R. P. C. Hanson, "Interpretations of Hebrew Names in Origen," *Vigiliae Christianae* 10 (1956): 103–23.

Eusebius, and Didymus.[106] Origen is one of the few writers who made at least an oblique connection between etymology and the naturalist theory. In the context of discussing the meaning of Hebrew names for God, Origen notes the Aristotelian, Stoic, and Epicurean theories of names and specifically rejects Aristotle's—the conventualist viewpoint—implicitly signaling his acceptance of the naturalist theories held by the Stoics and Epicureans.[107] With the exception of Eusebius of Caesarea (as we will shall discuss shortly), Christian exegetes did not connect etymological analysis with Platonist etymologizing nor did they even acknowledge that it was rooted in a naturalist view of names. Nonetheless their practice of etymology betrays an assumed naturalist view of names.

Christian etymological analysis appears to be a hybrid of Greek and Jewish practices. Jewish writers did not subject the names of God to etymological analysis: of the 166 names etymologized by Philo, none is a name for God.[108] Other Jewish sources are similarly characterized.[109] In contrast, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome subjected the Hebrew names for God to etymological analysis: El, Eloi, Jesus, Sabaoth, and so forth. It was probably the Greek habit of etymological analysis of the names for the gods—whether on the part of Platonists or Stoics—that led Christians, at least in part, to consider the names for God similarly. The name 'unbegotten' therefore seems like it

---

[106] Philo, *Congr*. 51, *Fug*. 208, *Abr*. 57, *Praem*. 44, and *Legat*. 4; Origen, *Princ*. 4.3.8 and *Comm. Jo*. 2.189; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.6.32, *Dem. ev.* 7.2.36, and *Comm. Isa.* 2.45; Didymus, *Comm. Zach.* 2.46 and *Spir*. 201. For further discussion, see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 37–40.

[107] *Cels*. 1.24 and 5.45. See also *Mart.* 46. Aristotle rejected the notion of natural names and defined a name as a sound whose meaning is determined by convention; see *De interpretatione* 2 (16a19-29).

[108] Grabbe, *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation*, 124–222.

[109] Grabbe, *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation*, 90–100.

would have been tailor-made for such analysis. But Eunomius did not subject this name to etymological analysis, nor is there any evidence that Eunomius practiced this methodology elsewhere. Thus he stands outside of this Christian tradition of etymological exegesis found in his contemporaries that was heavily indebted to Origen and Philo. His position vis-à-vis etymology indicates his distance from the tradition of naturalness that etymological analysis assumed.

If the Platonist naturalist tradition had any influence on Eunomius, I suggest that it was only aspects of Philo's mediated Mesoplatonist viewpoint—though not without substantial modification. The Philonic influence on Eunomius is best seen in his theory of the origin of names. It is likely that Eunomius drew upon Philo's account of God's naming in Genesis 1, but alters his source considerably when he ignores Philo's position that Moses and especially Adam played a role in namegiving because of their unique character and knowledge. In addition, Eunomius's identification of name and object has precedent in Philo: "the thing itself is at once necessarily its name and in no way different from the name given it" (cited above)—this is a very strong parallel between Philo and Eunomius. But other facts typical of Platonist and Philonic naturalness show the gulf between them. Etymological analysis was central for Philo, but Eunomius does not engage in it at all. Divine simplicity has no function in Philo's naturalist view as it did for Eunomius. Therefore, it seems that Eunomius's earlier theory of names owes nothing to Philo, but that he drew upon the Alexandrian later on when he recontextualized his original theory of names by grounding it in a theory of the divine origin of names.

Eusebius of Caesarea and Platonist indebtedness to Moses

Like his intellectual predecessors Philo and Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea also employed etymological analysis, probably using a handbook like them but also displaying some originality.[110] Though Eusebius is part of an etymological-exegetical tradition that goes back at least Philo, he is unique is connecting the tradition with Platonist etymologizing. For in *Praeparatio evangelica* 11.6 he offers the most extensive Christian reflection on names by engaging the *Cratylus*. As mentioned above, Michel Barnes suggested this text as the source of Eunomius's theory of names. Since this chapter of Eusebius has received little attention in scholarship, I will offer a detailed analysis of it in order to evaluate this possibility.

Eusebius appears to have been familiar with the Platonist view of the *Cratylus*, though his interpretation differs slightly. In this section, I show that (1) Eusebius adopts the typical Platonist acknowledgement that convention plays a role in the naturalness of names, in the form of a prudent namegiver; (2) he rejects the Platonic view that the proper forms of names can be constructed through phonetic naturalness; and (3) that his view of the nature revealed by names is much the same as that of the *Cratylus*. As a result of Eusebius's mainstream Platonist interpretation of the *Cratylus*, I argue that it is highly unlikely that Eunomius has borrowed from Eusebius.

In line with typical apologetics, Eusebius broaches the subject of names as part of a wider argument about Greek indebtedness to the Hebrews (understood as Christianity *in nuce*).[111] More specifically, he brings up the correctness of scriptural names to prove the

---

[110] See Michael J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 71–4.

[111] See G. R. Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), especially Ch. 4.

accurate reasoning of the author of the Hebrew scriptures, believed to be Moses.[112] He begins by outlining the general theory of names as he understands its:

> While Moses sometimes assigned the names for all things around him and sometimes attributed to God the decision for the changing of pious men's names, he taught that names are given to things by nature and not by convention.[113]

All names correspond to the nature of their bearers, whether Moses or God is the ultimate source of a name. Eusebius sees Moses as responsible for proper names in scripture like 'Adam' and 'Enoch', but attributes the changing of names, like 'Abram' to 'Abraham', to God alone. In any event, Eusebius advocates the naturalist view of names.

Eusebius's next aim is to demonstrate that Moses is the source for Greek ideas on namegiving, such as those of Plato. He takes his cue from Plato himself, who spoke of "barbarians" from whom the Greeks learned about naming. Eusebius identifies these barbarians as the Hebrews, citing *Cratylus* 383a, 390a, 390de, and 409de.[114] All these citations stem from dialogue between Socrates and Hermogenes and thus deal with arguments for the naturalist view of names over against conventionalism. Two points need emphasizing. First, Eusebius presents these four citations as nothing other than the opinions of Plato himself, betraying much as Alcinous had done that the Platonic dialogues contained the doctrine of Plato. In the fifth century, Proclus, perhaps

---

[112] *Praep. ev.* 11.5.9.

[113] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.1, 3-5 (GCS 43/2: 13 Mras / des Places): καὶ τοτὲ μὲν φυσικώτατα τῶν παρ᾽ αὐτῷ πάντων τὰς ἐπωνυμίας διατεταγμένου, τοτὲ δὲ τῷ θεῷ τὴν κρίσιν τῆς τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἀνδρῶν μετωνυμίας ἀναθέντος φύσει τε ἀλλ᾽ οὐ θέσει τὰ ὀνόματα κατὰ τῶν πραγμάτων κεῖσθαι πεπαιδευκότος.

[114] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.2-7.

expressing an older Platonic opinion, maintains that in the *Cratylus*, Plato presented his own views in the person of Cratylus.[115] So Eusebius appears to be in line with the standard Platonic tradition.[116]

Second, besides demonstrating Plato's appeal to barbarians (i.e. the Hebrews), these four citations summarize the main points of the naturalist view. Eusebius cites Hermogenes's report of Cratylus's naturalist view from the third line of the dialogue: names are not agreed upon by men but there is a "natural correctness of names" (ὀρθότητά τινα τῶν ὀνομάτων πεφυκέναι; 383a). The remainder of his citations are taken from the early part of the dialogue that discusses names as tools of instruction (388c-390e): the form of each name suits (προσῆκον) its bearer, regardless of the syllables used, whether Greek or barbarian (390a); a name has to be rightly given since things have their names by nature (φύσει τὰ ὀνόματα εἶναι τοῖς πράγμασι; 390d); and only the man who can discern the natural names should impose them (390de).[117] This is the extent of Eusebius's presentation of the general theory. For Eusebius the fittingness of names and their status as keys is due to their correspondence with the nature of their bearers and their ability to disclose that nature. He thus endorses the formal naturalness as outlined in the *Cratylus*, though he does not cite the passage of the *Cratylus* (430a-431e) that John Dillon claimed to be most influential.

---

[115] Proclus, *in Crat.* 10.

[116] Holger Strutwolf, *Die Trinitätstheologie und Christologie des Euseb von Caesarea* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 101.

[117] *Praep. ev.* xi.6.2-5.

Eusebius next turns to the question of the namegiver. He explicitly identifies Moses as both the namegiver and dialectician mentioned by Plato.[118] To prove this, he cites Genesis 2:19 (Adam's naming of the animals), explaining that the passage shows that when Adam gave designations to the animals, he did so in accordance with their nature (κατὰ φύσιν τεθεῖσθαι τὰς προσηγορίας). There are two points to be noted. First, like Philo, Eusebius identifies both Adam and Moses as namegivers. But Eusebius is not clear whether Moses is the namegiver for the scriptures and Adam for all other names generally. Recall earlier that he even allowed that some names—specifically, changes in names—were due to God alone. Therefore, the identity of the namegiver in Eusebius's account is ambiguous. Nonetheless, the central role of the namegiver is clear, regardless of the uncertainty about his identity.

Second, Eusebius explains that each name, before it is given, is contained in and pre-exists in the nature and that the namegiver is inspired by a superior power—presumably, God—to give the name that the nature contains.[119] In namegiving, then, the name is as it were elicited from the nature that contains it. Namegiving is thus conceived of as an inspired activity.[120] It is here that we find an original contribution of Eusebius, at least in light of the previous Platonist tradition. According to Plato (and Alcinous), the dialectician and namegiver collaborate in determining the natural name for things (390c-e).[121] As for Philo, he at least implied that the namegiving was an inspired activity when he said that God stirred up Adam to coin names. But here it is Adam's unparalleled

---

[118] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.8 and 11.6.41.

[119] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.8-9.

[120] Strutwolf, *Die Trinitätstheologie und Christologie*, 103–4.

[121] Eusebius recognizes this: *Praep. ev.* 11.6.41.

intelligence that enables him to pick the correct name for each thing. In contrast, according to Eusebius the namegiver is inspired because he has the extraordinary capacity to discern names that already pre-exist in natures. He does not coin the name as Philo's Adam did, but identifies it. Nonetheless, the resultant name is the same: a thing's name reflects, or embodies, its inherent nature, whatever the process by which it is given.

It is clear that Eusebius has understood Plato's theory of formal naturalness because he shows that Hebrew names are subject to etymological analysis just as Greek names are.[122] As was the case in the *Cratylus*, the "nature" revealed by this sort of analysis is, in the most general terms, some fact about the bearer. For example, he notes that 'adam' in Hebrew means 'earth', and so when this term was used as a name, it indicated that Adam was made of earth.[123] The Hebrew names for God 'El' and 'Elohim' mean 'strength' and 'power' and so reveal God's strength and power by which he is conceived of as Almighty.[124] Abel means 'sorrow' because he caused his parents much suffering; 'Cain' means 'jealousy' indicating his jealousy of Abel.[125] The tetragrammaton is applied to the supreme power of God.[126] The name 'I Am Who Am' (Ex 3:14) reveals that God is the sole absolute being.[127] Hence, names do not reveal essence, that is, they do not provide a definition of substance, but identify some distinctive property of the bearer of the name.

---

[122] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.10-40.

[123] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.10-12.

[124] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.20, contrasting Plato's view of *theoi* in Crat. 397d.

[125] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.23-24.

[126] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.36.

[127] *Praep. ev.* 11.9.1-2.

Though Eusebius fully grasped and adroitly applied the etymological analysis of the *Cratylus*, he has a muddled understanding of phonetic naturalness. His claim that the Greeks could not state the etymologies of their letters betrays a lack of understanding of how letters contribute to phonetic naturalness. He treats letters as words, not as sounds. His assertion that Plato could not explain the meaning of the letters is simply inaccurate, unless he means that Plato could not explain all of them, not the subset that he did.[128] When Eusebius comments on the meaning of the Hebrew letters like Aleph, Beth, and Gimel, these letters have a basic meaning like other names but are not derived through etymology. Nonetheless, the letters themselves do not represent in sounds the properties that correspond to nature of the bearer as is the case in phonetic naturalness. Hence Eusebius seems to misunderstand Plato's notion of phonetic naturalness, viewing the Hebrew letters as meaningful in themselves, but not providing a reason for their meaning.[129] And so, Eusebius appears to view etymological naturalness as the single way of expressing formal naturalness.

Though Eusebius's use of the *Cratylus* demonstrates that he viewed this Platonist dialogue much as the Platonists themselves did, his interpretation differs in its rejection—or misunderstanding—of phonetic naturalness. Nonetheless, he fundamentally agrees with formal naturalness of the Platonists and shows that he could engage in etymological analysis as well as any of them.

There are two points of contact between Eusebius and the Heteroousians (besides the superficial link between them due to a shared naturalist view) that merit consideration. First, Eusebius claimed that each name, before it is given, is contained in

[128] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.33-34.

[129] *Praep. ev.* 11.6.34-36.

and pre-exists in the nature. This is reminiscent of what I called Aetius's notion of God's intrinsic name, which has parallels in Eunomius. But for Eusebius this is a general feature of the naturalness of names, whereas for the Heteroousians it is a special feature of God's name. Hence it seems unlikely that the Heteroousians have adopted this idea from Eusebius. Second, Eusebius averred that the namegiver is inspired by a superior power to give the name that the nature contains. This too bears a slight resemblance to Eunomius's theory of the divine origin of names. But Eunomius's theory excluded humans from all namegiving; God did not delegate naming to humans in any way. Therefore, it does not seem as if Eunomius has followed Eusebius in viewing naming as an inspired activity. All in all, these reasons, coupled with Eusebius's emphasis on formal naturalness and etymological analysis, makes it unlikely that Eusebius has influenced Eunomius in any significant way in the development of either his initial theory of names or his later theory of the origin of names.

Conclusion

The naturalist view of names set out in the *Cratylus* and adopted by subsequent Mesoplatonist and Neoplatonist interpreters of the dialogue such as Alcinous and Proclus is characterized by two main features: (1) formal naturalness, and (2) etymological analysis. In the Heteroousians, we find no trace of either. This fact alone indicates the unlikelihood of the Heteroousians being influenced by a Platonist naturalist view of any form in their initial theory of names. Such is the case for Philo and Eusebius as well. Even though the possibility that either was a source for the Heteroousians is attractive, given their stature in the fourth century, their emphasis on formal naturalness and

etymological analysis in their understanding of the naturalness of names indicates that the Heteroousians could not have drawn upon them in their initial theory of names. Furthermore, in the theories of names in all of these figures, there is no trace of grounding a naturalist theory of names in divine simplicity and of the synonymy of all names said of simple beings. These, as I have argued, are the central elements of the Heteroousian theory of names. And so, the differences between the Heteroousian and Platonist theories of names are so great that positing any sort of influence of the latter upon the former seems untenable.

But the same situation does not obtain with regard to theories of the origin of names. Positing one or more namegivers as the guarantor of names having a natural correspondence to the things that bear them is a feature of both Platonist and Heteroousian theories. Nonetheless, Daniélou's well-known claims for Neoplatonist influence upon the Heteroousian theory of the divine origin of names fails to convince upon further scrutiny. I have shown how his historical reconstruction of the links by which both Eunomius and Proclus shared a common source—the disciples of Iamblichus—is at best based upon circumstantial evidence. The doctrinal connections he identified between Eunomius and Proclus evaporate once one realizes the Proclus did not attribute names to God exclusively. I have discussed how positing a divine origin for names was suggested in the *Cratylus* itself and remained latent in the Platonist tradition, becoming explicit—but not exclusive—in such authors as Philo, Origen, and Iamblichus.

It is somewhat surprising that Philo had not been proposed as a source for the Heteroousians. While I have already stated that the Heteroousians did not draw upon Philo in their initial theory of names, I think it quite likely that Eunomius borrowed from

Philo when recontextualizing his earlier theory of names within a theory of the origin of names. In his interpretation of the cosmogony of Genesis, Philo identified God as one of the namegivers, along with Adam and Moses. I discussed how Eunomius not only argued that God was the sole namegiver based upon the same scriptural passage but also seems to have justified his divergences from Philo's theory. The possibility of Eunomius's use of Philo has an immediate plausibility because of the Alexandrian thinker's popularity among fourth-century Christian theologians, and does not require the speculative historical reconstruction that supported Daniélou's source-claims for Eunomius's theory of the divine origin of names. When this is coupled with the strong resemblances between Philo and Eunomius, discussed above, in terms of both scriptural argument and doctrine, one must reject Daniélou's thesis of Neoplatonist influence upon Eunomius and accept that Eunomius availed himself of a source that many of his contemporaries used as well. And so, Eunomius emerges from this analysis, not as a Neoplatonist in Christian dress, but as one of several fourth-century theologians borrowing from Philo Judaeus.

This chapter began with a survey of the quest for the philosophical sources of Eunomius's theory of names. Gregory of Nyssa stands at the head of this list of inquirers. But even before Gregory, Basil had accused Eunomius of borrowing from pagan philosophers, though not specifically with respect to his theory of names.[130] In the rhetoric of fourth-century polemics, divergence from what was considered orthodoxy was ascribed either to a "Jewish" understanding of scripture or to the use of "external"—that is, Greek or philosophical—sources, whereas the doctrine of those deemed orthodox was

[130] *Eun.* 1.5 and 1.9.

nothing other than a mere restatement of scriptural teaching based on the interpretation of the orthodox fathers.[131] The situation was of course far more complex.

Yet too often source-claims have been made, even in modern scholarship, in order to prove either the unassailable orthodoxy of one writer or the undeniable heresy of another. Scholars influenced by the Harnackian opposition of Christianity and Hellenism are particularly susceptible to using source-claims in this manner, though rarely in such an intentional manner. Aetius and Eunomius have been particularly susceptible to such interpretations of their theology. Based on source-claims of Neoplatonist metaphysics, a methodology of Aristotelian dialectic, and suchlike, scholars have depicted them as philosophical rationalists, logicians, "technologues," and so forth, rather than as Christian theologians.[132] If one were to believe these portrayals, it is hard to account for many successes of Aetius and Eunomius and their appeal to their Christian followers.

Not only do I believe that such characterizations are unfair, being reprises of ancient polemics, but as caricatures they are also impediments to an accurate understanding of the theological project of the Heteroousians. Maurice Wiles once balked against such derogatory representations and tried to sketch out their deeply-felt religious and soteriological concerns.[133] My denials of Platonist source-claims for the

---

[131] A good example of this is Basil's *Hom.* 24. Here he depicts Sabellians as Jews and Heteroousians as pagan Greeks. Basil is one of the first theologians to appeal to patristic authorities to validate his claims; see the florilegium appended to his *Spir.*

[132] Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God,* 630–6, provides a nice survey, though without being immune from polemical characterizations.

[133] Maurice Wiles, "Eunomius: Hair-Splitting Dialectician or Defender of the Accessibility of Salvation," in Rowan Williams, ed., *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 157–72. He concludes by saying: "…the line between orthodoxy and heresy is not the line between a soteriological and a rationalist concern, between a religious and a philosophical spirit. Rather, it is a line which separates two understandings of faith, both of which were

Heteroousians theory of names and in particular of Daniélou's source-claim for their theory of the origin of names are made in the same vein. In the next chapter I continue this questioning of the commonplace portrayals of the Heteroousians by arguing that their theory of names in its initial formulation is best viewed as a response made to pressing fourth-century theological issues by drawing upon proximate Christian sources.

---

equally concerned to offer a reasoned faith as a way of salvation" (p. 169). An earlier article by Thomas Kopecek explored Heteroousian religion, though without the express intention of correcting distorted characterizations of Aetius or Eunomius; see "Neo-Arian Religion: The Evidence of the *Apostolic Constitutions*" in Robert C. Gregg, ed., *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Society, 1985), 153–79.

Chapter Three

The Heteroousian Theory of Names in its Christian Context

In the previous chapter I argued that the Heteroousians' theory of names had only superficial parallels with both Platonist theories and the Platonist-inspired theories of Philo and Eusebius, making it highly unlikely that any of them had a determinative influence upon the Heteroousian theory in its initial formulation. To counterbalance that denial, in this chapter I offer a positive account of their sources. I argue that the development of Heteroousians' initial theory of names is best explained by situating it within its proximate Christian context.

In Chapter One I suggested that Heteroousian reflections on names began with trying to make sense of one of the traditional names for God, 'unbegotten', and described how this term was central to their initial theory of names. Accordingly, I here contextualize the Heteroousian emphasis upon this name within preceding Christian usage, arguing that the Heteroousians were deeply embedded within this tradition. In particular, I focus upon the early fourth-century debate over 'unbegotten' in order to show that the Heteroousians were theological heirs of the Eusebian participants in this debate and that they were trying to make sense of the term in the light of it, while at the same time addressing the pressing theological issues of the 350s.

But previous Eusebian reflection on 'unbegotten' cannot on its own account for Eunomius's initial theory of names in all its features. For the doctrine of divine simplicity played no role in Eusebian accounts of 'unbegotten'. But this doctrine does play a central role in one of Athanasius's critiques of how his "Arian" opponents understood the

application of names to God. He argued against them all the names by which God is called must refer to God's substance because of divine simplicity. Therefore I will argue that the centrality of the doctrine of divine simplicity in Eunomius's theory of names represents not only a borrowing from Athanasius but also a clever deployment of the Alexandrian bishop's own argument against him.

I. The Christian tradition on 'unbegotten' as a name for God

The Heteroousians maintained that the name ἀγέννητος was uniquely revelatory of the divine substance. This emphasis owes a great deal to previous Christian use of both this term and another term, ἀγένητος. While ἀγέννητος is the privative passive adjective based on γεννάω, "I beget, give birth," ἀγένητος is the privative passive adjective derived from γίγνομαι, "I come into being, am generated." Though etymologically distinct, in both philosophical and Christian literature these two words were often regarded as synonymous.[1] Ἀγέν(ν)ητος was used to describe that which exists eternally, that which was never created or made, that which always is and lacks a beginning or a coming to be, and was never subject to an act of generation or begetting. Often they also implied that which is without an end and so incorruptible and indestructible.

From the second century onward, Christians applied ἀγέν(ν)ητος to God. It was only after ca. 350 that two senses of term began to be distinguished in theological contexts, though much of the same connotations were retained in each sense as when the

[1] R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 AD* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 202–6, has a nice survey of the literature on ἀγέν(ν)τος. But I find his assessment that ancient writers "confused" the two terms anachronistic. Note that what is said in the following paragraphs about ἀγέν(ν)τος equally applies *mutatis mutandis* to the related positive terms, γεν(ν)ητός and γέν(ν)ησις.

two terms were used synonymously. Generally speaking, the two senses corresponded to denials of distinct kinds of contingency. One sense of ἀγέν(ν)ητος was "not created" or "not made," meaning that that which was ἀγέν(ν)ητος occupied one side of a fundamental ontological divide between itself and created, contingent beings. The other sense of ἀγέν(ν)ητος that came to be recognized was "not begotten" or "not born," implying that that which was ἀγέν(ν)ητος was not subject to begetting (viewed as somehow analogous to the act or process by which animals, including humans, give birth, wherein one being is derived internally from another).[2] In time ἀγέννητος came to be used for the latter sense, and ἀγένητος for the former. There is some hint of this distinction in some early fourth-century texts, but on the whole the two terms are synonymous.[3] Even in those authors who came to recognize these semantic and terminological distinctions, they were not always observed, indicating that fluidity between the two senses and terms still obtained.[4]

I have outlined the evolution of the meaning of ἀγέν(ν)ητος because it is crucial for understanding the following discussion. Even though the Heteroousians themselves normally used the term ἀγέννητος, there is continuity between their usage and previous Christian usage of ἀγένητος. In fact, the usage of Aetius and Eunomius—and of Basil too—represents one of the earliest stages of the distinction between the two terms. Both ἀγέννητος and ἀγένητος are often translated as "ingenerate" or "unoriginate." I have no

---

[2] Athanasius, *Syn.* 46, is one of the earliest passages to recognize two distinct senses of ἀγέν(ν)ητος.

[3] Leonard Prestige, "ἀγέν[ν]τος and γεν[ν]ετός, and Kindred Words, in Eusebius and the Early Arians," *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1923): 486–96.

[4] Leonard Prestige, "ἀγέν[ν]τος and Cognate Words in Athanasius," *Journal of Theological Studies* 34 (1933): 258–65.

qualms with these translations, as each covers the meanings of the two terms from their earlier synonymous through their later distinctive usage, in addition to underscoring the continuity between them. For texts prior to the fourth century, I translate both ἀγέννητος and ἀγένητος as "ingenerate," as the former had not yet acquired its exclusive connection with begetting that it later would. Nonetheless, using a common translation of the two terms for fourth-century texts runs the risk of obscuring nuances in thought and incipient stages of their distinction. For this reason, I translate ἀγέννητος as "unbegotten" and ἀγένητος as "ingenerate" when they appear in fourth-century texts. And so, when reading such texts, the affinity that the two words have in Greek should be kept in mind, even though these English translations may conceal it.

Second-century Apologists

Thomas Kopecek has supplied a survey of the philosophical and Christian uses of ἀγέν(ν)ητος through the third century C.E.[5] Christians appear to have adopted it from Platonists. As the disputants of the fourth century knew well, and as Athanasius liked to point out,[6] the term is not found in scripture. Nonetheless, by the second century Christian Apologists began to apply this non-scriptural term to God and it soon became normative in Christian theology.

Among Christians, the practice was to reserve the term for the Father alone. One cannot really speak of a minor Christian trend, as Kopecek does, that called both Father

[5] Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979), 242–66.

[6] Athanasius, *Or.* 1.30.3-4; 1.34.2; *Decr.* 28.2-3; 31.2; *Syn.* 46.2.

and Son 'ingenerate'.[7] Athanasius himself suggested that there was such a trend by citing a passage from the Ignatius of Antioch's *Letter to the Ephesians*,[8] which reads:

> There is one physician,
> fleshly and spiritual,
> generate and ingenerate,[9]
> God come in the flesh,
> true life in death,
> both from Mary and from God,
> first passible and then impassible,
> Jesus Christ our Lord.[10]

I have translated this passage poetically because it underscores the fact that interpreting it as an endorsement of using 'ingenerate' for the Son in its technical sense misses the point of its paradoxical rhetoric about the incarnation.[11] Here 'ingenerate' and 'generate' mean that Jesus is both divine and human.[12] Kopecek cites only two other passages which call the Son 'ingenerate', both from Origen's *Contra Celsum*. But these passages hardly constitute a minor trend even in Origen, since the overwhelming majority of other Origenian texts reserve the name 'ingenerate' for the Father alone. The extremely sparse evidence for calling the Son 'ingenerate' does not merit labeling it a "trend."

The earliest extant Christian instance of calling God 'ingenerate' may be a passage in the *Apologia* of Aristides of Athens, which has been to dated to ca. 124-125

---

[7] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 259–65.

[8] *Syn.* 47.

[9] Gk. γεννητὸς καὶ ἀγέννητος.

[10] *Eph.* 7.2 (LCL 24: 226 Ehrman).

[11] William Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 61, notes that this passage is not a hymn but a "rhetorical expansion of semi-creedal paradoxes ... seeking to emphasize the true human [and historical] reality of the divine Christ in opposition to docetism."

[12] See John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 90–1. Kopecek himself realizes that the passage is concerned with the incarnation but this does not dissuade him from seeing Ignatius as the prime example of the minor trend.

and as such is the earliest preserved Christian apology. We cannot be certain of this, however, since the original Greek text is no longer extant. The Syriac version is probably our best witness to the original Greek text,[13] and the relevant passage reads: "Now I say that God is unbegotten (ܠܐ ܝܠܝܕ), uncreated, a constant nature that is beginningless and endless, immortal, perfect, and incomprehensible."[14] In contrast, the extant Greek version, which bears the marks of being modified version of the original, lacks 'unbegotten'. For the same passage it reads: "So then, I call God him who establishes and maintains all things, is beginningless and eternal, immortal and self-sufficient…"[15] Despite the claims made for the Syriac version's status as the best witness to the original text, at least with regard to this line it seems that the extant Greek more likely represents the original. The Syriac version appears to make a distinction between 'unbegotten' (ܠܐ ܝܠܝܕ) and 'uncreated' (ܠܐ ܥܒܝܕ = "not made") that corresponds to the much later distinction between ἀγέννητος and ἀγένητος. Furthermore, the words "unbegotten, uncreated" seem to be a gloss upon, or at least an addition to, the descriptions that are common to both versions: beginningless, eternal/endless, immortal, perfect/self-sufficient.

We are on more certain ground when we come to Justin Martyr (wrote ca. 150-160), who is therefore our earliest example of applying 'ingenerate' to God or the

---

[13] Bernard Pouderon and Marie-Joseph Pierre, *Aristides: Apologie*, SChr 470 (Paris: Cerf, 2003), 144–50.

[14] *Apol*. 1.2 Syr. (SChr 470: 184 Pouderon / Pierre): ܠܐ ،ܡܐܢܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝ ܠܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܠܥ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ .ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܠܐ .ܫܠܝܡ ܐܠܐ ،ܐܚܪ ܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܠܐ ܥܒܝܕ ܐܠܐ .ܐܬܝ.ܠܐ ܠܐ .ܝܠܝܕ .ܚܝܐ.

[15] *Apol*. 1.2 Gr. (SChr 470: 256 Pouderon / Pierre): αὐτὸν οὖν λέγω εἶναι θεὸν τὸν συστησάμενον τὰ πάντα καὶ διακρατοῦντα, ἄναρχον καὶ ἀΐδιον, ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀπροσδεῆ.

Father.[16] Most often Justin used 'ingenerate' (ἀγέννητος) in conjunction with 'incorruptible' (ἄφθαρτος) and 'immortal' (ἀθάνατος). Hence Justin is concerned to deny of God not only a beginning but also an end. He argues that God alone is ingenerate and incorruptible and adds "for this reason he is God."[17] In making sense of this odd inference, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz argues that for Justin, while 'ingenerate', 'incorruptible', and 'immortal' may fall short of definitions of what God is, they function as tags for a delineation or nominal definition, that is, an account of a thing that enables one to identify one thing among others without stating the thing's definition (which would supply the thing's essence). Hence when we say 'God', we mean that which is ingenerate, incorruptible, and immortal. Indeed, Justin's delineation of the concept of God in a Platonizing fashion reflects this idea: "That which always remains the same and in the same state and is the cause of the existence of all other things, this is God."[18] Therefore, 'ingenerate', 'incorruptible', and 'immortal' are the terms that specify the state of affairs outlined in this delineation. And so, for Justin, 'ingenerate' gains its full significance only when used in connection with these other terms.

Theophilus of Antioch (writing ca. 180) has a similar logic for connecting 'ingenerate' with other terms. He maintains that God "is beginningless *because* he is

---

[16] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 249–53; Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "'Seek and You Shall Find': Divine Simplicity and the Knowledge of God in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007), 82–7.

[17] *Dial*. 5.4 (97–8 Goodspeed): μόνος γὰρ ἀγέννητος καὶ ἄφθαρτος ὁ θεὸς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θεός ἐστι.

[18] *Dial*. 3.5 (94 Goodspeed): τὸ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἀεὶ ἔχον καὶ τοῦ εἶναι πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις αἴτιον, τοῦτο δή ἐστιν ὁ θεός. See Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 86 n. 9 for Platonist parallels.

ingenerate (ἀγένητος); he is immutable *because* he is immortal" (emphasis mine).[19] It is not clear why Theophilus draws these inferences. Nor is he consistent in making them. For elsewhere Theophilus considers immutability as a consequence of ingeneracy, not immortality:

> Plato and those of his school acknowledge that God is ingenerate and Father and Maker of the universe; but then again, they suppose that matter as well as God is ingenerate, and claim that it is coeval with God. But if God is ingenerate and matter is ingenerate, then, according to the Platonists, God is no longer Maker of the universe, nor do they demonstrate the monarchy of God. And moreover, just as God, since he is ingenerate, is also immutable; so too if matter were ingenerate, it would also be immutable and equal to God. For that which is generate is alterable and mutable, but that which is ingenerate is unalterable and immutable.[20]

Hence Theophilus says that God is immutable both because he is ingenerate and because he is immortal. This shows the strong connection in his mind between 'ingenerate' and 'immortal': these are logically prior to other terms. In this, he is similar to Justin, in that both describe God as the one who has neither a beginning of existence (ingenerate) nor

---

[19] *Auto.* 1.4 (6 Grant): Ἄναρχος δέ ἐστιν, ὅτι ἀγένητός ἐστιν· ἀναλλοίωτος δέ, καθότι ἀθάνατός ἐστιν.

[20] *Auto.* 2.4, 8-16 (26 Grant): Πλάτων δὲ καὶ οἱ τῆς αἱρέσεως αὐτοῦ θεὸν μὲν ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀγένητον καὶ πατέρα καὶ ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων εἶναι· εἶτα ὑποτίθενται θεὸν καὶ ὕλην ἀγένητον καὶ ταύτην φασὶν συνηκμακέναι τῷ θεῷ. εἰ δὲ θεὸς ἀγένητος καὶ ὕλη ἀγένητος, οὐκ ἔτι ὁ θεὸς ποιητὴς τῶν ὅλων ἐστὶν κατὰ τοὺς Πλατωνικούς, οὐδὲ μὴν μοναρχία θεοῦ δείκνυται, ὅσον τὸ κατ᾽ αὐτούς. ἔτι δὲ καὶ ὥσπερ ὁ θεός, ἀγένητος ὤν, καὶ ἀναλλοίωτός ἐστιν, οὕτως, εἰ καὶ ἡ ὕλη ἀγένητος ἦν, καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος καὶ ἰσόθεος ἦν· τὸ γὰρ γενητὸν τρεπτὸν καὶ ἀλλοιωτόν, τὸ δὲ ἀγένητον ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον.

an end to it (immortal, incorruptible). Theophilus's terms 'ingenerate' and 'immortal' would surely also specify the state of affairs in Justin's delineation of the concept of God.

Theophilus, however, makes a further move. If God is unbegotten and immortal, then God must be immutable and inalterable. Without a beginning and without an end, God never changes. Therefore, these names ('immutable' and 'inalterable'), together with 'unbegotten' and 'immortal', also have a delineative character. When taken together, the four uniquely identify God. Nonetheless, in spite of this, there remains some sense in which 'ingenerate' and 'immortal' are logically prior. These terms suffice for identifying God, even if other terms can be inferred from them. Though Theophilus does call God the 'immortal' once without additional terms, he would not have thought that it alone could name God since he believed that other things were immortal, such as the soul and the resurrected flesh of saved human beings.[21] Even still, Theophilus never concludes that 'ingenerate' alone suffices as a description of God. As was the case with Justin, it finds its full significance when used with other terms.

It is worth emphasizing that in this period 'ingenerate' was most often used in conjunction with other terms. For instance, a number of statements of Athenagoras writes (ca. 176-180) reflect such usage: "The divine is ingenerate and invisible;" "God is ingenerate, impassible, and indivisible, and so is not composed of parts;" and "the ingenerate, eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible, uncircumscribed…is one."[22] Athenagoras does not link 'ingenerate' with 'immortal' as Justin and Theophilus, but still

[21] See *Auto.* 1.7 and 2.19.

[22] Athenagoras, *Leg.* 4.1 (8 Schoedel): τὸ μὲν γὰρ θεῖον ἀγένητον εἶναι καὶ ἀίδιον; *Leg.* 8.3 (16 Schoedel): ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἀγένητος καὶ ἀπαθὴς καὶ ἀδιαίρετος· οὐκ ἄρα συνεστὼς ἐκ μερῶν; *Leg.* 10.1 (20 Schoedel): ἕνα τὸν ἀγένητον καὶ ἀίδιον καὶ ἀόρατον καὶ ἀπαθῆ καὶ ἀκατάληπτον καὶ ἀχώρητον. For a discussion of Athenagoras on 'ingenerate', see Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 253–7.

sees it as one term among many that contribute to a nominal definition of God. Clement of Alexandria (writing ca. 200) exhibits a similar usage, linking 'ingenerate' and 'incorruptible'.[23] And so, 'ingenerate' was one of handful of terms applied to God in the early Christian centuries that was deemed useful for delineating the concept of him.

The use of such alpha-privatives by these second-century Apologists locates them squarely (but not exclusively) within the burgeoning tradition of negative theology.[24] The emphasis placed on the transcendence of God in the Apologists has its roots in both Mesoplatonism and Hellenistic Judaism. A central feature of this approach is the namelessness of God, who is so far beyond human language and categories that he is unnamable. Raoul Mortley reports that "the view that available names actually refer to deeds, functions, or powers, rather than to God himself, is a commonplace in the Platonist writings."[25] The same view characterizes the negative theology of Hellenistic Judaism. After examining Philo's writings, David Runia concludes that "Philo is claiming that *every time* we speak of God by means of his names, we are not speaking of Him as He really is, but invariably in terms of His relationality, via the powers, toward that which is other than Him."[26] Hence the recognition that the terms applied to God, whether positive or negative, cannot not describe "God himself" or God "as He really is" betrays an

---

[23] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 257–9.

[24] D. W. Palmer, "Atheism, Apologetic and Negative Theology in the Greek Apologists of the Second Century," *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983): 234–59; and Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1986), 2.33–44.

[25] Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, 2.34–5.

[26] David T. Runia, "Naming and Knowing: Themes in Philonic Theology with Special Reference to the *De mutatione nominum*," in van den Broek, Baarda, and Mansfeld, *Knowledge of God in the Greco-Roman World*, 69–91 at 80.

assumption that they do not grant knowledge of the essence of God, who is incomprehensible and ineffable.

The second-century Apologists are fully aligned with this tradition of negative theology. Aristides writes: God “does not have a name. For everything that has a name is part of creation.”[27] Names are associated with created beings because being named requires a prior namegiver; since God has no prior, he has no name. Justin sums this attitude: “A name is not given to the Father of all because he is ingenerate. For the giver of the name is older than the one to whom the name is assigned. So ‘Father’ and ‘God’ and ‘Creator’ and ‘Lord’ and ‘Master’ are not names, but designations derived from his good deeds and words.”[28] The divine unnamability is a function of the divine ingeneracy, and the terms that are predicated of God are mere designations for his activities. Similar sentiments are found in Theophilus and Clement.[29] Hence for the Apologists negative terms like ‘ingenerate’, especially when used in connection with similar terms, emphasized the transcendence of God and the incomprehensibility of his essence. Positive, scriptural names like ‘Father’ indicate that which is other than God himself. Theophilus even goes so far as to claim that God is called ‘Father’ “because he is prior to

---

[27] *Apol*. 2.1 Syr. (SChr 470: 184–6 Pouderon / Pierre): ܫܡܐ ܠܝܬ ܠܗ. ܟܠ ܓܝܪ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܡܐ. ܒܬܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܒܪܝܬܐ. The namelessness of God has gnostic and other Christian parallels; see Roelof van den Broek, “Eugnostus and Aristides on the Ineffable God,” in idem, T. Baarda and J. Mansfeld, eds., *Knowledge of God in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 202–218.

[28] *Apol*. 2.6.1-2 (82 Goodspeed): Ὄνομα δὲ τῷ πάντων πατρὶ θετόν, ἀγεννήτῳ ὄντι, οὐκ ἔστιν· ᾧ γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὄνομά τι προσαγορεύηται, πρεσβύτερον ἔχει τὸν θέμενον τὸ ὄνομα. τὸ δὲ πατὴρ καὶ θεὸς καὶ κτίστης καὶ κύριος καὶ δεσπότης οὐκ ὀνόματά ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τῶν εὐποιϊῶν καὶ τῶν ἔργων προσρήσεις.

[29] Theophilus, *Auto.* 1.3-4; Clement, *Strom*. 5.82-83. On Clement’s negative theology more generally, see Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, 2.36–44.

everything."[30] Hence he makes 'Father' to be nothing more than a synonym for 'ingenerate.'

Therefore, the prominence of ἀγέν(ν)ητος as a name for God in Christian theology stems from the second century. At best, it is a tag used along with others for a delineation that allows one to describe God without defining his essence. It is agreed that there is no name for God that could give knowledge of God as he is in himself and as such disclose his essential being. The names used for God—not really names, but designations—communicate either what he is not (as 'ingenerate' and 'immortal') or what is other than God himself like powers, deeds, and relations (as 'Father' and 'Creator').

The Heteroousians are heirs of this second-century tradition, but not in the way that Kopecek thought.[31] Kopecek's reconstruction of Aetius's logic imputes to him a gross misunderstanding of how ἀγέν(ν)ητος functioned within the nascent negative theology of the Apologists. As stated above, the Apologists recognized the designations used for God fell into two broad categories: (1) negative terms which communicated what God was not, and (2) positive terms which communicated something other than God himself. Kopecek would have Aetius affirm the existence of the kind of name that the

---

[30] Theophilus, *Auto.* 1.4 (6 Grant): πατὴρ δὲ διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρὸ τῶν ὅλων.

[31] *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 270–3. After reviewing the "Christian Middle Platonic position [on theological language] present Justin and Clement," Kopecek concludes: "Aetius' version of this position, while it surely did not represent the intention of the Apologists' argument (theirs were designed to protect the claim of God's ineffability), was in harmony with the actual interpretation of the letter, not the spirit, of second and third century Christian Middle Platonism. The Neo-Arian probably noticed that ... Christian Middle Platonists employed the term ungenerated of God but did not include the term among the designations of God which referred to his deeds or his power. Aetius concluded that ungenerated does not refer to God's attributes or his relations with other things … but to his essence. It is God's 'name'" (p. 272).

Apologists denied. His belief that ἀγέν(ν)ητος did in fact reveal God's essence demonstrates his distance from the Apologist's theory of names.[32]

Aetius's belief that the ἀγέν(ν)ητος disclosed the essence of God needs to be explained in a different way. Both he and Eunomius are heirs of the apologetic tradition only insofar as they give a similar prominence to the term 'ingenerate'. The use of this term in Christian theology was quite traditional by their day. But of course they are not the only heirs of the Apologists. In the approximately 150 to 200 years that separate the Heteroousians from the Apologists, there are many other theologians who inherited the same tradition, and it is their appropriations of it that contributed to the specific role that ἀγέν(ν)ητος played in Heteroousian theology.

Dionysius of Alexandria

Dionysius of Alexandria (bishop 247/8 – 264/5) marks a departure from this earlier Christian usage. In contrast, he uses 'ingenerate' in isolation from other terms such a 'incorruptible' and 'immortal'. Like Theophilus, his comments on 'ingenerate' are made in the course of proving that matter is not ingenerate like God, though his argument is made in an anti-Sabellian context. Dionysius writes: "For if God is the ingenerate-itself and ingeneracy is, as one might say, his essence, then matter would not be ingenerate."[33] Andrew Radde-Gallwitz has analyzed this sentence and concludes that Dionysius sees 'ingenerate' as a definition of the divine essence, or more precisely, Dionysius equates

[32] But this is not to say that negative theology had no impact upon Aetius (or Eunomius); see Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, 2.128–59.

[33] Apud Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 7.19.3 (GCS 43/1: 401, 12-13 Mras / des Places): εἰ μὲν γὰρ αὐτογένητόν ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς καὶ οὐσία ἐστιν αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἄν εἴποι τις, ἡ ἀγενησία, οὐκ ἄν ἀγένητον εἴη ἡ ὕλη.

the definition of 'ingenerate' with the definition of 'God'.[34] Furthermore, this definition is motivated by the polemical context, as he is excluding the Son in his definition of God in order to eliminate the possibility of the Sabellian God who is both Father and Son. As Radde-Gallwitz says: "In Dionysius, we see the strongest identification of ingeneracy with divinity before Aetius and Eunomius."[35]

The parallels between the Heteroousians and Dionysius of Alexandria are so striking that it has raised the question whether Aetius and Eunomius knew and used the Alexandrian bishop's work. There is some evidence for this. At the beginning of his *De sententia Dionysii* (ca. 353-356) Athanasius informs us that his "Arian" opponents were appealing to Dionysius as a precedent for their views. It is not clear who these "Arians" were. Athanasius himself had also appealed to Dionysius as a precedent for the terminology of the Nicene Creed in the *De decretis* (ca. 351-353).[36] So it seems as if there was a battle in the 350s over who had the right to claim Dionysius as their theological forebear.[37] Athanasius of course had a vested interest in Dionysius because he was his predecessor in the Alexandrian see; if Dionysius were viewed as heterodox in any way, it would surely tarnish the reputation of the Alexandrian church.

So who were Athanasius's rivals? Thomas Kopecek has suggested that it was Aetius and his students who objected to Athanasius's interpretation of Dionysius in the

---

[34] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 87–93.

[35] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 92.

[36] *Decr*. 25.

[37] The battle over Dionysius in the early 350s may have been a rekindling of a debate that began in the early stages of the Trinitarian controversy. Athanasius of Anazarbus is said to have appealed to Dionysius in the early 320s to prove that the Father existed before the begetting of the Son; see Dok. 12.2.

De decretis, prompting him to write *De sententia Dionysii*.[38] Even if one does not accept Kopecek's thesis that Aetius developed Heteroousian theology in reaction to Athanasius's Homoousian theology in the *De decretis*,[39] the similar emphasis on 'ingenerate' in Dionysius and 'unbegotten' in Aetius makes it plausible that the latter at least appealed to former as an authority.

There is further evidence for Heteroousian appeal to Dionysius. Writing in the mid-360s Basil of Caesarea reported that he viewed Dionysius as the originator of "that impiety currently noised about, I mean that of the 'unlike'," meaning Heteroousian doctrine.[40] But this must have been a recent discovery of his, since in the slightly earlier *Contra Eunomium* Basil had pointed to Aetius as the first one to teach that doctrine.[41] Hence in the mid-360s Basil either learned that the Heteroousians claimed Dionysius as one of their patristic authorities or realized that Dionysius had anticipated Heteroousian thought. Basil simply notes the resemblance of their ideas without making precise source-claims. In any event, while Athanasius claimed Dionysius for Nicene orthodoxy without qualification, Basil is more critical. He admits that Dionysius's anti-Sabellian zeal had led him into error, and adds that Dionysius contradicts himself at times and even denigrates the divinity of the Holy Spirit.[42] Accordingly, the Alexandrian bishop needs to be read carefully and selectively. Basil's view of Dionysius could be more nuanced than

---

[38] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 122.

[39] On this thesis, see Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 114–32.

[40] Basil, *Ep*. 9.2, 5-6 (1.38 Courtonne).

[41] Basil, *Eun*. 1.1, 26-29 (SChr 299: 144 Sesboüé): "As far as I can tell, the first one who dared to declare openly and teach that the only-begotten Son was unlike the God and Father in substance was Aetius the Syrian." On dating *Eun*. before *Ep*. 9, see Hildebrand 210–22.

[42] Basil, *Ep*. 9.2.

Athanasius's because there was nothing at stake for the Caesarean church if Dionysius's reputation for unstinting orthodoxy was questioned.

The resemblance of ideas between Dionysius and the Heteroousians cannot be denied. Nonetheless, while Basil perceived a connection between the two, there is scant evidence for the Heteroousians actually using Dionysius as a source or appealing to him as an authority in making their claim that unbegottenness is the divine essence. It is of course not impossible that the Heteroousians did draw upon Dionysius. As Kopecek pointed out, the "Arians" against whom Athanasius defended Dionysius could very well have been Aetius and his allies. But even if one grants that the Heteroousians did make use of Dionysius, such a source-claim fails to explain the Heteroousian emphases upon explaining how names operate when said of God and the role of divine simplicity in their theory of names. These must derive from more the proximate concerns of fourth-century theologians. Therefore, if the Heteroousians did appeal to Dionysius, I would guess that it was calculated more as rhetorical framing of how their theology had ancient approbation than as a statement of their true doctrinal inspiration. Still, the resemblances between Dionysius and the Heteroousians are striking, and it would have been shrewd of the Heteroousians to exploit the connection when they defended their views.

Early fourth-century Eusebians

We turn now to the fourth century. Most early fourth-century theologians assumed without much comment that God was unbegotten. While the name 'Father' is commonly used, ἀγέν(ν)ητος was frequently used together with it, seen as equally valid. For example, Theognis of Nicaea, probably writing slightly before 325, called the Father

'ingenerate', saying that "we know from the holy scriptures that the Father alone is ingenerate."[43] Theognis must mean that the ingeneracy of the Father can be deduced from scripture since the designation 'ingenerate' is of course never used of God in scripture. But his was a widespread assumption. For example, Asterius mostly called God 'Father', but could also use ἀγέν(ν)ητος, the two forms of which were synonymous for him.[44]

Eusebius of Caesarea used ἀγέν(ν)ητος throughout his long career to describe God,[45] the divinity (θεότης),[46] the beginning (ἀρχή),[47] the divine nature (φύσις),[48] the divine substance (οὐσία),[49] the divine light,[50] the divine life,[51] the divine power

---

[43] Dok. 13.1 (AW III/1: 89, 3-5 Brennecke et al.): *solum autem patrem scientes ingenitum de sanctis scripturis.*

[44] E.g. *Fr*. 12 (ἀγέννητος) and 27 (ἀγένητος). In the fragments the spelling varies between ἀγέννητος and ἀγένητος, and in most cases, where the editor has chosen one spelling, there is ample mss. support for the other. If Asterius's use of the two spellings is not merely the result inconsistency on the part of those who cited him and the copyists thereof, they mean the same for Asterius. This is clearly seen when he claims that there are not two ἀγένητα (*Fr*. 3 and 72) but also rhetorically asks whether "τὸ ἀγεννητον is one or two?" (*Fr*. 44).

[45] With ἀγένητος: *Praep. ev.* 4.5.4; *Dem. ev.* 4.10.16, 5.5.10, 5.12.2; *Ecl.* 34, 17; 214, 14 Gaisford. With ἀγέννητος: *Dem. ev.* 1.5.19, 4.1.2; *Eccl. theo.* 2.6.1, 2.7.1, 2.14.15; *Ps.* 110:1-2 (PG 23: 1149c).

[46] With ἀγένητος: *Dem. ev.* 4.6.2; 4.15.13; 9.10.4; *Eccl. theo.* 1.11.3; 1.12.5; 2.23.4; *Ecl.* 124, 20 Gaisford. With ἀγέννητος: *h.e.* 1.3.13; *Praep. ev.* 11.14.3-4; *Eccl. theo.* 1.7.3; 2.7.17; *Is.* 1.41 (bis).

[47] With ἀγένητος only: *Praep. ev.* 7.15.8; *Marc.* 1.4.27; *Ecl.* 206, 6 Gaisford.

[48] With ἀγένητος: *Praep. ev.* 7.15.7; 5.proem.1; 5.1.4; 5.1.12; 5.1.18; 5.17.5; *Eccl. theo.* 3.3.64; Urk. 22.12; *Ecl.* 4, 23; 5, 8; 11, 24; 13, 3; 17, 12; 110, 4; 188, 25 Gaisford. With ἀγέννητος: *Dem. ev.* 5.1.7; *Laud.* 6.13; 11.12.

[49] With ἀγένητος: *Praep. ev.* 7.12.2; 7.15.1; 13.15.9; *h.e.* 1.2.8; *Dem. ev.* 4.3.8; 4.6.6; 5.1.19; 5.4.13; 5.6.3; *Eccl. theo.* 2.9.3; *Ecl.* 13, 6 Gaisford; *Ps.* 18:1 (PG 23: 185d). With ἀγέννητος: *Dem. ev.* 5.20.7.

[50] With ἀγένητος only: *Dem. ev.* 4.3.8.

(δύναμις),[52] the divine glory,[53] the Father,[54] the Father's *hupostasis*,[55] and also used it as substantive.[56] It is difficult to discern a distinct pattern of usage for either ἀγέννητος or ἀγένητος, except to say that the latter is in general more frequent and especially so when used to modify the divine 'nature' and 'substance'. Nonetheless, Eusebius thinks of ἀγέννητος and ἀγένητος as synonymous.[57] For example, twice in *Ecclesiastica theologia* Eusebius supplies a gloss for 'eternal', once saying "eternal, which is to say ingenerate," and once "eternal … which is to say, unbegotten."[58] While Eusebius sometimes joins ἀγέν(ν)ητος with 'eternal' (αἴδιος),[59] far more frequently he joins it to 'beginningless' (ἄναρχος),[60] as if they too were more or less synonymous. Such usage indicates that ἀγέννητος, ἀγένητος, ἄναρχος, and αἴδιος were functionally equivalent

---

[51] With ἀγένητος: *Eccl. theo.* 1.20.33 (bis); with ἀγέννητος: *Is.* 2.12; *Ps.* 89:3-7 (PG 23: 1133b).

[52] With ἀγένητος: *Dem. ev.* 4.15.16, 4.15.18, 4.15.31, 4.15.39. With ἀγέννητος: *Laud.* 11.17.

[53] With ἀγένητος only: *Eccl. theo.* 1.20.12.

[54] With ἀγένητος: *Marc.* 1.1.17; *Ecl.* 214, 14. With ἀγέννητος: *Dem. ev.* 4.3.5, 4.3.13, 5.1.20.

[55] With ἀγέννητος only: *Eccl. theo.* 2.7.3.

[56] With ἀγένητος: *Praep. ev.* 11.9.3; *Dem. ev.* 4.7.4, 5.1.6, 5.4.6; *Ecl.* 16, 28 Gaisford. With ἀγέννητος: *Dem. ev.* 4.15.15; *Eccl. theo.* 1.11.1, 2.14.7; Urk. 3.1; *Is.* 2.26; *Laud.* 11.12, 12.6

[57] Prestige, "ἀγέν[ν]τος and γεν́[ν]ετός, and Kindred Words," 488.

[58] *Eccl. theo.* 2.3.3 (GCS 14: 102, 4 Klostermann / Hansen): ἀΐδιον, τοῦτ' ἐστιν ἀγένητον; *Eccl. theo.* 2.12.2 (GCS 14: 113, 32 Kl. / H.): ἀΐδιον … τουτέστιν ἀγέννητον.

[59] With ἀγένητος: *Dem. ev.* 4.3.8; *Marc.* 1.1.17. With ἀγέννητος: *Dem. ev.* 4.1.2; *Marc.* 1.1.17.

[60] With ἀγένητος: *Praep. ev.* 7.12.2, 7.15.1; *Dem ev.* 4.3.8, 5.4.13, 5.4.14, 5.6.3; *Marc.* 1.1.17, 1.4.27; *Eccl. theo.* 1.11.3, 1.12.5, 1.20.12, 1.20.33, 2.9.3. With ἀγέννητος: *Eccl. theo.* 1.2.1, 1.2.5, 1.7.3, 1.11.1, 2.6.1, 2.7.1, 2.7.3 (bis), 2.14.3, 2.14.7, 2.23.1; *Is.* 2.12; *Laud.* 6.13; *Ps.* 89:3-7 (PG 23: 1133b).

for Eusebius. Still, ἀγέν(ν)ητος is Eusebius's most common name for God and it underscores "the creative power and uniqueness of the divine nature."[61]

In addition, Eusebius used a wide variety of other names for God, such as 'Father', which had more or less the same meaning as ἀγέν(ν)ητος. The names he uses are both scriptural and non-scriptural, and convey a sense of the utter transcendence and power of God.[62] It has been noted that Eusebius found a congruence among Platonism, the Hebrew scriptures, and Christian writings, which allowed him to use a variety of scriptural and philosophical terms to describe God, though not always with sufficient critical analysis.[63] Yet this is not due to a mere syncretistic blending of scriptural and philosophical language, as if Eusebius gave equal weight to both schools of thought.[64] Rather, scripture proved the correctness of philosophical descriptions of God. In other words, the non-scriptural names for God were implied by it and could be deduced from it. Indeed, Eusebius exhibits a certain glee in calling God by non-scriptural names, even of all of them basically mean "beginningless and unbegotten/ingenerate." For example, he says: "Common to all people is the account about God, the first and eternal, the alone, the unbegotten and supreme cause of all the universe, and universal king."[65] Many names captured the unique status of God the Father of all. No single name sufficed.

---

[61] J. Rebecca Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 93–4, 96, and 112. Quote from p. 94.

[62] Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 91, 93, and 98–9.

[63] Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 91–3 and 107–9.

[64] See Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 90, 93, 99 and 108; Holger Strutwolf, *Die Trinitätstheologie und Christologie des Euseb von Caesarea* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 113–123.

[65] Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 4.1.2 (GCS 23: 150, 5-7 Heikel): ὁ μὲν οὖν περὶ τοῦ πρώτου καὶ ἀϊδίου μόνου τε ἀγεννήτου καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων αἰτίου τῶν ὅλων πανηγεμόνος τε καὶ

In contrast, Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia use 'unbegotten' instead of 'Father', not together with 'Father' as Asterius, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Theognis did. When speaking of God *in se*, Arius avoids the name 'Father' and calls him such names as 'unbegotten', 'eternal', and 'beginningless'.[66] Indeed, these are Arius's three primary names for God.[67] Eusebius of Nicomedia does a similar thing, though he uses only 'unbegotten'.[68] The letter to Alexander sent by Arius and his Alexandrian supporters is the best example of this usage. After professing the one God whom he calls by sixteen names including 'unbegotten', 'eternal', and 'beginningless', but not 'Father', and stating that God has begotten an only-begotten Son, Arius only introduces the name 'Father' when refuting various heretical opinions about God's begetting of the Son.[69] Thereafter, he speaks of 'God' and 'Father', but the latter only in connection with the Son. The remainder of the extant writings of Arius and Eusebius exhibit similar usage.[70] And so, unlike Eusebius of Caesarea, Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia use 'unbegotten' (and 'eternal' and 'beginningless' in Arius's case) *instead of* 'Father', not alongside of it.

Arius offers some rationale for this usage. In an extract from the *Thalia* preserved by Athanasius, Arius says:

> As to what he is (καθό ἐστιν), God himself is ineffable to everyone. He alone has no equal, no one like him, nor one the same as him in glory. We

---

παμβασιλέως θεοῦ κοινὸς ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις ἐστὶ λόγος. For similar texts, see *Dem. ev.* 4.3.5, 4.3.13, 4.15.15, and 5.1.20.

[66] Urk. 6.2; Athanasius, *Syn.* 15.3.

[67] Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 140.

[68] Urk. 8.3.

[69] Urk. 6.3; see Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 138–9.

[70] See Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 139 for further details.

> say that he is 'unbegotten' because of the one who is begotten by nature. We name him 'beginningless' because of the one who has a beginning. We honor him as 'eternal' because of the one who came to be in time. The beginningless established the Son as the beginning of generate things.[71]

Hence the ineffable nature of God can be described apophatically by opposing it with the known nature of the Son. Arius's logic here is in line with the negative theology of the Apologists. It is well-known that Arius's primary concern was to preserve the ingenerate uniqueness of God and from this he derives his description of the divine nature, in the words of Peter Widdicombe, as "the uniquely self-existent and unconstrained source of all existing things who transcends all limitation and thus is inexpressible."[72] Hence the names 'unbegotten', 'eternal', and 'beginningless' most accurately describe God's substance, even if they fall short of definitions. In this, Arius uses delineations similarly to the Apologists.

The early Eusebians, then, considered ἀγέν(ν)ητος one of the primary names for God. In addition, there was clearly an early Eusebian tradition of viewing terms like ἀγέν(ν)ητος, 'eternal', and 'beginningless' as synonymous.[73] This set of terms, as we saw in Eusebius of Caesarea and Arius, emphasized the transcendence of God, and in this the Eusebians echoed the Apologists. At the same time, the usage of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia indicates a move toward preferring the transcendent names for God over against positive names like 'Father'. The writings of other Eusebians do not exhibit this

---

[71] Athanasius, *Syn.* 15.3 (AW II/1: 242, 9-14 Opitz).

[72] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 140.

[73] Asterius also joined ἀγέν(ν)ητος to 'beginningless' (ἄναρχος); see *Fr.* 62 and 66. Note that Basil of Caesarea will later insist upon a distinction between 'eternal' and 'beginningless' (*Eun.* 2.17).

preference, who used positive and negative terms equally, and even in apposition, as "the unbegotten Father."

The creeds and statements of faith connected with the various eastern councils in this period were slow to use ἀγέν(ν)ητος. This name is not used in the creed or anathemas from the Council of Nicaea in 325.[74] Neither is it used in any of the documents associated with the Councils of Rome and Antioch in 340-341 (the latter of whose so-called Fourth Creed of Antioch became standard in the east for nearly twenty years),[75] nor in any of the texts produced by either the western or eastern factions at the Council of Serdica in 343.[76] Even though the Second and Fourth Creeds of the Antiochene council are considered classic expressions of Eusebian theology, the name for God that featured so prominently in two of their greatest theologians—Asterius and Eusebius of Caesarea—does not make an appearance.[77]

This began to change soon after the debacle of Serdica, a period of theological rapprochement and consensus building.[78] From the middle of the 340s, ἀγέν(ν)ητος starts to appear in synodal documents. The first example is the Macrostich Creed,

---

[74] On the one hand, this is not surprising since the creed was designed to exclude Arius's theology, which gave special prominence to ἀγέν(ν)ητος. On the other hand, since Arius has accused Alexander of teaching that there were two ἀγέν(ν)ητα, it is somewhat surprising that Alexander and his allies did not clarify their position that there is only one who can be called ἀγέν(ν)ητος.

[75] See Dok. 41 and 42.

[76] See Dok. 43.

[77] The bishops convened at Antioch in 341 explicitly distanced themselves from the theology of Arius; see Dok. 41.5.

[78] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 126–30; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 306–14.

produced by the Council of Antioch in 344.[79] While this creed reproduces the Fourth Creed of Antioch, it appends a number anathemas. The usage of ἀγέν(ν)ητος in the anathemas reflects that of previous Eusebians in two significant ways.[80] First, it is the Father who is explicitly called 'unbegotten', as in Eusebius of Caesarea but in contrast to the usage of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia. Second, in three out of the four appearances of 'unbegotten', it is joined to 'beginningless', in line with the Eusebian tradition of connecting these terms.

Another example is the Sirmium Creed of 351, which similarly reproduces the Fourth Creed and appends its own anathemas. In the latter, ἀγέννητος is used as a substantive and to modify God: "the unbegotten"[81] and "the unbegotten God."[82] 'Unbegotten' and 'beginningless' are treated as synonyms.[83] But elsewhere, and more frequently, 'Father' is used instead of 'unbegotten'. One can discern a pattern of usage here. God is called 'unbegotten' in those anathemas which condemn identifying God the Father with either the Son or the Holy Spirit. Hence it appears that those who drafted these anathemas believed that 'unbegotten' was the most suitable term for singling out the Father.

Unfortunately we lack documents that report on the theological debates at the Councils of Arles in 353 and of Milan in 355. While the statement of faith from the meeting of bishops at Sirmium in 357 is extant, the closest it comes to using ἀγέν(ν)ητος

---

[79] At this council Leontius was elected bishop of Antioch to replace the deposed Stephen. Within a few years, Aetius and Eunomius were part of his inner circle.

[80] Dok. 44.5-8.

[81] Athanasius, *Syn.* 27.3 (Anathema 4).

[82] Athanasius, *Syn.* 27.3 (Anathemas 10, 15, 16, and 19).

[83] Athanasius, *Syn.* 27.3 (Anathema 26).

is when it states that "the Father has no beginning."[84] But at this point we are on the verge of the emergence of Heteroousianism as a distinct theological stance.

And so, the preceding survey shows that the prominence which the Heteroousians gave to ἀγέν(ν)ητος is anticipated by and in line with Eusebian usage. At the same time, the priority they accorded the term over against other names for God appears to be a retrieval of the specific position of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia. The usage of Aetius and Eunomius does not exhibit the typical Eusebian "looseness" of employing other names for God like 'Father' alongside of 'unbegotten', as found in Asterius, Eusebius of Caesarea, and synodal documents from the late 340s and early 350s. Yet in contrast to Arius, the Heteroousians focus exclusively upon 'unbegotten' (incidentally, much as Eusebius of Nicomedia did). Therefore, the Heteroousians carved out for themselves a unique stance within the earlier fourth-century tradition. In the next section I explore the reasons why the Heteroousians may have made the name 'unbegotten' central in a way that diverged from earlier Eusebian usage.

Early fourth-century debate over 'unbegotten'

Alexander of Alexandria's teaching that the Father and Son were co-eternal on account the Father's eternal generation of the Son seemed to Arius and other early Eusebians as if he were implying that there were two "unbegottens," that is, two first principles, which of course destroyed Christian monotheism. In response to their charge, Alexander vigorously denied that this was his teaching and agreed without complaint that

---

[84] Hilary, *Syn.* 11 (PL 10: 489a): *Patrem initium non habere*. Athanasius and Socrates preserve an ancient Greek translation: τὸν δὲ πατέρα ἀρχὴν μὴ ἐχειν; Athanasius, *Syn.* 28.9 (AW II/1: 257, 15-16 Opitz); Socrates, *h.e.* 2.30.38 (GCS n.f. 1: 145, 18 Hansen).

the Father alone was legitimately called 'unbegotten'.[85] Nonetheless, it appears that his theology was still widely interpreted as implying two unbegottens. Surviving Eusebian documents from the 320s are filled with statements that there is one unbegotten, that the Son is not unbegotten, that Father and Son are not co-unbegottens, that the Father alone is beginningless and eternal, and so forth. The same documents affirm that the Son is begotten, not eternal, has a beginning, and so forth.[86]

On one level, the disagreement appears to be over which terms apply to which beings. The Eusebian consensus is that ἀγέν(ν)ητος is limited to the Father, and in this they are in line with the Christian tradition that we have outlined above. But the fact that no one in this period was advocating the use of ἀγέν(ν)ητος for the Son prompts us to seek the more fundamental issues that were at stake. The Eusebians were not simply refuting a distortion of Alexander's views, nor were they merely decrying the demolition of monotheism that a doctrine of two unbegottens implied. In their response to Alexander they did not offer specific arguments why God must be one, but rather deployed a different tactic.

If one looks at the contexts in which the Eusebians affirmed that there was one ἀγέν(ν)ητος and not two, the other level of the issues at stake becomes clearer. It was not solely Alexander's belief that the Father and Son were co-eternal, but even more so his advocacy of the Son's being "from the Father" (ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς) that led the Eusebians to assert the Father's unique ingeneracy. For Alexander's interpretation of how the Son was from Father—that the Son was from the substance of the Father—seemed to

[85] Urk. 14.19; 14.46.

[86] Urk. 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, and 21; Dok. 13.

the Eusebians to imply that the Son was the same kind of being as the Father. Early Eusebian documents are replete with denials of this and attempts to explain how the Son was from the Father or from God in alternative ways.[87] A passage from Eusebius of Nicomedia's letter to Paulinus of Tyre summarizes these concerns in comments upon Proverbs 8:22:

> If he [i.e. the begotten] were from him [i.e. the unbegotten], that is, derived from him (ἐξ αὐτοῦ, τουτέστιν ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ), as though a part of him, or from an outflow of his substance, it could still not be said that he is created or established. … For what exists from the unbegotten would still not be created or established, either by another or by him, since it is unbegotten from the beginning. If calling him begotten gives any basis for thinking that, should he have been generated from the Father's substance, he also has from him identity of nature, we know that the scripture speaks not of him alone as begotten, but also does so in the case of those entirely unlike him by nature. [Here Eusebius cites Is 1:2, Deut 32:18, and Job 38:28]. None of these suggests nature from nature, but in each case the generation of generated things from his will. For there is nothing from his substance, but each and every thing, insofar as it has been generated, is generated by his will.[88]

First of all, saying that the Son was "from the Father" as if it meant "from the substance of the Father" seemed hopelessly materialistic to the Eusebians, and they consistently

---

[87] Urk. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 13.

[88] Urk. 8.5-7 (AW III/1: 16, 12 – 17, 5 Opitz).

denied material ways of conceptualizing the Father's begetting of the Son.[89] Anti-materialistic concerns aside, the Eusebians also maintained that what is from the substance of the unbegotten must itself be unbegotten in substance. Eusebius of Nicomedia describes this as "identity of nature" and "nature from nature." Elsewhere in the same letter, Eusebius expresses the same idea: "He has not been generated from his substance and in no way at all participates in the nature of the unbegotten or exists from his substance."[90] A passage of Eusebius of Caesarea provides a good expression of the logic:

> So the Son was not ingenerate within the Father, as one thing within another for infinite and beginningless ages, being a part of him which afterwards was changed and discharged, and thereby came to be outside of him. For such a one would even be liable to alteration and in such a situation there would be two ingenerates, the issuer and the issued.[91]

Because the Eusebians found "from the Father" so problematic, they asserted either that the Son was from nothing or generated by the will of God.[92] These ways of conceiving

---

[89] Urk. 1.4, 6.3, 6.5, and 9.1. Urk. 6.3 is notable because here Arius explicitly denies that the Son was begotten in the materialistic ways held by Valentinus, Manichaeus, Sabellius, and Hieracas.

[90] Urk. 8.3 (AW III/1: 16, 3-4 Opitz). See also Urk. 21 (AW III/1: 42 Opitz): "But if we say that the Son of God is also uncreated (*increatum* = ἀγέν(ν)ητος), then we begin to confess that he is the same in substance as with the Father."

[91] *Dem. ev.* 5.1.13, 1-5 (GCS 23: 212, 12-16 Heikel): οὐ τοίνυν ὡς ἕτερον ἐν ἑτέρῳ ἐξ ἀπείρων καὶ ἀνάρχων αἰώνων ἦν ὁ υἱὸς ἀγένητος ἐν τῷ πατρί, μέρος ὢν αὐτοῦ ὃ μεταβληθὲν ὕστερον καὶ κενωθὲν ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ γέγονεν· τροπῆς γὰρ ἤδη τοῦτο οἰκεῖον, καὶ δύο γ᾽ ἂν οὕτως ἀγένητα εἶεν, τὸ προβεβληκὸς καὶ τὸ προβεβλημένον. This argument is anti-Gnostic.

[92] Urk. 1.4-5, 6.3, 7, and 11. Arius expresses the logic well; see Urk. 1.5 (AW III/1: 3, 5-6 Opitz): "We are also persecuted for this reason, because we say that he is from nothing.

the Son's generation from the Father were thought to insure that the Son did not share the Father's unbegotten nature.

It is hard to determine why the Eusebians found such a possibility so problematic. The weight of tradition, which did not call the Son ἀγέν(ν)ητος, may have been factor. Two unbegottens would obviously destroy monotheism as well. But neither of these reasons is stated explicitly. Yet there is some hint that the Eusebians were trying to maintain divine simplicity and immutability. They consistently deny that the Son is a part (μέρος), outflow (ἀπορροία), or issuing (πρόβλημα; προβολή) of the Father.[93] If this were so, then the Father's simplicity would be compromised. Paulinus of Tyre exhibits this concern clearly:

> As for the Father, since he is indivisible and partless, he becomes Father of the Son, not by issuing him, as some think. For if the Son is an issuing of the Father and something begotten from him, such as those begotten of animals are, he who issues and he who has been issued are necessarily bodies.[94]

If the Son were from the Father in this way, it would involve the Father in change.[95] Arius supplies a concise expression of the Eusebian concern to preserve divine simplicity and immutability. After citing a few scriptural testimonies about how the Son is from the Father, he says that if these are "understood by some to mean that he is a part of him the

---

We speak in this way because he is neither part of God nor from some substrate." See also Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 53.

[93] Urk. 1.4-5, 6.3, and 8.5.

[94] Urk. 9.1 (AW III/1: 17, 7 – 18, 3 Opitz):

[95] Urk. 1.4, 6.2, and 8.4

same in substance and an issuing, then according to them the Father is composite and divisible and mutable."[96]

And so, the Eusebian insistence on calling only God the Father ἀγέν(ν)ητος was meant to secure the doctrines of divine simplicity and immutability. But as a corollary, it precluded an identity of nature between Father and Son. If the Son was not from the substance of the Father, then the Father was unbegotten and the Son was not. In other words, the Eusebian promotion of ἀγέν(ν)ητος resulted in Father and Son being different in substance—the Heteroousian position *avant la lettre*.[97] This is not to say that the Eusebians did not affirm likeness between Father and Son. Indeed, elsewhere in the letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia cited above he affirms it, but in terms of other than likeness of nature.[98] One of the principal ways that the Eusebians affirmed the Son's likeness to the Father without identity of nature was in their understanding of how the Son was the image of God. In virtue of being the image of God, the Son was clearly distinct from the Father in both number and substance, but pre-eminently like the Father

---

[96] Urk. 6.5 (AW III/1: 13, 18-19 Opitz).

[97] Athanasius attributes phraseology to Arius that approximates later Heteroousian expressions: *Or.* 1.6, 4-5 (AW I/1: 115 Metzler / Savvidis): "In everything the Word is alien to and unlike the substance and distinctiveness of the Father;" 1.6, 14-15 (AW I/1: 115 M. / S.): "The substances of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are alien to each other;" and so forth. It is Eusebius of Nicomedia who comes closest to *heteroousios* when he says in Urk. 8.3 (AW III/1: 16, 4-5 Opitz) that the Son is "different in nature and in power" (ἕτερον τῇ φύσει καὶ τῇ δυνάμει).

[98] Urk. 8.3-4 (AW III/1: 16, 4-6 and 9-10): "But he has been generated as entirely different in nature and in power and is generated in perfect likeness of the state and power of the one who has made him. … he is created, established, and begotten in a substance and in an immutable and inexpressible nature and likeness to the one who has made him."

because he mediated knowledge of God.[99] The theological rhetoric of the Eusebians sought to exclude two extreme positions on the Son: (1) that he was unbegotten as the Father, and (2) that he was begotten as all other begotten beings.[100] Their theology is therefore an articulation of how the Son occupies this middle position between these two poles, in what ways the Son is like and unlike both the unbegotten Father and creatures. In neither case was the Son like the other in substance. Therefore, while the Eusebians promoted the attribution of ἀγέν(ν)ητος to the Father alone in order to uphold divine simplicity and immutability, it resulted in an inchoate doctrine of difference in substance.

This interpretation of the Eusebian emphasis on ἀγέν(ν)ητος also contextualizes the Nicene Creed. Since its framers wanted to exclude the theology of Arius, they glossed the phrase "begotten from the Father" (γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ πατρός) with "that is, from the substance of the Father" (τούτεστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός) and added the *homoousios*. The gloss promotes Alexander's interpretation of "from the Father" and the *homoousios* targets the doctrine that was the consequence of Eusebian concern to preserve an divine simplicity and immutability, namely, difference in substance.[101] While the Nicene Creed, by inserting these lines, may have successfully excluded the theology of Arius in no uncertain terms, but these same lines also explain subsequent Eusebian resistance to it.

---

[99] Mark DelCogliano, "Eusebian Theologies of the Son as Image of God before 341," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14.4 (2006): 459–484.

[100] On the latter theme, see Urk. 6.2-3, 7, 9.1, 11, and 13. The Eusebian rhetoric is most clearly seen in Eusebius, ***Dem. ev.*** 5.1.13-24.

[101] G. C. Stead, "'Eusebius' and the Council of Nicaea," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 24 (1973), 86, argues that "from the substance of the Father" was specifically aimed at Eusebius of Nicomedia's letter to Paulinus.

Asterius witnesses to debate over ἀγέν(ν)ητος and advances it. Unfortunately, the fragmentary state of his writings hinders efforts at reconstructing the argumentative basis for this theology. His fragments derive from two separate works. The first is the theological handbook entitled the *Syntagmation* published around 320-321, a book which Athanasius claimed that Arius himself used.[102] Fragments of this work are preserved in Athanasius. The second work of Asterius is a letter written in defense of the letter that Eusebius of Nicomedia wrote to Paulinus of Tyre, which I cited from above. Apparently the theological language used by Eusebius in his widely-circulated letter had become within a few years after its composition so outdated that it was a cause of embarrassment among the Eusebians.[103] Fragments of this letter are preserved in the fragmentary writings of Marcellus of Ancyra.

Long ago Wilhelm Kölling argued that the title of Asterius's *Syntagmation* was Περὶ τοῦ ἀγεν(ν)ήτου.[104] This seems unlikely, but without a doubt the ἀγέν(ν)ητος was one of the principal themes of Asterius's handbook.[105] Like his fellow Eusebians, he affirms that there is one ἀγέν(ν)ητος[106] and denies that there are two ἀγέν(ν)ητα.[107] Asterius also seems to make such affirmations and denials when discussing how the Son

---

[102] Athanasius, *Decr.* 8.1 (AW II/1: 7, 20-21 Opitz): καὶ τοῦτο γὰρ Ἀστέριος ὁ θύσας ἔγραψεν, ὁ δὲ Ἄρειος μεταγράψας δέδωκε τοῖς ἰδίοις

[103] Joseph T. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum. Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 92 and 95.

[104] Wilhelm Kölling, *Geschichte der arianischen Häresie*, 2 vols. (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1874-1883), 1.99–103 and 2.99f.

[105] *Fr.* 1. See Markus Vinzent, *Asterius von Kappadokien: Die theologischen Fragmente* (Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1993), 42–3 and 147–9.

[106] *Fr.* 12.

[107] *Fr.* 3.

is from the Father, even though none of the extant fragments explicitly preserve this context.[108] He affirms that the Son was begotten from the Father,[109] but also amassed a collection of scriptural testimonies to deny that the Son was from the Father *by nature* (φύσει), which to him meant that he was like the Father in substance (ὅμοιος αὐτῷ κατ' οὐσίαν).[110] He considered this to be the theme of Eusebius of Nicomedia's letter, from which I cited above:

> The main point of the letter is to ascribe the generation (γένεσιν) of the Son to the will of the Father and not to represent the offspring (γονήν) as the result of a change (πάθος) in God. This is what the wisest of the fathers have declared in their own handbooks, guarding against the impiety of heretics, who falsely alleged that God's childbearing (τεκνογονίαν) is corporeal and passionate, teaching the issuings (προβολάς).[111]

Rather than being from God in this manner, Asterius denies, in typical Eusebian fashion, that the Son was from the Father as if a part of him[112] and maintains that the Son was begotten, made, generated *by the will* of the Father.[113]

But Asterius also advanced upon Eusebian arguments. He was the first to offer a precise definition of this term: "that which has not been made but always exists."[114] Such

---

[108] See *Fr.* 5, 44, and 76.

[109] *Fr.* 10 and 11.

[110] *Fr.* 74 (134–8 Vinzent).

[111] *Fr.* 5 (84 Vinzent).

[112] *Fr.* 76.

[113] *Fr.* 16, 18 and 20 (βουλήσει); 18 (θελήσει); 73 (τῇ βουλῇ, τῷ βουλήματι). See also *Fr.* 5 and 19.

a definition was no doubt aimed at clarifying the existing ambiguity of the term, but also would have clearly excluded the Son from being called ἀγέν(ν)ητος.[115] Hence it is a definition formulated to support Eusebian theology. Asterius also appears to have honed the rhetoric of Eusebian arguments. He provoked his opponents by asking: "Is the unbegotten one or two?"[116] The question backed his opponents into a corner. No one would dare answer, "two." And so, when someone gave the expected answer, "one,"

---

[114] *Fr.* 2 (82 Vinzent): ἀγένητον εἶναι τὸ μὴ ποιηθέν, ἀλλ' ἀΐδιον ὄν. I label this Asterian definition AA. The words ἀΐδιον ὄν are uncertain, and I prefer the reading ἀεὶ ὄν. AA is preserved in Athanasius, where the reading of the Athanasius Werke edition (based on mss. support) is ἀεὶ ὄν (*Or.* 1.30, 24-25; AW I/1: 141 Metzler / Savvidis). Bardy preferred this reading: *Fr.* 7 (344 Bardy). There is also mss. support for ἀΐδιον. But Vinzent's reading is ultimately based on a "philosophical" definition preserved in Athanasius, *Decr.* 28.4, which I label DD: τὸ ὑπάρχον μέν, μήτε δὲ γενητὸν μήτε ἀρχὴν ἐσχηκὸς εἰς τὸ εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἀΐδιον ὂν καὶ ἀδιάφθορον (AW II/1: 25, 9-10 Opitz). A few lines later Athanasius rephrases DD at *Decr.* 28.6: τὸ μὴ ἔχον ἀρχὴν εἰς τὸ εἶναι μηδὲ γενητὸν ἢ κτιστόν, ἀλλ' ἀΐδιον ὄν (25, 14-15 Opitz). Though DD does not correspond exactly to any of three philosophical definitions that Athanasius offered in *Or.* 1.30, nor to AA, it has similarities to both AA and the third philosophical definition [=D3]. D3 reads τὸ ὑπάρχον μέν, μὴ γεννηθὲν δὲ ἔκ τινος μηδὲ ὅλως ἔχον ἑαυτοῦ τινα πατέρα (*Or.* 1.30, 22-23; AW I/1: 140 M. / S.). D3 and DD are similar because both affirm that the ἀγένητον subsists (τὸ ὑπάρχον) but deny that it is either generated (μὴ γεννηθὲν δὲ = μήτε δὲ γενητὸν) or has a beginning (μηδὲ ὅλως ἔχον ἑαυτοῦ τινα πατέρα = μήτε ἀρχὴν ἐσχηκὸς εἰς τὸ εἶναι). AA and DD are similar because each adds an ἀλλα clause that affirms the permanent existence of the ἀγένητον. Hence D3 appears to be a conflation produced by Athanasius and as such not a preservation of Asterius's own words. Indeed, Athanasius presents D3 as a philosophical definition, not Asterius's. Therefore, it seems a dubious move to reconstruct AA based on D3. Note that D3 is remarkably similar to the definition of ἀγέννητος that Athanasius preserved in Athanasius, *Syn.* 46 (AW II/1: 271, 18-19 Opitz), where he glosses it as ἄκτιστον.

[115] Markus Vinzent lists another definition as *Fr.* 4 (82 Vinzent): ἀγένητον εἶναι τοῦτο τὸ μὴ ἔχον τοῦ εἶναι τὸν αἴτιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἀγενητοῖς αὐτὸν αἴτιον εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι τυγχάνοντα, "that which does not have a cause of its being but for those things generated is itself the cause of their generation." Athanasius preserved this definition at *Decr.* 29.2 (AW II/1: 25, 29 – 26, 1 Opitz), but does not attribute it to Asterius, but to unnamed κακοῦργοι. Therefore, I find Vinzent's attribution of this definition suspect. It is clear enough, however, that it is a Eusebian definition.

[116] Asterius, *Fr.* 44, 3-4 (108 Vinzent); see also *Fr.* 72.

Asterius would reply: "then the Son belongs to things generated."[117] The fragmentary state of Asterius's writings do not permit further conclusions about his contributions to the ongoing debate over ἀγέν(ν)ητος. But that they were effective, or at least significant, is proven by the fact that both Athanasius and Marcellus of Ancyra deemed it expedient to refute him.

The earlier Eusebian tradition is evident in the anathemas of Macrostich Creed of 344 and the Sirmian Creed of 351. The former rejects Arius's idea that the Son is from nothing and affirms that he is from God.[118] But it still stresses that the ἀγέν(ν)ητος is one and that the Son is not συνἀγέννητος with the Father.[119] The latter similarly condemns anyone who maintains that the Son is from nothing and not from God,[120] that he is ἀγέν(ν)ητος, and that there are two ἀγέν(ν)ητα.[121] The latter is concerned as well to uphold the simplicity and immutability of God.[122] The continued stress on the one ἀγέν(ν)ητος in these anathemas indicates an ongoing Eusebian fear that their opponents' theology compromised divine simplicity and immutability. And so, the features of the earlier Eusebian insistence upon one ἀγέν(ν)ητος passed into the creeds of the late 340s and early 350s, albeit not without some modification.

Athanasius represents the most vociferous opposition to the Eusebian theology of the one ἀγέν(ν)ητος. He rejected this term (as well as γεν(ν)ητός) as useless for designating the Father and Son. His arguments against ἀγέν(ν)ητος are found on three

---

[117] Athanasius, *Or.* 1.30, 1-9 (AW I/1: 139–40 Metzler / Savvidis).

[118] Dok. 44.5.

[119] Dok. 44.5-8.

[120] Athanasius, *Syn.* 27.3 (Anathema 1).

[121] Athanasius, *Syn.* 27.3 (Anathema 26).

[122] Athanasius, *Syn.* 27.3 (Anathemas 4 and 16).

separate occasions spanning twenty years.[123] Athanasius advanced three distinct arguments.[124] First, the term is unscriptural, but rather derived from Greek philosophy.[125] This makes it immediately suspect to Athanasius.

Second, ἀγέν(ν)ητος is ambiguous. In *Oratio contra Arianos* 1.30 he lists three distinct philosophical senses of the term, though two are dismissed as absurd.[126] The viable sense is "that which subsists, but has neither been begotten from someone nor has any sort of father at all."[127] It is in this context that he cited Asterius's definition, for the purpose of further mudding the waters: "that which has not been made, but which always exists."[128] Athanasius points out that even the Son can be called ἀγέν(ν)ητος according to Asterius's definition.[129] Hence the polyvalence of ἀγέν(ν)ητος useless as a meaning designation for the Father.[130] Athanasius makes a similar argument in both *De decretis* and *De synodis*, though the definitions of ἀγέν(ν)ητος that he uses vary from his earlier ones.[131]

---

[123] *Or.* 1.30-34 (ca. 339); *Decr.* 28-31 (ca. 351-353); and *Syn.* 46 (ca. 359). See Xavier Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006), 211–17.

[124] I will discuss these arguments in more detail in Chapter Six, p. 241–3.

[125] Athanasius, *Or.* 1.30.3-4; *Decr.* 28.1-3; *Syn.* 46.2.

[126] Athanasius, *Or.* 1.30.5-33.8; *Decr*. 28.4-29.4; *Syn.* 46.2-3.

[127] *Or.* 1.30, 22-23 (AW I/1: 140 Metzler / Savvidis): τὸ ὑπάρχον μέν, μὴ γεννηθὲν δὲ ἔκ τινος μηδὲ ὅλως ἔχον ἑαυτοῦ τινα πατέρα. In n. 114 above, this definition was labeled D3.

[128] *Or.* 1.30, 24-25 (AW I/1: 141 Metzler / Savvidis): ἀγένητον εἶναι τὸ μὴ ποιηθέν, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ὄν.

[129] *Or.* 1.31.

[130] *Or.* 1.34.2.

[131] Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, 214–5.

Third, Athanasius objects to ἀγέν(ν)ητος because it correlates the Father, not to the Son, but to "the things which came to be through the Son"[132] and thereby includes the Son among the generated (i.e. created) beings. To Athanasius, this obscures the Son's unique status. But since 'Father' correlates to the Son, by implication it includes the works made through the Son and so is more accurate than ἀγέν(ν)ητος.[133]

And so, Athanasius problematized not only saying that God was ἀγέν(ν)ητος, but also what was meant when it is said. Therefore, Athanasius questioned nearly 200 years of Christian usage and sought to overturn it. Athanasius could have been seen as a threat to traditional Christianity. On a Eusebian interpretation, the elimination ἀγέν(ν)ητος as the unique designation for the Father would have signaled a simultaneous lack of commitment to divine simplicity and immutability. The Eusebians may have been asserting the use of ἀγέν(ν)ητος precisely because Athanasius sought to undermine that usage.

Given the prominence of ἀγέν(ν)ητος in the Trinitarian debates of the first half of the fourth century among the Eusebians, it should come as no surprise that Aetius and Eunomius saw this term as of the utmost significance for any viable theology. Their position represents one interpretation of earlier fourth-century Eusebian reflections upon this term and its significance. It is also possible that the Heteroousian view of ἀγέν(ν)ητος represents a specifically anti-Athanasian stance. But the Heteroousians took the further step of not simply seeing the term as a marker for God's unique ontological

---

[132] *Or.* 1.33, 10-11 (AW I/1: 143 Metzler / Savvidis).

[133] *Or.* 1.33.8; *Decr.* 30.4.

status, but as signifying the divine essence itself. I explore why they made this move in the next section.

II. Athanasius and Eunomius

The preceding part has shown the cardinal significance of 'unbegotten' in the early fourth century. So far nothing has accounted for the Heteroousian belief that this name reveals substance. But this position too was similarly influenced by prior fourth-century dispute over what divine names signified, further demonstrating how engaged the Heteroousians were with contemporary theological debates. I argue that the Heteroousian theory of names—more specifically, Eunomius's theory—owes something to Athanasius's understanding of how names are said of God. In what follows, I discuss two passages of Athanasius that contain ideas strikingly similar to those of Eunomius. The first demonstrates that a commonality of ideas about names and natures existed between the two theologians. The second Athanasian passage, I suggest, was decisive for the formulation of Eunomius's theory of names because it addressed how names are applied to a God who is simple.

Athanasius on name and nature

In Chapter One I explained how Eunomius's theory of names resulted in homonymy and cited a passage from *Apologia* 18, in which he stated that natures are primary but names secondary and as a result each name takes on meaning according to the dignity of its bearer.[134] The principle that Eunomius expressed there is very similar to

[134] See Chapter One, p. 48.

one formulated by Athanasius in his interpretation of Hebrews 3:2. This was one of the verses his opponents used to justify calling the Son a 'thing-made'. In their minds, when the verse speaks of Christ as *faithful to him who made him* (τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτόν), it is a straightforward inference to claim that he is something made (ποίημα) by God. Athanasius denies this interpretation since he believes that the name 'thing-made' belongs exclusively to the realm of creatures, one of which he thinks the Son is not.

Athanasius's challenge, then, is to argue that Hebrews 3:2 does not mean that the Son is a 'thing-made' as he understands the term even though the verse says that God made him. To this end, he adopts the principle that the particular expressions used when speaking about the Son do not matter as long as "what the Son is according to nature is confessed."[135] He continues:

> For terms do not repudiate the nature; rather, the nature draws the terms to itself and changes them. Indeed, the terms are not prior to substances, but substances are first and the terms for them are second. Therefore, when the substance is a thing-made or creature, then "he has made" and "he has come to be" and "he created" are said in the proper sense in their case and they signify a thing-made. But when the substance is something begotten and Son, then "he has made" and "he has come to be" and "he created" are no longer said in the proper sense in his case, nor do they signify a thing-

[135] *Or.* 2.3, 5-6 (AW I/1: 179 Metzler / Savvidis): ὀνομάζουσιν οἱ ἅγιοι, ὡς ἀδιαφόρου τοῦ ῥήματος ὄντος ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων, ἕως τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ὁμολογεῖται.

> made. But instead of "he has begotten" the expression "he has made" is used without a difference.[136]

Athanasius then proceeds to cite a number of examples from daily life and scripture wherein people call others by a name that does not reflect their nature but without forgetting the "genuineness" (τὸ γνήσιον) of their nature.[137] For example, a father often calls his sons 'servants' but this does not nullify the fact that they are his genetic offspring. In this case, his sons remain his sons even if he does not call them such. This is the essential point.

Accordingly, Athanasius's solution to the problem of 'thing-made' is to argue that the nature of the substance itself determines the meaning of the names applied to that substance. Those names said "in the proper sense" (κυρίως) of the substance accurately communicate the nature of the one thus named and their meanings are not altered. They are literally true. The sons of fathers are called 'sons' in the proper sense because that it what they really are. Other names not said in the proper sense do not reflect the nature of the one thus named. They are not literally true, but are imprecise ways of referring to or describing the natures. Hence, when a father can call his sons 'servants', they remain sons. Such is the case when "to make," "to come to be," or "to create" is said of the Son.

---

[136] *Or.* 2.3, 7-14 (AW I/1: 179 M. / S.): οὐ γὰρ αἱ λέξεις τὴν φύσιν παραιροῦνατι, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἡ φύσις τὰς λέξεις εἰς ἑαυτὴν ἕλκουσα μεταβάλλει. καὶ γὰρ οὐ πρότεραι τῶν οὐσιῶν αἱ λέξεις, ἀλλ' αἱ οὐσίαι πρῶται, καὶ δεύτεραι τούτων αἱ λέξεις. διὸ καὶ ὅταν ἡ οὐσία ποίημα ἢ κτίσμα ᾖ, τότε τὸ »ἐποίησε« καὶ τὸ »ἐγένετο« καὶ τὸ »ἔκτισε« κυρίως ἐπ' αὐτῶν λέγεται τε καὶ σημαίνει τὸ ποίημα. Ὅταν δὲ ἡ οὐσία γέννημα ᾖ καὶ υἱὸς, τότε τὸ »ἐποίησε« καὶ τὸ »ἐγένετο« καὶ τὸ »ἔκτισεν«, οὐκέτι κυρίως ἐπ' αὐτοῦ κεῖται οὐδὲ ποίημα σημαίνει• ἀλλ' ἀντὶ τοῦ »ἐγέννησε« τῷ »ἐποίησεν« ἀδιαφορως τις κέχρηται ῥήματι. See Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 214–7, for a discussion of the interpretative principle Athanasius formulates here.

[137] *Or.* 2.3.4-6.

Since the Son's substance is not made or created, and has not come to be, but is rather begotten, when "to make," "to come to be," or "to create" is said of the Son, these expressions mean "to beget" because they are used of a being who is by nature something begotten. The nature of which the verbs are used determines their meaning. Hence, they are synonymous with "to beget."

Just as Eunomius claimed that 'creature' was homonymously said of the Son and all other beings, so too Athanasius claims that "to make, come to be, and create" are said homonymously of the same. In both cases the claim is based on the principle that natures are primary and names secondary, and that the dignity of the nature determines the meaning of the name applied to it. Yet both Eunomius's and Athanasius's application of this principle suffers from the same weakness: they do not propose the criteria by which one can know whether a name either accurately reflects the dignity (Eunomius), or is said properly (Athanasius), of the one of whom it is said. Both base their views on prior assumptions. Peter Widdicombe is surely correct to note that for Athanasius, the rule of faith "provides us with the necessary prior knowledge that the Son who may be described as 'made' in any given text in fact the Son by nature."[138] But this understanding of the rule of faith is shaped by his own theological assumptions and someone like Arius—or Eunomius, for that matter—would not have agreed with him. Hence his argument for which names are said properly is tendentious, even if 'Son' has the weight of Christian tradition behind it.

Eunomius did not take over Athanasius's language of names said "in the proper sense," perhaps detecting the subjectivity of the claim. For him, "to beget" meant the

---

[138] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 215.

same as "to make, come to be, and create" when said of the Only-Begotten. Yet these four verbs did not mean the same as when applied to creatures. The main point is that Eunomius enunciated the very same argument as Athanasius when discussing the Son's names. He claimed that natures were primary and names secondary; the meaning of names is a function of the dignity of the nature to which they were applied. While it is difficult to claim that Eunomius knew this Athanasian passage, the commonality of ideas between the two is striking.

Athanasius on divine simplicity and predication

Along with the importance of 'unbegotten' in the early fourth century there was growing concern over what is was about God that names signified. For example, when speaking about the names 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit', the Second Dedication Creed (341) says: "the names are given neither carelessly (ἁπλῶς) nor without meaning (ἀργῶν), but they signify in a precise manner (σημαινόντων ἀκριβῶς) the peculiar subsistence (τὴν οἰκείαν ... ὑπόστασιν) of each of those named, as well as their rank and glory, such that they are three in subsistence but one in agreement."[139] As mentioned earlier, both Aetius and Eunomius use the exact phrase "signifies subsistence" (σημαινόντων ... ὑπόστασιν), though they were talking about different names.[140] Hence their language of "signifying subsistence" may reflect contemporary theological usage. But the Heteroousians omit mention of rank and glory, and focus exclusively on the subsistence or substance that names signify.

---

[139] Dok. 41.4.5-6 (AW III/1: 147, 3-6 Brennecke et al.).

[140] Aetius, *Synt.* 27; Eunomius, *Apol.* 12, 9-10.

Thomas Kopecek has suggested that Aetius, realizing that 'unbegotten' did not refer to God's deeds or power—or we might add, rank and glory—concluded that the term did not refer to God's attributes or relations but to his essence.[141] I think this is a reasonable description of the logical process, but Kopecek does not explain what prompted Aetius to make this move. I suggest that this move is due to an appreciation on the part of the Heteroousians of the implications of divine simplicity. Earlier we saw the centrality of the doctrine of simplicity in the Heteroousian theory of names. Here I argue that it was Athanasius who prompted the Heteroousians to take divine simplicity into account for the divine names.

Athanasius argued that because of divine simplicity, all God's names refer to his substance. His discussion is significant because it employs an inchoate, rudimentary distinction between the *sense* of names and their *reference*, which in most ancient texts are confused. More accurately, he recognizes that the divine names have reference apart from their sense. He formulates his understanding of the reference of names in the context of the debate over what it meant to say that the Son was "from God." Recall that this very debate was what prompted early Eusebians to stress the one unbegotten. Some early Eusebians like George of Laodicea held that the Son was from God just as all other things—all creatures—were from God.[142] Above I cited Eusebius of Nicomedia's statement that "there is nothing from his [sc. God's] substance, but each and every thing, insofar as it has been generated, is generated by his will."[143] In contrast, Athanasius, in line with Alexander, believed that the Son's being "from God" meant that he had to be

---

[141] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 272.

[142] Urk. 13.

[143] Urk. 8.7 (AW III/1: 17, 4-5 Opitz).

from the substance of God, not from his will, if the Son's sonship by nature was to be preserved. He argued that the Nicene phrases, "same in substance" and "from the substance of the Father," though not found in scripture, ensured the proper understanding of scriptural testimony about the Son as the Father's genuine and natural offspring. When he defends this Nicene phraseology in *De decretis*,[144] he argues that "from God" means "from the substance of God" due to divine simplicity. In this context, he advances the theory that divine simplicity implies that all God's names *refer* to his substance without fully disclosing it.

He begins by demonstrating the blasphemies that result from viewing God as composite:

> So then, if someone thinks that God is composite as (1) the accident is in the substance, or (2) that he has a certain external covering and is enclosed, or (3) that there are in connection with him certain things that complete his substance, so that when we say 'God' or name him 'Father' we do not signify his invisible and incomprehensible substance, but rather some one of the things connected with him, then let them, on the one hand, find fault with the Council's stating that the Son is "from the substance of God," but on the other hand consider that they utter the following two blasphemies when they think this way: (A) they introduce a

[144] On the polemics and argumentation of this work, see Lewis Ayres, "Athanasius' Initial Defense of the Term ὁμοούσιος: Rereading the *De Decretis*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12 (2004): 337–59.

> certain corporeal God and (B) falsely assert that the Lord is not Son of the Father himself, but of the things in connection with him.[145]

Andrew Radde-Gallwitz has studied the three types of composition mentioned here (marked 1-3) and concludes that Athanasius is denying both accidental and ordinary essential predication in the case of God, even though he wants to argue that all predication in the case of God is essential predication.[146] Nonetheless, this is the central point of Athanasius: if God is composite, God's names must refer to something other than God, that is, to properties God merely possesses.

It seems as if Athanasius is missing a premise here that would explain why names must refer to non-essential properties and not substance in the case of a composite God. But why Athanasius assumes this becomes clear from his polemical context. Some of his Eusebian opponents believed that 'Father' named a power or activity of God, not the divine substance.[147] In Athanasius's mind, then, this was tantamount to saying that 'Father' referred to "one of the things connected with God," not God's substance. This is the missing premise. Hence Athanasius is bringing the views of his opponents to their

---

[145] Athanasius, *Decr.* 22.1-2 (AW II/1: 18, 21-28 Opitz): Εἰ μὲν οὖν τὸν θεὸν ἡγεῖταί τις εἶναι σύνθετον ὡς ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ τὸ συμβεβηκὸς ἢ ἔξωθέν τινα περιβολὴν ἔχειν καὶ καλύπτεσθαι ἢ εἶναί τινα περὶ αὐτὸν τὰ συμπληροῦντα τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ, ὥστε λέγοντας ἡμᾶς θεὸν ἢ ὀνομάζοντας πατέρα μὴ αὐτὴν τὴν ἀόρατον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκατάληπτον οὐσίαν σημαίνειν, ἀλλά τι τῶν περὶ αὐτόν, μεμφέσθωσαν μὲν τὴν σύνοδον γράψασαν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας εἶναι τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν υἱόν, κατανοείτωσαν δέ, ὅτι δύο ταῦτα βλασφημοῦσιν οὕτω διανοούμενοι. τόν τε γὰρ θεὸν σωματικόν τινα εἰσάγουσι καὶ τὸν κύριον οὐκ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πατρός, ἀλλὰ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν εἶναι υἱὸν καταψεύδονται.

[146] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 98–100.

[147] Asterius, *Fr.* 14; see also Philostorgius, *h.e.* 2.15 (Theognis of Nicaea); Dok. 12 (Athanasius of Anazarbus); and Urk 22.16 (Eusebius of Caesarea).

logical, blasphemous consequences (marked A and B) by suggesting that they view God as composite.

Next Athanasius teaches that divine simplicity demands that all God's names refer to the divine substance:

> But if God is something simple, as he in fact is, it is clear that when we say 'God' and name him 'Father', we name nothing as if in connection with him, but signify his substance itself. For although it is impossible to comprehend what the substance of God is, nonetheless, we understand only the fact that God is (εἶναι τὸν θεὸν) when scripture signifies him in these names, and when we ourselves wish to signify none other than him, we say 'God' and 'Father' and 'Lord'."[148]

This is a straightforward claim: if God has no parts, any name used for God must refer to his simple substance, not something else connected with God. At the same time, while referring to the divine substance, they do not reveal what God's substance is. Because of God's incomprehensibility, the names of God cannot reveal what his substance is, but they do disclose that fact that he exists. In Fregean terms, Athanasius claims that due to divine simplicity, God's names designate the divine substance as their *reference*, and due to divine incomprehensibility, the *sense* of the names reveal nothing about God's

---

[148] Athanasius, *Decr*. 22.2-3 (AW II/1: 18, 28-32 Opitz): εἰ δὲ ἁπλοῦν τί ἐστιν ὁ θεός, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἔστι, δηλονότι λέγοντες τὸν θεὸν καὶ ὀνομάζοντες τὸν πατέρα οὐδέν τι ὡς περὶ αὐτὸν ὀνομάζομεν, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὴν τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ σημαίνομεν. κἂν γὰρ καταλαβεῖν ὅ, τί ποτέ ἐστιν ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐσία, μὴ ᾖ δυνατόν, ἀλλὰ μόνον νοοῦντες εἶναι τὸν θεὸν καὶ τῆς γραφῆς ἐν τούτοις αὐτὸν σημαινούσης οὐκ ἄλλον τινὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἢ αὐτὸν σημᾶναι θέλοντες λέγομεν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα καὶ κύριον.

substance.[149] Hence while his Eusebian opponents held that 'God' and 'Father' had two different references, Athanasius maintains that they have the same reference, namely, the substance of God.[150]

There is one more step in Athanasius's argument. He connects 'God' with the name that God himself disclosed to Moses, 'I am who am'. He writes:

> So when he says: *I am who am* [Ex 3:14] and *I am the Lord God* [Ex 3:15] and when scripture says 'God', we read and understand nothing other than that his incomprehensible substance is signified and that he is the one about whom they are speaking.[151]

Athanasius sees the 'who am' (ὁ ὤν) and 'Lord God' of Exodus 3:14-15 as equivalent self-identifications. Hence it follows that any scriptural use of 'God' could be substituted by ὁ ὤν. Connecting this participle with its cognate noun 'substance' (οὐσία), Athanasius sees all God's names as referring to his substance, that is, God himself and not some aspect of him.[152] This is a creative argument, intending to provide scriptural justification for his theory that all divine names have the same reference, the divine substance. Therefore, God and the substance of God are not logically or conceptually separable.

---

[149] *Contra* Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 100–1. I interpret νοοῦντες εἶναι τὸν θεὸν καὶ τῆς γραφῆς ἐν τούτοις αὐτὸν σημαινούσης οὐκ ἄλλον τινὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἢ αὐτὸν σημᾶναι θέλοντες with Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, 289.

[150] Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, 290–93.

[151] Athanasius, *Decr.* 22.3-4 (AW II/1: 18, 32-35 Opitz): ὅταν γοῦν λέγῃ· »ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν«, καὶ τὸ »ἐγώ εἰμι κύριος ὁ θεός«, καὶ ὅπου ποτὲ λέγει ἡ γραφὴ ὁ θεός, ἡμεῖς ἀναγινώσκοντες οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ αὐτὴν τὴν ἀκατάληπτον αὐτοῦ οὐσίαν σημαινομένην νοοῦμεν καὶ ὅτι ἔστιν ὅπερ λέγουσιν.

[152] Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, 288–90.

While Athanasius maintains that "from the substance of God" is not merely equivalent to "from God" but also clearer, he admits that it is pleonastic:

> So then, no one should be startled when he hears that the Son is from the substance of God. Rather, let him accept that the fathers, in order to clarify the meaning wrote "from God" more clearly and as it were pleonastically (ὡς ἐκ παραλλήλου) as "from the substance of God." For they considered that the statements "from God" and "from the substance of God" are identical in account, since 'God', as I said before, signifies nothing other than the substance of he who is. So then, if on the one hand the Word is not from God as genuine Son of the Father by nature, but as the creatures are said to be, namely, by being created and he is from God just as all things are, the Son is neither from the substance of the Father nor is he Son by substance, but from virtue, just as we are who called 'sons' by grace. But on the other hand if he alone is from God as genuine Son, as in fact he is, it also makes sense that the Son is said to be from the substance of God.[153]

---

[153] Athanasius, *Decr.* 22.4-5 (AW II/1: 18, 35 – 29, 9 Opitz): οὐκοῦν μὴ ξενιζέσθω τις ἀκούων ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον ἀποδεχέσθω τοὺς πατέρας διακαθάραντας τὸν νοῦν καὶ λευκότερον καὶ ὡς ἐκ παραλλήλου τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γράψαντας τὸ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας. ταὐτὸν γὰρ ἡγήσαντο τὸ λέγειν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ λέγειν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν λόγον, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ θεός, καθὰ προεῖπον, οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ὄντος σημαίνει. εἰ μὲν οὖν μὴ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν ὁ λόγος, ὡς ἂν εἴη υἱὸς φύσει γνήσιος ἐκ πατρός, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τὰ κτίσματα διὰ τὸ δεδημιουργῆσθαι λέγεται καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὔτε ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ τοῦ πατρὸς οὔτε αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς κατ᾽ οὐσίαν ἐστὶν υἱός, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ἀρετῆς, ὡς ἡμεῖς οἱ κατὰ χάριν καλούμενοι υἱοί. εἰ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστι μόνος ὡς υἱὸς γνήσιος, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἔστι, λεχθείη ἂν εἰκότως καὶ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱός.

This conclusion to Athanasius's argument demonstrates its polemical context. He is concerned to preserve the Son's genuine, natural sonship as unique and different from adopted sonship of the Father by grace. He does this by claiming that the divine names refer to the divine substance (though without revealing what that substance is) and not one of the things connected with God. Hence, "from God" really means "from the substance of God."

This view of the divine names is not isolated; Athanasius repeats it in the later *De synodis* when once again defending the Nicene phrase "from the substance of the Father."[154] He writes:

> If when you name him 'Father' or say the name 'God', you do not signify his substance nor understand him who is what he is according to substance, but signify by these names some other thing connected with him or something worse (I dare not speak of such things), then you ought not have written that the Son is "from the Father," but "from the things connected with him or in him." Hence by refusing to say that God is truly Father, and by imagining that the one who is simple is composite, even in a material way, you have became inventors of a newer blasphemy.[155]

---

[154] Athanasius, *Syn.* 34-36.

[155] Athansius, *Syn.* 34.4 (AW II/1: 261, 33 – 262, 3 Opitz): εἰ μὲν οὖν τὸν πατέρα ὀνομάζοντες ἢ τὸ θεὸς ὄνομα λέγοντες οὐκ οὐσίαν σημαίνετε οὐδὲ αὐτὸν τὸν ὄντα ὅπερ ἐστὶ κατ᾽ οὐσίαν νοεῖτε, ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερόν τι περὶ αὐτὸν ἢ τὸ γοῦν χεῖρον, ἵνα μὴ παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ λέγηται, διὰ τούτων σημαίνετε, ἔδει μὴ γράφειν ὑμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν υἱόν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν ἢ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα φεύγοντες λέγειν ἀληθῶς πατέρα τὸν θεὸν σύνθετον δὲ τὸν ἁπλοῦν καὶ σωματικῶς αὐτὸν ἐπινοοῦντες καινοτέρας βλασφημίας ἐφευρεταὶ γένησθε.

The argument in this citation and what follows is a reprise of *De decretis* 22 and has the same polemical context.[156] Note that Athanasius has abandoned his earlier three ways of conceptualizing God as composite and simple. Now it is the difference between "the things connected with him or in him" (like power) and being "what he is according to substance." Once again, Athanasius emphasizes that the divine names merely refer to the divine substance without disclosing it: "For although it is impossible for us to comprehend what he is, nonetheless when we hear 'Father' and 'God' and 'Almighty' we do not understand something else, but that the very substance of the one who is is signified."[157] Here too Athanasius affirms that 'Son' also signifies substance when he complains that the "Arians" consider the name 'Son' "not as a substance but as a name only."[158] Hence for both Father and Son, names refer to substance.

Both Athanasius and the Heteroousians not only use similar language of "signifying substance" but also root their theories of divine predication in the doctrine of divine simplicity. I suggest that the Heteroousians used a logic similar to that of Athanasius when trying to make sense of what 'unbegotten' referred to when applied to God. Eusebian reflection on the name had taught them that this one term was applied to the Father alone and distinguished him from all other beings. Hence if this name was uniquely revelatory of God, what then did it reveal about God? According to Athanasius, if God is simple, then any name for God must refer to his substance. Hence when we say

---

[156] Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, 293–5.

[157] Athanasius, *Syn.* 35.2 (AW II/1: 262, 11-13 Opitz): κἂν γὰρ ἀδυνάτως ἔχωμεν καταλαβεῖν, ὅ τι ποτέ ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκούοντες τὸ πατὴρ καὶ τὸ θεὸς καὶ τὸ παντοκράτωρ οὐχ ἕτερόν τι, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὴν τὴν τοῦ ὄντος οὐσίαν σημαινομένην νοοῦμεν.

[158] Athanasius, *Syn.* 34.4 (AW II/1: 262, 1-3 Opitz): οὕτω δὲ νοοῦντες ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ τὸν λόγον καὶ τὸ υἱὸς οὐκ οὐσίαν, ἀλλ᾽ ὄνομα μόνον νομίζετε.

that God is unbegotten, we must mean that God's substance is unbegotten. The Heteroousians drew upon the theory of essential predication in the case of God advanced by Athanasius but misinterpreted the inchoate distinction between *sense* and *reference* that Athanasius was making in those passages. Indeed, it was typical of ancient thought that these two be conflated, so they are not alone in this. Besides, the Heteroousians did believe that God was comprehensible. So they adopted only half of Athanasius's theory of divine predication based upon simplicity. Therefore, the Heteroousian use of Athanasius winds up being at the same time a modification and refutation of him. They cleverly used their opponent's argument against him.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the Heteroousian theory of names represents a continuation of earlier fourth-century debates and an attempted solution to the pressing theological issues of the their era. I have demonstrated how their thinking advances upon previous Christian reflection upon and dispute over 'unbegotten', especially among Eusebians in the early fourth century. Their stance on 'unbegotten' appears to represent a response to Athanasius's critiques of the Eusebian usage of this term. In addition, two of Athanasius's two ideas about naming have striking parallels in Eunomius. The first is that because natures are primary and names secondary, the meaning of a name is determined by the nature of the bearer. The second is Athanasius's theory of essential predication rooted in a doctrine of divine simplicity. This idea seems to have been the lynchpin of Eunomius's theory of names and the source of his single greatest improvement upon Aetius's argumentation. Therefore, the Heteroousian theory of names was developed over

time by engaging contemporary debate over the names for God and their significance. They drew upon their theological forebears, the Eusebians, but also borrowed ideas from Athanasius, but used them against him.

I am not the first to claim that the Heteroousians developed their theology by engaging Athanasius. Thomas Kopecek argued that in the early 350s Aetius began to stress the term *heteroousios* precisely because Athanasius had rejected it in his *De decretis*.[159] His claim is intriguing, but we would need more precise evidence for it to be convincing.[160] In addition, I find it problematic that Kopecek portrays Aetius's theological project as fundamentally driven by his partisanship of Arius and his polemics against Athanasius. He depicts Aetius as a little more than an dialectical disputant who adopted his positions just to contradict Athanasius. While Kopecek allows for Aetius's discriminating use of Arius,[161] he does not grant a similar discernment when Aetius read Athanasius. My claim that the Heteroousians, particularly Eunomius, selectively drew upon Athanasius consequently alters Kopecek's depiction of the Heteroousian theological project. It is not solely, or even primarily, driven by a polemical spirit, but by a genuine concern to speak about God accurately and truthfully, wherever good resources for this theological task may be found.

---

[159] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 114–24.

[160] Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 113 and 144.

[161] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 124–6.

Chapter Four

Basil's Critiques of Eunomius's Theory of Names

The last three chapters examined the Heteroousian theory of names and its sources. In this chapter we turn to Basil's theory of names. Since Basil articulated his to refute Eunomius's, I begin my discussion of Basil's with his critiques of his opponent's. We need to know what Basil found wrong with Eunomius's in order to arrive at a full appreciation of the alternatives that he offered. Basil's critiques are both substantive and *reductiones ad absurdum*. Nonetheless, by both forms of argument he reveals what he thinks a good theory of names should be. Identifying these criteria will enable us to understand the goals that Basil set for himself in formulating his own theory of names and to evaluate whether he has met them.

Basil criticizes five aspects of Eunomius's theory of names, all of which were discussed in Chapter One: (1) that a name uniquely applied to God reveals his substance, which is to say that it defines the divine essence; (2) that such divine names are synonymous; (3) that divine simplicity necessarily entails essential predication; (4) the epistemological principle whereby different names imply different substances; and (5) the identity of name and substance.

The incomprehensibility and ineffability of God's substance

We saw in Chapter One that the Heteroousians claimed to know both the name and the substance of God—'unbegotten' and unbegottenness. Basil denies the possibility of knowing either, affirming the ineffability and incomprehensibility of God's substance.

He thereby followed a venerable Christian tradition whose adherents included the second-century Apologists, as well as Arius and Athanasius, whom I discussed in Chapter Three. His refutation of this Heteroousian claim has two elements: the demonstration that it is impossible for human beings to know the substance of God, and charges of Heteroousian arrogance for claiming that they do. As we will see, the latter is weaved into the former in the three arguments that Basil employs.

(1) His first argument is that there is no means by which we may come to know God's substance. Basil challenges the Heteroousians to acknowledge the source of the knowledge they claim to have. He sees only two possibilities: the common notions of philosophy or scripture. If the Heteroousians claim a common notion, Basil replies that "this tells us that God exists, not what God is."[1] Therefore, the common notions of philosophy do not grant us knowledge of the divine substance. After he dismisses this avenue, Basil asks whether scripture is the basis for their claim.[2] He cites several scriptural testimonies to show such knowledge is beyond human capacities:

> Isn't it clear that the great David, to whom God manifested the secret and hidden things of his own wisdom [see Ps 50:8], confessed that such knowledge is inaccessible? For he said: *I regard knowledge of you as a marvel, as too strong—I am not able to attain it* [Ps 138:6]. And when Isaiah came to contemplate the glory of God [see Is 6:1-3], what did he reveal to us about the divine substance? He is the one who testified in the prophecy about Christ, saying: *Who shall tell of his begetting?* [Is 53:8].

---

[1] *Eun.* 1.12, 8-9 (SChr 299: 212 Sesboüé): Ἀλλ' αὕτη τὸ εἶναι τὸν θεόν, οὐ τὸ τί εἶναι ἡμῖν ὑποβάλλει. I discuss this passage more fully in Chapter Five, p. 191.

[2] *Eun.* 1.12, 10-11.

> Then there's Paul, *the vessel of election* [Acts 9.15], who had *Christ speaking in him* [2 Cor 13.3] and *was snatched away up to the third heaven and heard ineffable words which are impossible for a person to utter* [2 Cor 12.2-4]. What teaching did he bequeath to us about the substance of God? He is the one who peered into the particular reasons for the economy and cried out with this voice, as if the vastness of what he contemplated made him dizzy: *O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments, and how unsearchable are his ways!* [Rom 11.33]. If these things are beyond the understanding of those who have attained the measure of the knowledge of Paul, how great is the conceit of those who profess to know the substance of God?[3]

Hence the Heteroousians display nothing but arrogance in claiming to exceed the knowledge of Paul.[4]

(2) Basil's next step is to argue by analogy: the impossibility of knowing even the substance of created realities demonstrates the impossibility of substantial knowledge of the highest reality. In this vein, Basil challenges the Heteroousians to name the substance of the element of earth. For "if they were to argue incontrovertibly about what lies on the ground and under their feet, we would believe them even when they concern themselves

---

[3] *Eun.* 1.12, 11-29 (SChr 299: 212–4 Sesboüé).

[4] *Eun.* 1.12, 1-7 (SChr 299: 212 Sesboüé): "Generally speaking, how much arrogance and pride would it take for someone to think he has discovered the very substance of God above all? For by their bragging they nearly eclipse even the one who said: *Above the stars I will set my throne* [Is 14:13]. Yet these men are not insolently attacking the stars or heaven, but are bragging that they have penetrated the very substance of the God of the universe!"

with the things beyond every notion."[5] Once again, assuming that the Heteroousians would claim to have an answer, Basil asks by what means they came to know earth's substance. He again sees two possibilities: sense-perception or scripture.[6] If the Heteroousians were to claim that it is by sense-perception that they can comprehend the earth's substance, Basil has another series of questions ready for them:

> By which of the senses is it comprehensible? By sight? But sight apprehends colors. Perhaps by touch? But touch can distinguish between hardness and softness, between hot and cold, and such things, none of which anyone would call substance—unless he had been carried away to the utmost insanity! As for taste and smell, what do we need to say about these senses? The former apprehends flavors, the latter odors. And as for hearing, it is perceptive of noises and voices, things which have no relationship to the earth. … Insofar as the earth is perceptible to the senses, it is either color or mass or lightness or heaviness or density or rarity or hardness or softness or coldness or hotness, or the qualities pertaining to flavor, or shape or magnitude—none of which they can say is its substance, not even if they were to readily affirm all of them.[7]

By enumerating the proper objects of the five senses, Basil shows that none of them apprehends substance, only particular qualities.

Basil then turns to the other half of the disjunction: scripture. He cites the beginning of Genesis to show that it is only recorded who made the earth, not what its

---

[5] *Eun.* 1.12, 32-35 (SChr 299: 214 Sesboüé).

[6] *Eun.* 1.12, 35-38.

[7] *Eun.* 1.12, 38-46; 1.13, 9-14 (SChr 299: 214–6 Sesboüé).

substance is: "*In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth; now the earth was invisible and without form* [Gen 1:1-2]."[8] Basil attributes to the narrator of the cosmogony the kind of intellectual humility that he claims his opponents lack: "Thinking it sufficient to state who made the earth and set it in order, he has refused to waste his time investigating what the earth's substance is, on the grounds that such an endeavor is pointless and useless to his audience."[9] Hence there is no way to know earth's substance and claiming to have such knowledge is sheer arrogance: "those who have no understanding of the nature of the earth on which they trample go so far as to brag that they have penetrated the very substance of the God of the universe!"[10]

Basil maintained his position on the incomprehensibility of earth's substance, and the hubris of those who would inquire into it. Commenting on Genesis 1:1 in the *Hexaemeron*—the same passage Basil quoted in the passage cited above—, Basil discouraged inquiry into the substances of each of things that exist, not only because it results in an excess of words, but also because it is useless for the edification of the church.[11] He stated that one cannot use reasoning to abstract an unqualified substance (οὐσία) of the earth, since the qualities of earth are its essential complements: take them away and you destroy earth.

He also continued to employ the argument that proved the impossibility of knowing the substance of God by analogy with the incomprehensibility of the substance of created realities or natural processes. In the context of discussing the divinity of the

---

[8] *Eun.* 1.13, 2-3 (SChr 299: 216 Sesboüé).

[9] *Eun.* 1.13, 4-6 (SChr 299: 216 Sesboüé).

[10] *Eun.* 1.13, 16-24; the citation is of lines 22-24 (SChr 299: 219 Sesboüé).

[11] *Hex.* 1.8.

Spirit, he pointed out the impossibility of knowing the substance of the sun and whether vision occurs through the reception of images or the emission of a ray from the eye.[12] Therefore, Basil's anti-Eunomian argument in *Contra Eunomium* 1.13 about the impossibility of knowing created substances, let alone the divine substance, was but the first of a series of similar arguments he would make throughout his career. In every case Basil exhorts the intellectually arrogant, who claim that sure knowledge of essences is within their grasp, to epistemological humility.

(3) Basil's third argument is based on his understanding of the divine will. He cites Exodus 3:15 and 6:2-3—"God said that he was *the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob*, for *this is my everlasting name and my memorial to generations of generations* [Ex 3.15]" and "*I am the Lord, and I appeared to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, as I am their God, and I did not disclose my name to them* [Ex 6.2-3]"—to remind Eunomius that God did not reveal his name, and much less his substance, to the great saints of old, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because "his name is too great for human ears."[13] This is simply a choice that God has made because of its transcendence. This fact furnishes Basil with another occasion for accusing Eunomius of arrogance: "Yet it seems that to Eunomius God has manifested not only his name, but also his very substance! This great secret, which was not manifested to any of the saints, he makes public by writing it in his books, and blurts it out to all people recklessly."[14] Basil adds that God's substance is not only incomprehensible to human beings, but to all created

---

[12] *Eun.* 3.6; *Hom.* 24.7.

[13] *Eun*. 1.13, 25-36 (SChr 299: 218 Sesboüé).

[14] *Eun.* 1.13, 36-40 (SChr 299: 218–20 Sesboüé).

rational natures—the angels.[15] Basil cites Matthew 11:27 and a conflation of 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 and 2:12—"*No one knows the Father except the Son*; and: *The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For no one knows what belongs to a man except the spirit that is in him, and no one knows what belongs to God except the Spirit that is from God*"—to show that only the Son and the Holy Spirit know the substance of the Father.[16] If this is the case, how can the Heteroousians claim to have the same knowledge?[17] Thus their arrogance is once again revealed. Human beings cannot know the substance of God, but "are led up from the activities of God and gain knowledge of the maker through what he has made, and so come in this way to an understanding of his goodness and wisdom. For *what can be known about God is that which God has manifested* [Rom 1:19] to all human beings."[18] Humans thus have true knowledge of God, even if it falls short of his substance.

Therefore, in reaction to Eunomius, Basil held that God's substance was incomprehensible and ineffable. Basil employed three distinct arguments: (1) there is no source, whether common notions, sense perception, or scripture, whereby one may come to knowledge of God's substance; (2) the impossibility of knowing even the substance of created realities like earth underscores the impossibility of substantial knowledge of the highest reality; and (3) God chose to reveal his substance only to the Son and Holy Spirit. Interspersed with these arguments are accusations of Heteroousian arrogance for making the claim to know substances. Basil affirms that human beings do have true knowledge of

---

[15] *Eun.* 1.14, 1-3.

[16] *Eun.* 1.14, 4-8 (SChr 299: 220 Sesboüé).

[17] *Eun.* 1.14, 8-14.

[18] *Eun.* 1.14, 16-20 (SChr 299: 220–222 Sesboüé).

God, but it is not of his substance. There is no name that expresses the incomprehensible and ineffable substance of God, despite Heteroousian claims to the contrary.

Each of Basil's three arguments appeals to scripture. The first two are premised on a disjunction between scriptural knowledge and knowledge from common notions and sense-perception, respectively. The third is wholly scriptural. In each case Basil quotes verses to prove his point. Therefore, while Basil is arguing that Eunomius is mistaken about the possibility of knowledge of the divine substance, he is also implying that Eunomius is a poor interpreter of scripture. This is a principal feature of Basil's anti-Eunomian rhetoric. His opponent's errors are easily unmasked by an attentive reading of scripture.

God is not a polyonym

In Chapter One I outlined how Eunomius's theory of names resulted in the synonymy of all names uniquely applied to God. Basil picks up on this and remarks that one of the absurd consequences of Eunomius's theory of names is that every designation used of God must similarly refer to his substance, making God a polyonym. According to Porphyry,

> polyonyms are things that have several different names, but one and the same account, such as 'sword', 'saber' and 'blade', and in the case of clothing, 'coat' and 'cloak'. In the former case, the thing in question is one, as is the definition that corresponds to the name, for it is a double-

> edged blade fashioned for the purpose of killing animals, but the names 'sword', 'saber' and 'blade' are different. [19]

Basil appears to consider Eunomius's theory of names to amount to nothing more than crude polyonymy. But in accusing Eunomius of making God into a polyonym, Basil is not merely accusing Eunomius of having a simplistic theory of names, but also of having a basic misunderstanding of God. For Basil would later censure Sabellians for believing that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were "one polyonymous reality" (ἕν πρᾶγμα πολυώνυμον).[20] It is admittedly odd that Basil would posit similarities between Eunomius and the Sabellians; his usual polemical tactic is to depict Eunomius and the Sabellius as two contradictory extremes.[21] But the kinds of polyonymy Basil accuses Eunomius and Sabellians of are different: Eunomius does not conflate Father, Son, and Spirit into a single modalistic reality as the Sabellians do, but considers the different names for God as having the same account (*logos*). Yet in either case, it is inappropriate to consider God a polyonym, and hence Basil's charge attributes a defective understanding of God to Eunomius.

There may be more to the charge of polyonymy. Basil may also be rejecting a Christian tradition of considering God a polyonym. Among others, Cyril of Jerusalem considered God to be polyonymous and Eusebius of Caesarea though that Christ was polyonymous.[22] Yet it is unclear if these earlier fourth-century theologians were using 'polyonymous' in its technical sense, and may have meant nothing more than that God or

---

[19] *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 69, 1f. Busse); trans. Strange 50. Cf. Dexippus, *in Cat.* 1.3 (CAG 4.2: 9, 19f. Busse).

[20] *Ep.* 226.4.

[21] *Hom.* 24 is the clearest example of this.

[22] Cyril, *Cat.* 6.7; Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 5.1.4, 6.10.1; *Is.* 1.54.

Christ is called by multiple names.[23] Whatever the precise polemical context which makes sense of Basil's charge, it is clear that Basil's main goal is to affirm against Eunomius that each name used for God has a distinct account (*logos*), that is, a meaning that is not synonymous with the other names applied to God, thereby precluding the possibility that God is a polyonym.

Basil makes this point twice, once concerning the names of Christ, once concerning the names for God. As for Christ, Basil notes that he called himself by several different names which are distinct in meaning:

> He called himself 'door,' 'way,' 'bread,' 'vine,' 'shepherd,' and 'light,' even though he is not a polyonym. All these names do not carry the same meaning as one another. For 'light' signifies one thing, 'vine' another, 'way' another, and 'shepherd' yet another. Though our Lord is one in substrate, and one substance, simple and not composite, he calls himself by different names at different times, using designations that differ from one another for the different conceptualizations.[24]

The fact that Christ is one in substrate, one substance, and simple does not imply that all Christ's names refer to his substance and mean the same thing. Hence Basil rejects Eunomius's teaching that divine simplicity necessarily entails essential predication. Since Basil thinks that Eunomius's theory of names would effectively make Christ a polyonym, he offers an alternative account of names that maintains the simplicity of Christ without

---

[23] See Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 5.1.4 (GCS 23: 210, 32-33 Heikel), on Christ: πολυώνυμός τις ὢν καὶ διὰ πλείστων προσήσεων θεολογούμενος. The two clauses seem to be parallel. Yet at the same time Eusebius appears to have believed that each of the Son's names, whatever else it disclosed, also indicated his derivative ontological status in relation to the Father.

[24] *Eun.* 1.7, 8-15 (SChr 299: 188–90 Sesboüé).

falling into Eunomius's errors (requiring essential predication or making Christ a polyonym). Instead of indicating substance, each name that Christ used of himself designates a different conceptualization. This teaching is discussed more fully in Chapter Five, but for now we can say that these conceptualizations refer to non-substantial aspects of Christ. Basil describes what 'light', 'vine', and 'bread' mean when applied to Christ.[25] 'Light', for example, "points out the inaccessibility of the glory in the divinity." Hence Christ's names reveal his conceptualizations, not substance despite his simplicity: "If anyone should examine each of the names one by one, he would find the various conceptualizations, even though for all there is one substrate as far as substance is concerned."[26]

Basil makes a similar argument regarding the names for God. He thinks that it is preposterous that "all things attributed to God similarly refer to his substance."[27] He writes: "how is it not ridiculous to say that his creative power is his substance? Or that his providence is his substance? Or the same for his foreknowledge? In other words, how is it not ridiculous to regard every activity of his as his substance?"[28] It is ridiculous because "if all these names converge upon a single meaning, each one has to signify the same thing as the others, such as is the case with polyonyms, as when we call the same man 'Simon', 'Peter', and 'Cephas'."[29] But according to both common usage and the Spirit's

---

[25] *Eun.* 1.7, 17-27 (SChr 299: 190 Sesboüé).

[26] *Eun.* 1.7, 27-29 (SChr 299: 190 Sesboüé).

[27] *Eun.* 1.8, 21-22 (SChr 299: 194 Sesboüé).

[28] *Eun.* 1.8, 22-26 (SChr 299: 194 Sesboüé).

[29] *Eun.* 1.8, 26-28 (SChr 299: 194 Sesboüé). Note that Porphyry considered the Romans to be polyonyms because each had several names that referred to the same person, e.g. Marcus Tullius Cicero; see *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 69, 8f. Busse).

teaching each name has a proper signification (τὴν ἰδίαν σημασίαν).[30] Therefore, Eunomius is establishing outlandish linguistic conventions.

Basil cites a number of scriptural passages to show that each discloses a distinct property (and thus name) for God:

> And yet, when we hear it said about God that *in wisdom he made all things* [Ps 103:24], we learn of his creative art. When it is said that *he opens his hand and fills every living thing with delight* [Ps 144:16], it is a question of his providence that extends everywhere. When it is said that *he made the darkness his hiding-place* [Ps 17:12], we are taught that his nature is invisible. Furthermore, when we hear what was said by God himself, *As for me, I am and do not change* [Mal 3:6], we learn that the divine substance is always the same and unchanging.[31]

And so, these passage supply us with distinct names for God—'creator', 'provident', 'invisible', and 'unchanging'—each of which tell us something different about God. Basil concludes: "how is it not sheer madness to deny that a proper signification underlies each of the names, and to claim in contradiction to their actual meaning that all names mean the same thing as one another?"[32] Therefore, in rejecting Eunomius's theory that all the names for God are synonymous, Basil thinks that a good theory of names demands that the proper signification of each name be preserved, in line with common usage and scriptural practice.

---

[30] *Eun.* 1.8, 31-34 (SChr 299: 194 Sesboüé)

[31] *Eun.* 1.8, 34-42 (SChr 299: 194–6 Sesboüé).

[32] *Eun.* 1.8, 42-45 (SChr 299: 196 Sesboüé).

According to Basil, the many names by which God is called—none of which names his substance—contribute bit-by-bit to our knowledge of God. He writes: "There is not one name which encompasses the entire nature of God and suffices to express it adequately. Rather, there are many diverse names, and each one contributes, in accordance with its own meaning, to a notion that is altogether dim and trifling as regards the whole but that is at least sufficient for us."[33] Some names like 'incorruptible', invisible', 'immortal' and 'unbegotten' tell us what is not present to God, whereas other names like 'good', 'just', 'creator', and 'judge' affirm what is present to God.[34] The negative names teach what it is inappropriate to think about God, whereas the positive names affirm what is appropriately considered in connection with God.[35] For Basil the multiple names of God are not synonymous; each has a meaning which adds to our knowledge of God. Each name must retain its own meaning when applied to God, a feature that Eunomius's theory did not preserve.

Divine simplicity and predication

In the last section we saw how Basil rejected the notion that in the case of Christ divine simplicity entailed essential predication. He made a similar claim regarding the things said of God. In response to Eunomius's claim that 'unbegotten' and 'light' are synonymous because of divine simplicity, Basil writes:

---

[33] *Eun.* 1.10, 1-5 (SChr 299: 204 Sesboüé).

[34] *Eun.* 1.10, 5-35.

[35] On Basil's understanding of positive and negative terms, see Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "'Seek and You Shall Find': Divine Simplicity and the Knowledge of God in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007), 160–4. He rightly critiques the interpretation of Basil's negative terms as actually negations of negations, and thus positives.

> Our response to the objection that God will be revealed as composite unless the light is understood as the same thing as unbegotten goes as follows. If we were to understand unbegottenness as part of the substance, there would be room for the argument which claims that what is compounded from different things is composite. But if we were to posit, on the one hand, the light or the life or the good as the substance of God, claiming that the very thing which God is is life as a whole, light as a whole, and good as a whole, while positing, on the other hand, that the life has unbegottenness as a concomitant, then how is the one who is simple in substance not incomposite? For surely the ways of indicating his distinctive feature will not violate the account of simplicity. Otherwise all the things said about God will indicate to us that God is composite.[36]

Here Basil gives his account of how God can have non-synonymous essential properties without destroying divine simplicity. Andrew Radde-Gallwitz has highlighted the significance of Basil's distinction between predicating properties "as part of the substance" and "of the substance as a whole." The former clearly violates divine simplicity, whereas the latter preserves it by affirming that such "names do not refer to one aspect of God's essence while failing to refer to another."[37] Those names predicated of God as a whole refer to properties that are co-extensive with each other and concurrent with the divine essence. The latter means that these properties are necessarily connected

---

[36] *Eun.* 2.29, 13-24 (SChr 305: 122–4 Sesboüé). For a discussion of this passage and the following in their wider context, see Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 179–88.

[37] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 182.

with the divine substance without being identical with it.[38] As such, they contribute to God's "formula of essence" (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας), that is, they are "predicated directly of the essence, rather than some other feature"[39] but do not define that essence. Basil sees such names as indicating the "distinctive feature" of God.

Immediately after the passage cited above, Basil lays out the options of how God's names can by non-synonymous without violating divine simplicity:

> It seems that if we are going to preserve the notion of simplicity and partlessness, there are two options. Either (1) we will not claim anything about God except that he is unbegotten, and we will refuse to name him 'invisible,' 'incorruptible,' 'immutable,' 'creator,' 'judge,' and all the names we now use to glorify him. Or (2), if we do admit these names, what will we make of them? (2a) Shall we apply all of them to the substance? If so, we will demonstrate not only that he is composite, but also that he is compounded from unlike parts, because different things are signified by each of these names. Or (2b) shall we take them as external to the substance?[40]

Note that the names Basil lists are doxological, "the names we now use to glorify him," rather than those names that are predicated of the substance of God as a whole. There are two ways of preserving divine simplicity if each name applied to God has a distinct meaning. The first option is to use only one name for God, such as 'unbegotten'. This is more-or-less what Eunomius has done. But this clearly goes against scripture and

---

[38] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 183–6.

[39] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 180.

[40] *Eun.* 2.29, 24-34 (SChr 305: 124 Sesboüé).

Christian tradition, which uses a variety of names to glorify God. And so, the first option should be rejected on the grounds that it is unscriptural and results in a God who cannot be worshipped. This leads to the second option, which tries to account for the usage of the names Basil has listed, both negative and positive. If they refer to the divine substance itself (2a) while retaining distinct meanings, then divine simplicity is not only destroyed since each name refers to a different thing in the substance itself, but they also make God a compound of unlike parts. This too is clearly an objectionable option.

This leaves Basil with a final option: "shall we take them as external to the substance?" (ἔξω τῆς οὐσίας). Unfortunately, he does not explain what he means by this. It is clear, however, that the names he lists here are not like those not names predicated of the substance of God as a whole, those names which contribute to God's formula of essence. Nonetheless, according to Radde-Gallwitz, "they are necessary, either because they name some truth about an essential property of God, or they refer to an activity of God (such as judging or creating), or simply because they contribute to Christian doxology. That is, they are true, but non-essential in the specific sense of not belonging to the *logos tês ousias*."[41]

And so, Basil has offered a way of accounting for a multitude of names for God, each with distinct meanings, without compromising divine simplicity. The point here is that he does not believe that divine simplicity necessarily entails essential predication or synonymy. Hence his theory of names preserves the distinct meaning of each name used for God without destroying divine simplicity by arguing that most names predicated of

[41] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 188.

God do not refer to his substance, but those that do name his substance refer to it as a whole.

The consequences of the Heteroousian epistemological principle

Basil points out a number of inconsistencies and contradictions with regard to the Heteroousian epistemological principled discussed in Chapter One, that a difference in names implies a difference in substance. These arguments of Basil are for the most part polemical *reductiones ad absurdum* aimed at scoring points in the debate and showing the holes in Eunomius's theory. In addition, the inferences he draws from Eunomius's positions in order to expose his opponent's self-contradictions are not always logically sound. Despite these facts, Basil's arguments do nonetheless reveal what he thinks a theory of names should not be. Basil makes use of three arguments.

(1) First of all, Basil points out that the Heteroousian epistemological principle cannot be correct because in their system the same names can indicate different substances. He notes that both Father and Son share many names such as 'invisible', 'unchangeable' and 'incorruptible.' If such names indicate substance for God the Father, why don't they also indicate substance for God the Son?[42] Hence Eunomius does not have a consistent account of how common names operate. In a good theory of names, such names would operate the same way each time they are applied, which is to say that would have the same significance each time they are used.

(2) The fact that two items of the same substance can be called by different names also indicates that their epistemological principle is mistaken. Note that in this context

[42] *Eun.* 1.8, 47-58.

Basil uses a slippery notion of substance. Basil points out that if Eunomius is correct, then the names 'Peter' and 'Paul' would indicate that the two men are different in substance (ἑτεροουσίους).[43] But this is absurd since a scriptural passage like Job 33:6—*You have been formed from clay, as also have I*—"signals nothing other than that all human beings are the same in substance" (τὸ ὁμοούσιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων).[44] In this argument, Basil understands substance as common substrate. Furthermore, he notes that Eunomius calls the Son both 'something-begotten' and 'thing-made' but it is impossible that the different names reveal different substance in this case since there is but one substance (here understood as individual existent).[45] Therefore, whether substance is interpreted as common substrate or individual subsistence, Eunomius's theory of names is self-contradictory.

(3) Basil also attacks the epistemological principle by refuting its inverse. Basil infers that if different names reveal different substances, then the same names would have to indicate a sameness of substance. First of all, Basil's logic is a bit shaky here, for the inverse of a true conditional need not always be true. Eunomius's conditional is: if different names, then different substances. Basil assumes that the inverse is true: if the same names, then the same substances. The contrapositive is: if the same substances, then the same names. Since the contrapositive of a true conditional is always true, Eunomius would have had to agree with the contrapositive, but not the inverse of his position (which, as we shall see in the next paragraph, Eunomius explicitly denied). Nonetheless, Basil's assumption of the truth value of the inverse works well enough for his polemical

---

[43] *Eun.* 2.4, 27-30 (SChr 305: 20 Sesboüé).

[44] *Eun.* 2.4, 32-34 (SChr 305: 20–22 Sesboüé).

[45] *Eun.* 2.5, 5-9. Eunomius of course would have claimed these names are synonymous.

purposes. So assuming it is true, then when those who are perfect in virtue are called 'gods' (cf. John 10:35), "human beings would be the same in substance as the God of the universe."[46] In assessing this absurd statement, Basil says it best: "But just as saying this is sheer madness, so too is his logic here equally crazy."[47] In attempting to reduce Eunomius's position to absurdity, Basil's logic, while not crazy, is surely lazy.

Basil assumed the truth value of the inverse elsewhere in order to point out Eunomius's own self-contradictions. He argues that it is incompatible for Eunomius to assert that a difference in substance follows upon a difference in names, while denying that a commonality of substance follows upon a commonality of names.[48] Eunomius made this denial in connection with the name 'something made'. Just because the Son and creatures share this name, he taught that it does not mean that they have a co-ordinate ontological status.[49] While in this instance Eunomius is being logically consistent with his own claims, Basil's logic, for the reasons mentioned earlier, is suspect. Basil notes that shortly after the denial, Eunomius once again reasserts the Heteroousian epistemological principle.[50] Basil accuses Eunomius of having it both ways: "How could anyone use language more carelessly? In short measure, he switches between contrary positions: now he says that a difference in names intimates diversity in substance, now he

---

[46] *Eun.* 2.4, 40-41 (SChr 305: 22 Sesboüé): ὁμοούσιοι ἂν εἶεν τῷ Θεῷ τῶν ὅλων οἱ ἄνθρωποι.

[47] *Eun.* 2.4, 41-42 (SChr 305: 22 Sesboüé).

[48] *Eun.* 2.24, 55-78.

[49] *Apol.* 17.8-9.

[50] Basil refers to *Apol.* 18.13-14, and alludes to Eunomius's previous statement of the principle at *Apol.* 12.13-14.

says that commonality of names does not mean that there is a substance in common."[51] But Eunomius is not being as self-contradictory as Basil makes him out to be.

It can be discerned in these three arguments that Basil's main goal in pointing out these absurdities, inconsistencies, and contradictions in Eunomius's theory is to show that the same name must mean the same thing in every case and operate in the same way in every case, but in no case indicate substance. He thinks that the Heteroousian epistemological principle and its inverse could be valid only if names are primary and natures are secondary. He of course denies this, saying: "the nature of realities is not consequent to their names but names are found posterior to realities."[52] His denial echoes sentiments of both Athanasius and Eunomius, discussed in Chapter Three. Unlike them, however, Basil views the primacy of natures and the posteriority of names as meaning that names do not give access to substance such that they express essence.

Only in the first argument has Basil exposed a real problem in Eunomius's thinking. Eunomius's account of names common to the Father and Son, such as 'light', is rife with logical problems and Basil devoted much space to demonstrating them.[53] While Basil's second and third arguments may be effective polemically, they themselves suffer from logical flaws. Nonetheless, Basil's main point is clear: the Heteroousian epistemological principle in invalid because the divine names do not and cannot disclose substance.

Though Basil was quick to expose Eunomius's self-contradiction, Basil himself is guilty of the same. In the third book of *Contra Eunomium*, devoted to the Holy Spirit,

---

[51] *Eun.* 2.24, 74-78 (SChr 305: 104 Sesboüé).

[52] *Eun.* 2.4, 35-37 (SChr 305: 22 Sesboüé).

[53] See *Eun.* 2.25-29.

Basil assumes the validity of the principle that sharing a name indicates a commonality of nature. In the context, he wants to argue that the Holy Spirit is of the same nature as the Father and the Son, though different in rank and dignity. In order to prove this point he brings in the principle that a single nature can admit of differences in rank in dignity. The example that he uses is the angels, saying: "Just as all the angels share a single designation, so too they share a nature that is absolutely the same."[54] Basil goes on to demonstrate that scripture speaks of various kinds of angels whose dignities are proportional to the number of those for whom they care: an angel who cares for a single individual (that is, a guardian angel) is of a lesser dignity than an angel who leads a nation. Yet he emphasizes that all angels share a single nature. While Basil's point in this argument is to show that the single divine nature allows for differences in dignity, he betrays the assumption that the same name indicates the same nature.

In addition, Basil points out that the Holy Spirit shares the designations 'holy' and 'spirit' with the Father and Son.[55] He cites various scriptural texts to this effect and concludes: "These testimonies make it clear to everyone that the communion of the names does not communicate the Spirit's estrangement of nature, but rather his affinity with the Father and the Son."[56] Once again, Basil appeals to a principle that he berated Eunomius for using. These lapses on the part of Basil show to what extent he was resisting an understanding of names that was perhaps common in philosophical and theological contexts, one that Eunomius drew upon.

---

[54] *Eun.* 3.1, 40-41 (SChr 305: 148 Sesboüé).

[55] *Eun.* 3.3, 1-16.

[56] *Eun.* 3.3, 14-16 (SChr 305: 156 Sesboüé).

The convertibility of name and substance

Another of Basil's *reductio* arguments against Eunomius's theory of names concerns his opponent's tendency to collapse name, meaning, and object into a single reality, as we discussed in Chapter One. It is certainly one of Basil's more tendentious arguments. He argues that Eunomius's theory means that names and substance are linguistically convertible. This is a very questionable interpretation.

Nonetheless, Basil employs two examples. The first concerns the Only-Begotten and Eunomius's primary name for the Son, 'something begotten'. He says: "if the [Only-Begotten's] substance is something begotten, and vice versa, if that which is begotten is substance for anything that is begotten, then all things that are begotten are of the same substance with one another."[57] While Eunomius's claim is that begottenness is the substance of the Begotten was ontological, Basil perversely interprets him a making a linguistic claim, that the terms 'begotten' and 'substance' are interchangeable. His second example is even more absurd. Given the convertibility of name and substance in Eunomius's theory, Basil opines that if we say that the Son is 'something begotten' of God, then this means that the Son is the 'substance' of God. For 'something begotten' and 'substance' are linguistically convertible.[58] And of course this is ridiculous.

However dubious Basil's interpretation of Eunomius here, his comments reveal what he thinks a good theory of names should look like:

> Surely, he will not claim that 'something begotten' signifies substance only when it is used for the Son, but that when it is used for the other things that participate in begetting it no longer preserves the same notion.

[57] *Eun.* 2.10, 4-6 (SChr 305: 38 Sesboüé).

[58] *Eun.* 2.10, 28-44.

> So let him give us a clear and incontrovertible explanation why the same designation does not mean the same thing in every case similarly.[59]

For Basil, names must mean the same thing whenever they are applied. He is very concerned with understanding the meaning, or notions, of names. According to Basil, each name has a notion associated with it that is true of the name-bearer whenever the name is applied, whether in mundane or divine contexts. The same notion must be preserved in each instance of a name's usage.

Conclusion

Basil's critiques of Eunomius's theory of names reveal three aspects of what he thinks is a good theory of names. While his critiques do not always exhibit a charitable interpretation of his opponent's thought, and even though Basil himself is guilty of shaky logic and self-inconsistency, his remarks do reveal his criteria for his alternative theory of names. In this way Basil establishes the parameters for a radically different theory of names.

First and primarily, names do not reveal substance, meaning that they do not define the essence of the things to which they are applied or grant knowledge of that essence. Essences always remain incomprehensible for Basil. Therefore, Basil will need to identify what names do signify, if not essence. Aspects of his answer were hinted at above. Negative names like 'unbegotten' and 'invisible' signify what is not present in God, whereas positive names what is present in God. Of the latter, some like 'good' and 'light' refer to the substance of God as a whole without defining it; others like 'creator'

---

[59] *Eun.* 2.10, 9-13 (SChr 305: 38 Sesboüé).

and ‘judge’ are, in Basil’s words, “external to the substance.” In other words, names signify properties, not essences. I examine Basil’s argumentation for this position, which cuts to the heart of Eunomius’s theory of names, in Chapter Seven.

Second, each name applied to God is non-synonymous and has a distinct meaning. This is aimed at denying the two features of Eunomius’s theory of names: (1) the centrality of the name ‘unbegotten’, and (2) that divine simplicity necessitates the synonymy of all names predicated of God. Basil argued that no single name suffices to exhaust knowledge of God; multiple names are needed. Each contributes in its own way to our understanding of God, even if this understanding falls short of knowledge of God’s essence. Basil’s theory of names will therefore support a theological epistemology that allows for a far richer and more comprehensive knowledge of God than Eunomius’s. I explore Basil’s account of the non-synonymy of God’s names in Chapter Five, and his decentralization of ‘unbegotten’ in Chapters Five and Six.

Third, Basil holds that names must always operate in the same way whenever they are applied, in both divine and mundane contexts. In other words, they mean the same thing whether applied to God or creatures; the same notion must be preserved. It should be noted that Basil thinks this must be the case only for those names that are literally true. For example, we saw how Basil recognized ‘vine’ as a name for Christ. While this term tells us something true about Christ, it does not meant that he is a grape-producing plant whose stem requires support. Furthermore, Basil recognizes that scripture uses figurative and allegorical language about God that is not literally true. For example, he acknowledges that the scriptures have at times spoken of the substance of God as something material, citing Ezekiel 8:2, Deuteronomy 4:24, and Daniel 7:9-10 as

examples. These passages describe God as amber, fire, and so forth. Basil says that such descriptions are meant to transfer us to worthy notions of God. But if we take them literally, we will think of God as not only material but also composite.[60] Basil's explanation of the unity of meaning and preservation of the notion between divine and mundane context is explored in Chapter Five.

[60] *Eun.* 1.14, 20-39.

Chapter Five

Basil's Notionalist Theory of Names

In Chapter Four, I discussed Basil's critiques of Eunomius's theory of names because they revealed the criteria for his own theory. In this chapter and the next I take up two of these parameters, (1) that each name applied to God is non-synonymous and has a distinct meaning, and (2) that names must always operate in the same way, part of which is to say they must always mean the same thing, whenever they are applied, whether it be to God or created realities. Basil achieves these two features in his own theory of names by insisting that each name has a distinct meaning, which is to say a distinct notion (ἔννοια) associated with it, a notion which holds true of both God and mundane realities. When a person hears name F, the notion of F is impressed upon the mind of the hearer, and it is true of any entity that bears the name. Hence names, instead of immediately disclosing substance, give rise to notions that are true of the name-bearer. Because of the emphasis that Basil accords to notions in his theory of names, I call it "notionalist."

When discussing what specific names mean when applied to God, Basil appeals to the distinct notions associated with the names. According to Basil, notions are present to the human mind in three ways: (1) immediately, (2) after the purification of those notions immediately present, and (3) through reflection upon either of the first two. This schema results in two general kinds of notions. Basic notions are present to the mind from a variety of sources either immediately or after purification, whereas derived

notions are achieved by reflection upon basic notions.[1] Every notion, whether basic or derived, has a corresponding name that can be applied to an entity.

Basil's terminology for notions is inconsistent.[2] He uses the same term for both the genus and the species. The word ἔννοια is the generic term for 'notion'. Basil most often uses it for both the general class and basic notions, though he also uses the synonym 'concept' (νόημα). A derived notion is most often called an conceptualization (ἐπίνοια), though it is sometimes called an ἔννοια or a νόημα. Despite his inconsistency in terminology, it is usually clear what he means. There is a semantic distinction between basic and derived notions in Basil, even if the terminological distinction is less clear.[3] Note that it is not content that accounts for the distinction between a basic and a derived notion; rather, it is how the notion is arrived at that makes it one or the other.

I have three goals in this chapter. First, I will argue that Basil recognizes two sources of basic notions, natural notions and common usage, but by far the most important source of notions for him that are useful for theology is the latter. While Basil presents these as immediately present to the human mind, I argue that he actually requires that they be purified of their inappropriate content—chiefly their corporeal connotations—in order for their use in theology. Hence while they are basic notions

---

[1] On the distinction between basic and derived notions in Basil, see Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley / Los Angeles / London: University of California Press, 1994), 112; and Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "'Seek and You Shall Find': Divine Simplicity and the Knowledge of God in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007), 169 n. 5. Of course, one imagines that another derived notion could be achieved by reflection upon a prior derived notion; but Basil does not speak about this possibility.

[2] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 169–70.

[3] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 170 n. 6.

insofar as they can be used to construct derived notions, they differ from those basic notions immediately present to the human mind.

Second, I will argue that Basil views a conceptualization (*epinoia*) as a derived notion and that his well-known doctrine of conceptualization is but part of a larger understanding of notions. Most scholars who have studied Basil's understanding of the connection between names and notion have focused only upon the derivative conceptualizations. I contend that Basil develops a consistent theory of names in which all names reveal notions, but some notions are basic and others derived. In a sense, theology for Basil is an appropriate understanding of the basic notions about God and the use of these to discover derived notions about God. In addition, since it is often noted in scholarship, but not sufficiently explored, that Basil draws upon Origen in his use of conceptualization, I conclude the second part by examining how Basil used Origen, and demonstrate that Basil has heavily adapted Origen's doctrine of conceptualization for polemical purposes.

In the third part of this chapter I seek to uncover upon what resources Basil may have drawn in formulating his notionalist theory of names against Eunomius's theory. I suggest both a remote and a proximate background. I argue that Basil may have been remotely influenced by fourth-century Neoplatonist commentators upon Aristotle who taught that names signify primarily thoughts and secondarily things. Basil would have found the wedge that these Neoplatonist placed between names and substances quite useful for refuting Eunomius. Unfortunately, there is only scant evidence for Neoplatonist influence upon Basil in this area. Accordingly, I argue that in the formulation of his theory of names Basil was proximately influenced by the

Homoiousians, who placed tremendous importance on the notions of the names 'Father' and 'Son' in their anti-Heteroousian theology. I suggest that Basil developed the rudimentary notionalism of the Homoiousian into a full-blown theory of names.

I. Basic notions: the foundations of theology

Basil recognizes two kinds of basic notions: those immediately present to the human mind and those notions achieved through the purification of notions as they are commonly used.

Common or natural notions

Basil's appeal to the natural notions immediately available to the human mind represents an adaptation of philosophical epistemology. In Stoic and Epicurean epistemology, a "common notion" (κοινὴ ἔννοια) or a "natural notion" (φυσικὴ ἔννοια) is any ordinary, naturally well-founded concept that is available to the mind as a "preconception" (πρόληψις).[4] According to Michael Frede, common notions "provide us with an antecedent general understanding or grasp of the things which as rational beings we perceive and think about, and which even in perceiving them we represent in terms of these conceptions."[5] A preconception is the innate concept of a thing that makes discussion, investigation, and understanding of it possible. Preconceptions are the

---

[4] For ancient testimonies, see Cicero, *Nat. deo.* 1.43 and *Acad.* 2.30 [=LS 40N]; Diogenes Laertius, *VP* 7.54 [=LS 40A]; Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.22 [=LS 40S]; and Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.331a-332a [=LS 40T].

[5] Michael Frede, "Stoic epistemology," in Keimpe Algra et al., eds. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 295–322, at 319.

necessary foundations and principles of all further knowledge that arises from rational inquiry.[6] Basil's appeal to common notions is not remarkable; it was quite typical of Christian theologians of his era to do so. Even Eunomius himself appealed to them. The belief in the existence of natural notions immediately present to the human mind was therefore not controversial in the fourth century.

For example, Eunomius wrote that he confessed that God is unbegotten in accordance with "the natural notion" (φυσικὴν ἔννοιαν).[7] Basil chided Eunomius for trying to prove that God was unbegotten after claiming it self-evident based on "the common notions of all people" (ταῖς κοιναῖς πάντων ἐννοίαις) and compared him to a man that tries to prove that the sun is the brightest object in the sky at high noon.[8] He continues: "if someone who uses rational argumentation to prove what is already quite well known through sense perception is considered to be utterly absurd, how could the person who teaches what common preconceptions (ταῖς κοιναῖς προλήψεσιν) enable us all to agree upon not be considered guilty of the same foolishness?"[9] Basil recognized Eunomius's deployment of "natural notion" as a philosophical borrowing and used it against him, employing the two more-or-less synonymous concepts, the common notion and the preconception. But note that for Basil 'unbegotten' is not a common notion. As we shall see, for him it was a derived notion.

---

[6] On the difference between a notion and a preconception, see F. H. Sandbach, "Ennoia and prolepsis," in A. A. Long, *Problems in Stoicism* (London: The Athlone Press, 1971), 22–37, and Matt Jackson-McCabe, "The Stoic Theory of Implanted Preconceptions," *Phronesis* 49/4 (2004): 323–47.

[7] *Apol.* 7.1-7, cited by Basil at *Eun.* 1.5, 15-22.

[8] *Eun.* 1.5, 25-30.

[9] *Eun.* 1.5, 30-33 (SChr 299: 172 Sesboüé).

Basil's rejection of Eunomius's appeal to a common notion does not mean that he denied the validity of that source of knowledge, for Basil himself appeals to common notions. In Chapter Four I mentioned how Basil challenged Eunomius to say whether he gained his knowledge of God's substance from a common notion or scripture.[10] He claimed that the common notion of God "tells us that God exists, not what God is."[11] Here Basil is not limiting the common notion of God to the content that God exists because saying "God exists" requires at least a nominal definition of God for the proposition to have meaning. Both the Epicureans and Stoics had a common notion of God that included a set of specific attributes of God. According to the Epicureans, God was, for example, eternal, blessed, immortal, and imperishable; according to the Stoics, immanent, providential, rational, and active.[12] These attributes were discerned through reason and a general observation of the universe. Basil expresses a similar view in Letter 234 to Amphilochius of Iconium in January 376, where he says that the notion (ἔννοια) of God is formed by reflecting on God's attributes revealed in scripture such as his greatness, power, wisdom, goodness, providence, and justice, but that God's substance is incomprehensible. Hence for Basil while the notion of God tells us far more than simply that God exists, it still does not grant us knowledge of the divine substance.

In another example, Basil speaks of the common notion of grain. He says: "the concept (νόημα) of 'grain' exists in everybody as something simple, by means of which

---

[10] *Eun.* 1.12; see Chapter Four, p. 162.

[11] *Eun.* 1.12, 8-9 (SChr 299: 212 Sesboüé).

[12] For the Epicurean view, see Epicurus, *ep. Men.* 123-4 [=LS 23B]; Cicero, *Nat. deo.* 1.43-9 [=LS 23E]; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 9.43-7 [=LS 23F]; for the Stoic view, see Cicero, *Nat. deo.* 2.12-16 and 75-76 [=LS 54C and 54J]; Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1075e [=LS 54K]; Diogenes Laertius, *VP* 7.147 [=LS 54A]; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 9.133-6 [=LS 54D].

we recognize grain as soon as we see it."[13] Even though Basil uses the term νόημα instead of ἔννοια, it is clear from how he describes the νόημα that it is a preconception, or a basic notion. For it makes immediate recognition of grain possible as soon as the senses perceive it, and from it derived notions can be discovered, as we will see when we return to this grain example in our discussion of derived notions.

Finally, Basil claims that Eunomius tried to destroy "the common preconception (κοινὴ ἡ πρόληψις) that exists similarly in all Christians," namely, "that the Son is the begotten light who has shone forth from the unbegotten light, that he is life itself and goodness itself that has proceeded from the lifegiving source and the paternal goodness."[14] Though this seems to be a rather complex concept for a preconception, Basil explicitly says that it "exists similarly in all Christians." Hence it has the status of a common notion. Basil confirms this interpretation when he says that Eunomius used sophisms to confuse "these notions of ours" (ταύτας ἡμῶν τὰς ἐννοίας).[15] Therefore it appears that Basil understands two kinds of common notions: the general preconceptions that all people have to which appeal was made by philosophers, and preconceptions specific to Christians in virtue of their belief in Christ. This example shows that Basil was not beholden to the philosophical understanding of common notions.

Therefore, generally speaking, Basil views common notions as those concepts shared by all human beings (or at least all Christians) that constitute the starting point of basic knowledge of the world or God. They enable the identification of the objects of sense-perception, as in the case of grain or the identification of the being to whom names

---

[13] *Eun.* 1.6, 44-45 (SChr 299: 186 Sesboüé).

[14] *Eun.* 2.25, 2-7 (SChr 305: 104 Sesboüé).

[15] *Eun.* 2.25, 7-8 (SChr 305: 104 Sesboüé).

refer, as in the case of 'begotten light'. Note that Basil does not try to delineate such common notions: they are so obvious to everyone that delineation is superfluous. They are immediately available to the mind.

Common usage

The second kind of basic notion and the most important source of notions for Basil is the "common usage" (συνήθεια, κοινὴ συνήθεια, or κοινὴ χρήσις) of terms.[16] In fact, Basil mainly delineates notions by appeal to common usage. Only recently has such appeal been highlighted as one of the key principles of Basil's theological method.[17] Basically, Basil seeks to understand names by appeal to how speakers of Greek would ordinarily use them. For him the ordinary sense of terms determines their meaning in theological contexts. Words can be used according to their common usage or contrary to it; indeed, usage contrary to common usage is simply misusage in the eyes of Basil. Because his theology is grounded in common usage, Basil is bewildered by Eunomius's claim that the same word like 'light' can mean different things when applied to the Father

[16] Basil's terminology for common usage is inconsistent. He uses συνήθεια alone to refer to the customary usage of certain terms and sees it as parallel with κοινὴ χρήσις (*Eun.* 1.6, 19-22; 1.6, 33; 2.20, 10-13; 2.24, 17). The phrase κοινὴ συνήθεια is also used to refer to the common usage of certain terms (*Eun.* 2.8, 12, 34, 46; 2.10, 29; 2.13, 19), and is frequently contrasted with scriptural usage, for which Basil uses the term χρήσις modified by τῶν γραφῶν or something similar (*Eun.* 1.6, 21; 1.7, 2; 2.6, 38; 2.8, 13, 47; 2.24, 14).

[17] Richard Paul Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 265; David G. Robertson, "Relatives in Basil of Caesarea," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 279–80 and n. 11; and especially Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 136–143.

or the Son (homonymy),[18] or that different words like 'unbegotten' and 'invisible' can mean exactly the same thing in the case of God (synonymy).[19] Basil's appeal to common usage is, at least in part, meant to contradict Eunomius's claim that names operate entirely differently when applied to mundane and divine realities.[20]

Common usage is distinct from scriptural usage, though for Basil in practice they are never opposed.[21] Scriptural language about God operates on the same principles as ordinary human language, even if—as we shall see—our ordinary language must be purified. Only once in *Contra Eunomium* does Basil explain in sufficient detail what he means by "common usage." He makes clear that there are *two* aspects of the common usage of a term. First, as we said above, the common usage of a term indicates how an ordinary speaker of a language would normally understand the term. In other words, the common usage of term F dictates the notion (ἐννοία) that is impressed upon the mind of an ordinary person when she hears term F.[22] For example, when an ordinary person hears the term γέννημα, she understands this to mean, according to Basil, that the γέννημα is "the one who has been brought into being by the other through begetting."[23] The second aspect of a term's common usage is its universal applicability. When term F is said of multiple entities, it means the same thing in every case. This universal applicability extends even to God: the notion suggested by term F when used according to its common

---

[18] *Eun.* 2.25-29. I.e., 'light' means 'unbegotten' when applied to the Father, but 'begotten' when applied to the Son because of the synonymy that obtains for simple beings.

[19] *Eun.* 1.8.

[20] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 137–8.

[21] *Eun.* 1.6, 19-21 (SChr 299: 184 Sesboüé); 2.8, 12-14 (SChr 305: 32 Sesboüé).

[22] *Eun.* 2.10, 16-21 (SChr 305: 38 Sesboüé).

[23] *Eun.* 2.10, 21 (SChr 305L 38 Sesboüé).

usage applies to both mundane and divine realities. Returning to our example, the Son and any human being, or even any sort of offspring, can be called a γέννημα and in every case it refers to one who has been brought into being by another through begetting.[24]

From Basil's example of γέννημα, however, it is clear that "common usage" cannot primarily refer to how an ordinary uneducated person would understand a term, but rather to how the term is understood in typical philosophical discourse.[25] It is unlikely that an ordinary speaker of Greek would have thought of the idealized notion described above when she heard γέννημα. Rather, that notion is derived by abstracting from the range of meanings of the word γέννημα what is common in each instance of its usage. For example, elsewhere Basil mentions that γέννημα could be used for the products of the vine or aborted fetuses.[26] Yet even in both of these cases Basil's notion of γέννημα obtains: each has been brought into being by another through begetting. The notion that γέννημα impresses on the mind must hold true for all entities called a γέννημα.

The example of γέννημα hints that some words have multiple common usages. This is explicit, for example, when Basil sets out to examine how the term 'conceptualization' is used according to common usage. He first discusses the epistemological process whereby the intellect divides what appears simple at first glance into its multiple aspects.[27] But Basil acknowledges a second common usage of the term 'conceptualization': non-existent fabrications of the mind.[28] Thus Basil's deployment of

---

[24] *Eun.* 2.10, 21-23 (SChr 305: 38 Sesboüé).

[25] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 136 and 142.

[26] *Eun.* 2.8, 25-31 (SChr 305: 32–4 Sesboüé).

[27] *Eun.* 1.6, 21-29.

[28] *Eun.* 1.6, 29-33.

arguments based on common usage is made more complex by the fact that some terms have multiple common usages, not merely a single one.[29] In such cases, it then becomes necessary to determine which sense is appropriate for the context. For example, Basil maintains that there are two common usages of 'to beget.' It can give rise to the notion of the begetter's passion or the begetter's affinity to the one begotten.[30] Basil argues that when we are speaking about the divine begetting, which for Basil is incorporeal and impassible, only the first common usage is inapplicable. Hence the divine begetting communicates only the notion that the Father has affinity with the Son.[31] But a human father also has affinity with his son, so the first common notion of begetting obtains in this case. It just that for humans, the second obtains as well because human begetting involves passion.

Such a maneuver on the part of Basil may seem to indicate that he is equivocating on the significance of common usage. If Basil chooses only one of two common usages of 'to beget' as appropriate for God, he seems to be contradicting his claim that words used according to common usage have universal applicability. But in reality Basil makes a distinction between common usage for created realities and common usage for divine realities. In the example of 'to beget' mentioned above, Basil actually says that the term signifies two things "according to common usage *here below*" (κατὰ τὴν ὧδε συνήθειαν). Such a distinction between common usage for created realities and divine

---

[29] For example, Basil says that according to common usage, an interval (διάστημα) must indicate a span of time or age (ἢ χρόνοις ἢ αἰῶσιν) (*Eun.* 2.13, 19-20).

[30] *Eun.* 2.24, 16-18 (SChr 305: 98–100 Sesboüé).

[31] *Eun.* 2.24, 19-31 (SChr 305: 100 Sesboüé).

realities is found elsewhere in Basil's corpus.[32] Yet it would be mistaken to think that Basil places a wedge between "our" common usage for mundane realities and the more philosophical/theological common usage for divine realities "there above." The common usage of terms *in theological contexts* is attained by purifying them, as they are commonly used "here below," of their inappropriate or irrelevant content. For Basil, this means primarily removing their corporeal or materialistic overtones.[33] The purified common usage then meets the two criteria that Basil stated in the example of γέννημα: (1) impression of a particular notion of what it means to be called by term F, and (2) universal applicability. Hence, the begetter's affinity with the one begotten signified by 'to beget' is universal: it holds true for both human beings and God. Only created begetters experience passion.

In Eunomius's theory of names, names were said of God and creatures equivocally. For example, 'father' had intrinsic corporeal overtones for Eunomius and therefore must mean different things when predicated of God and men.[34] Basil's appeal to *purified* common usage is a rejection of Eunomius's equivocity. He agrees with Eunomius that 'father' is not applied to God and men in the ordinary, corporeal sense of the term, but disagrees that the name is used equivocally. He therefore formulates a notion of fatherhood that results in a univocal use of 'father' in divine and human contexts. Basil is very concerned that all our names for God be literally true of God (excepting metaphors), not just one name as Eunomius thought.

---

[32] Cf. *Spir.* 21.52, and *Fid.* 3 (PG 31: 684), where Basil says that "if we were apply 'Father' to God entirely according to our usage (τὸ πατὴρ ὁλόκληρον κατὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν χρῆσιν), we would be impious."

[33] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 138–43.

[34] *Apol.* 16.

Therefore, Basil's appeal to common usage is more complex than it first appears to be. It is not simply an appeal to how ordinary people use language. Rather, it is an appeal to the notion encapsulated in term F when F is a term that can be applied to both mundane and divine realities. One arrives at these universal notions by purifying terms of their corporeal and materialistic connotations. This purification is achieved by abstracting the notion that is common in each instance when an entity is called by term F. It is common usage that plays the most significant role in Basil's theology. Purified basic notions based on common usage are the foundation for Basil's understanding of what names mean when applied to God.

II. Derived notions: Basil's defense of conceptualization

Other notions are derived by reflecting upon basic notions. Basil's preferred term for these is 'conceptualization' (ἐπίνοια). His doctrine of conceptualization has been much studied.[35] There is general agreement that Basil viewed conceptualization as an

[35] Antonio Orbe, *La Epinoia: Algunos preliminaires históricos de la distinción κατ' ἐπίνοιαν* (Rome: Pontificia universitas gregoriana, 1955), 36–45; Th. Dams, "La Controverse Eunonéenne" (Ph.D. diss., Institut Catholique de Paris, 1951), 149–56 [n.b. I have been unable to obtain this dissertation]; Bernard Charles Barmann, "The Cappadocian Triumph over Arianism" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1966), 72–8; Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979), 375–77; Bernard Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome suivi de Eunome Apologie*, SChr 299 (Paris: Cerf, 1982), 72–3 and 182–3 n. 2; Volker Henning Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea: Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 75–8; Bernard Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité: Un acte théologique au IV^e siècle* (Paris: Descleé, 1998), 70–77; Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, 241–7; Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 191–4; John Behr, *The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 285–6; Stephen M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical*

intellectual process that made accurate and useful knowledge of a thing possible without comprehension of a thing's essence. At the same time, 'conceptualization' is an ambiguous term, referring to both the activity of reflection upon a thing and the end-result of that reflection. Scholars have suggested several possible sources or at least precedents for Basil's doctrine, both philosophical and Christian.[36] Origen is frequently cited as the source of Basil's discussion of conceptualization in relation to Christ in *Contra Eunomium* 1.7, 1-31. Most recently, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz had argued for a 'conceptualist' interpretation of conceptualization, by which he means that "conceptualizations are only conceptions in minds, and hence have no extra-mental reality."[37] I concur with this interpretation.

Most studies of Basil's understanding of conceptualization have considered it on its own, but I argue that it is a key element in his notionalist theory of names. I have two goals in this section. First, I will explore how Basil derives notions from basic notions and how they are connected with names. It is important for our understanding of his notionalist theory of names to distinguish conceptualization as a process from the same as a notion. For names are connected with the resultant notion, not the process. Second, I will compare Basil's understanding of conceptualization with that of Origen. Even

---

Truth (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 52–4; Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 168–79.

[36] Orbe, *La Epinoia*, 3–36; Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 376; G. C. Stead, "Logic and the Application of Names to God," in Lucas F. Mateo-Seco and Juan L. Bastero, eds., *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la Produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1988), 309–12 and 315–6; Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea*, 75 n. 90 and 76–7 n. 82; Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, 241–3 and 248; Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 192–3; Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 286; Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 172 and 175.

[37] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 168.

though Basil's use of Origen's doctrine of conceptualization has been frequently noted, there has been little discussion of how Basil uses him and how his appropriation of Origen harmonizes with his overall doctrine of conceptualization. I will argue (1) that Origen's and Basil's doctrines differ in significant ways, even though they share the belief that conceptualizations reveal the ways in which God acts toward and relates to human beings, and (2) that Basil's appeal to Origen is fundamentally polemical, intending to assert the revered Origenian tradition against Eunomian innovation. Andrew Radde-Gallwitz divides Basil's discussion of conceptualization into four stages, which I adopt.

Stage one: the meaningfulness of conceptualizations

Here Basil refutes Eunomius's claim that words are meaningless if they have no external referent, being merely noise of the tongue.[38] This refutation represents one of Basil's clearest statements of his notionalism. In response to Eunomius, Basil argues that, even if conceptualizations refer to non-existent things, there are still concepts of them that are present to the mind. He uses the example of mythological centaurs and Chimaera (κενταύρων … καὶ χιμαίρας): these creatures are surely imaginary, but once 'centaur' or 'Chimaera' is spoken, the creature does not "dissolve together with the noise of the tongue, seeing that the false concepts remain in the mind after the voice is entirely dissipated into the air."[39] The concepts of fictitious things without external referents, whether dreamt during sleep or imagined by the idle mind, are retained in the memory and can be uttered at will, but "it is not the case that these mental impressions dissolve

[38] *Eun*. 1.6, 1-18; see Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 171.

[39] *Eun*. 1.6, 8-11 (SChr 299: 184 Sesboüé).

together with the words that expressed them."[40] Hence names primarily signify notions; whether they also signify things is secondary.

Dexippus, the early fourth-century Neoplatonist commentator upon Aristotle, makes a similar argument regarding the fact that names primarily signify concepts and things secondarily, against Sosigenes the Peripatetic who maintained that names signified things.[41] In the first part of his response to Sosigenes, Dexippus notes that we can make statements about things that are not present before us, such as the past and the future, as well as about non-existent things like centaurs and goat-stags (ἱπποκενταύρους καὶ τραγελάφους), and what madmen and ecstatics speaks. If Sosigenes is correct, "we would not be able to name anything that did not exist."[42] Though the polemical contexts of Basil are Dexippus are different, their common appeal to mythological creatures as part of an argument for that fact that names signify notions is striking.

Stage two: conceptualization according to the common notion

In the second stage of the argument, Basil discusses conceptualization on the basis of the common notion of the term.[43] He first treats it as a fundamental intellectual process.

> Whatever seems simple and singular upon a general survey by the mind (ταῖς ἀθρόαις ἐπιβολαῖς τοῦ νοῦ),[44] but which appears complex and

[40] *Eun.* 1.6, 15-16 (SChr 299: 184 Sesboüé).

[41] *in Cat.* 1.3.

[42] *in Cat.* 1.3 (CAG 7.2: 7, 23 Busse): καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν μὴ ὑφεστηκὸς ὠνομάζομεν; trans. Dillon 26.

[43] *Eun.* 1.6, 21-57; see Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 171–4.

> plural upon detailed scrutiny and thereby is divided by the mind—this sort of thing is said to be divided through conceptualization alone. For example, at first glance the body may seem to be simple, but when reasoning is used it reveals that the body is complex, dissolving it through conceptualization into the things out of which it is constituted: color, shape, solidity, size, and so forth.[45]

Basil makes a distinction between two mental processes: the general overview of an object upon first glance and the detailed analysis of the same upon further reflection. The knowledge of an object acquired by conceptualization is more nuanced and accurate than that gained initially.[46] "Reasoning" mentally breaks the body down into its components; these components are not conceptualizations (understood as the end-results of the process), but are arrived at by means of the process of conceptualization. "In other words, 'epinoia' (i.e. conceptualization) here names the faculty by which things that are in reality inseparable are separable by analysis."[47]

In the same stage Basil offers another description of conceptualization: "After an initial concept (τὸ πρῶτον … νόημα) has arisen for us from sense perception, the more subtle and precise reflection (ἐπενθύμησις) about the intellectual object is called conceptualization."[48] Is Basil talking about the process or the end-result here? The answer hinges on how ἐπενθύμησις is understood. Most scholars think it refers to the

---

[44] See Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 172, for a discussion of the mixed philosophical pedigree of this phrase.

[45] *Eun*. 1.6, 22-29 (SChr 299: 184 Sesboüé).

[46] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 172.

[47] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 173.

[48] *Eun*. 1.6, 41-44 (SChr 299: 186 Sesboüé).

process of reflection.[49] This seems to be corroborated by a marginal note that many manuscripts incorporated into the main body of Basil's text directly following the passage just cited: "Thus common usage calls it a 'reflection' (ἐπιλογισμός), though improperly."[50] Some ancient reader thought it necessary to supply the name for the end-result of the process that remained unnamed in Basil's text.

Here conceptualization is that "more subtle and precise reflection" upon the basic notion ("the initial concept" and "the intellectual object"). Basil uses the above-mentioned example of grain to show the distinction: "For example, the concept of 'grain' exists in everybody as something simple, by means of which we recognize grain as soon as we see it. But when we examine grain in detail we come to consider more things about it, and use different designations to indicate these different objects of thought."[51] As mentioned earlier, the concept of 'grain' is a common notion and this notion is the basis for deriving other notions through the process of conceptualization. All the resultant derived notions ("the different objects of thought") are assigned distinct names ("different designations") because each notion communicates a distinct aspect of grain ("more things about it"). The notions that Basil derives from 'grain' are given the designations 'fruit', 'nourishment', and 'seed'. Grain "is 'fruit' as the result of the farming that has been completed, 'seed' as the beginning of the farming to come, and 'nourishment' as what is suitable for the development of the body of the one who eats

---

[49] Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea*, 76; Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 286; Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 173.

[50] See the critical apparatus at *Eun*. 1.6, 43 (SChr 299: 186 Sesboüé).

[51] *Eun*. 1.6, 44-47 (SChr 299: 186 Sesboüé).

it."[52] Hence names are given to the various conceptualizations that describe various aspects of the basic notion. The conceptualizations of grain are ways in which grain is viewed at particular stages of its existence (the source or end-result of farming) or how it relates to human beings (food). Such aspects say nothing about grain *qua* substance.

Basil then provides a general description of conceptualization as a process: "generally speaking, all things recognized through sense-perception and which seem simple in substrate but which admit of a complex account upon further consideration are said to be considered by conceptualization."[53] This concludes his discussion of the meaning of conceptualization on the basis of common usage. His general description is applicable to both examples: the body and the grain. Both are complex, material objects. On the one hand, conceptualization can be used to analyze a material object into its constituents (even though physically inseparable)—this use of conceptualization says something about the object itself, though not about its substance. On the other hand, conceptualization can also be used to analyze a material object into its historical or relative aspects—this use also says nothing about the object in itself. Note Basil's progression: from the analysis of complex, material objects *qua* object to *qua* history and relations. In what follows, Basil continues the progression: he moves from complex, material objects to simple, immaterial objects.

Stage three: the conceptualizations of Christ

[52]*Eun*. 1.6, 49-51 (SChr 299: 186 Sesboüé).

[53] *Eun*. 1.6, 54-57 (SChr 299: 186–8 Sesboüé). At line 57, read ἐπινοίᾳ for ἐπινοία, clearly a misprint.

In the third stage Basil shifts from discussing conceptualizations on the basis of common usage to on the basis of scriptural usage, thereby shifting from ordinary knowledge to theological knowledge. He also shifts to discussing Christ, whom Basil believes is immaterial and simple.[54] Yet when conceptualizations are discussed in relation to Christ, they are not derived from basic notions but revealed by Christ himself. Basil says: "When our Lord Jesus Christ spoke about himself … he did so by means of certain distinguishing marks (ἰδιώμασί τισι) considered in connection with him. He called himself 'door', 'way', 'bread', 'vine', 'shepherd', and 'light', even though he is not a polyonym."[55] So far Basil does not connect these names with conceptualizations. But he does so when he continues:

> All these names do not carry the same meaning as one another. For 'light' signifies one thing, 'vine' another, 'way' another, and 'shepherd' yet another. Though our Lord is one in substrate, and one substance, simple and not composite, he calls himself by different names at different times, using designations that differ from one another for different conceptualizations.[56]

Basil is clear that the multiple names that Christ uses for himself do not indicate that he is complex, as would be the case if names revealed substance. Rather, because each name Christ uses reveals a conceptualization, his simplicity is preserved and he is not a polyonym. The various names of Christ indicate various aspects of Christ—but what sort of aspects? Basil says: "On the basis of his different activities and his relation to the

---

[54] *Eun*. 1.7, 1-31; see Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 174–77.

[55] *Eun*. 1.7, 4-9 (SChr 299: 188 Sesboüé).

[56] *Eun*. 1.7, 9-15 (SChr 299: 188–90 Sesboüé).

objects of his divine benefaction, he employs different names for himself."[57] Basil then describes what the names 'light', 'vine', and 'bread' describe about Christ. For example, he is called 'vine' because "he nurtures those who have been planted in him by faith so that they may bear the fruits of good works."[58] The conceptualizations of Christ, then, describe Christ's activities toward and relation to humanity.[59] They reveal nothing about his simple substance. In the third stage, Basil has applied his general theory of conceptualization, described in the second stage, to Christ. In its main points, it is consistent: conceptualization enables one to discern numerous aspects of an entity that appears simple at first glance (whether or not the entity is complex or simple in actuality) and these aspects are conceptual. But there is an important difference. In the second stage, conceptualizations were derived by reflection and then named; in the third stage, the names of the conceptualization are revealed and then the significance of each conceptualization is determined through reflection.

Stage four: the conceptualizations applied to God

The first three stages have been preparation for the fourth stage, in which Basil turns from Christ to the "God of the universe."[60] Here he argues that Eunomius's primary name 'unbegotten' refers to a conceptualization and thus does not disclose substance. But

---

[57] *Eun*. 1.7, 15-17 (SChr 299: 190 Sesboüé). Eusebius of Caesarea maintained that such names corresponded to the divine powers in Christ; see *Eccl. theo.* 2.10 and 2.14.

[58] *Eun*. 1.7, 21-23 (SChr 299: 190 Sesboüé).

[59] The case of 'light' is complex. Basil says that the name 'light' indicates both the "inaccessibility of the glory in the divinity" and that Christ illuminates believers with the splendor of knowledge. 'Light' is both a common name for God and a particular name for Christ. See Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 177 n. 30.

[60] *Eun*. 1.7, 32 – 8, 69; see Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 177–9.

'unbegotten' (and other similar names like 'incorruptible') are not revealed by scripture (as the names of Christ were) but are names applied to notions derived by reflecting upon basic notions. Basil says: "We say that the God of the universe is 'incorruptible' and 'unbegotten', designating him with these names according to various aspects (κατὰ διαφόρους ἐπιβολάς)."[61] Basil's terminology here is reminiscent of his first description of conceptualization as a process in stage two—and his methodology is as well. Such names refer to the notions derived from the basic notion of the divine life.[62] This is clear from the following:

> Whenever we consider ages past, we find that the life of God transcends every beginning and say that he is 'unbegotten'. Whenever we stretch our mind forward to the ages to come, we designate the one who is without boundary, infinite, and comprehended by no terminal point as 'incorruptible'. Therefore, just as 'incorruptible' is the name we give him because his life is without an end, so too is 'unbegotten' the name given because his life is without a beginning, when we consider each by conceptualization.[63]

---

[61] *Eun*. 1.7, 35-37 (SChr 299: 192 Sesboüé).

[62] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 177 and 178 n. 33.

[63] *Eun*. 1.7, 37-44 (SChr 299: 192 Sesboüé). At line 44, read τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ θεωρούτων ἡμῶν ἑκάτερα, following several important mss., a reading also witnessed to by Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* 2.507 (GNO I: 374, 12 Jaeger).

Basil derives the conceptualization of 'unbegotten' from the basic notion of 'life'.[64] Though Basil treats the divine life as a basic notion, he does not say how we know it. Perhaps he views is as a kind of common notion: "God is alive." But it is more likely that it is derived from scriptural passage like John 5:26 (*as the Father has life in himself*). Further on, Basil implies that certain other names of God, like 'creator', 'wise', 'provident', 'invisible', and 'unchangeable' can be derived from certain passages of scripture which are treated as encapsulating basic notions about God.[65] For example, Basil says: "When it is said that *he made the darkness his hiding-place* [Ps 17:12], we are taught that his nature is invisible."[66] Thus, the name 'invisible'. However he thought human beings come by the basic notion of the divine life, it is the basis for several derived notions about God, each of which has a name that is applicable to God and reveals a distinct aspect about him. Note that the conceptualizations of 'unbegotten' and 'incorruptible' name aspects of God from a human point of view.[67] Conceptualizations of God describe God in relation to human beings.

Basil's use of Origen

As mentioned earlier, it is generally acknowledged that Basil is principally drawing on Origen in the third stage of his argument. But two questions remain

---

[64] See also *Eun*. 1.15, 4-7 (SChr 299: 224 Sesboüé): "When our intellect scrutinizes whether *God who is over all* [Rom 9:5] has some cause superior to himself, then, unable to conceive of any, it designates the fact that his life is without beginning as 'unbegotten'." See also *Eun.* 1.16, 1-13. At *Eun*. 2.29, 20, Basil says: "the life has unbegottenness as a concomitant" (SChr 305: 122 Sesboüé).

[65] *Eun*. 1.8, 34-42.

[66] *Eun.* 1.8, 38-40 (SChr 299: 196 Sesboüé).

[67] Radde-Gallwitz, "Seek and You Shall Find," 178.

unanswered: How does Basil use Origen? How does Basil's appropriation of Origen in stage three mesh with his overall doctrine of conceptualization in all four stages? In order to answer these questions, we need to describe Origen's understanding of conceptualization and compare it to Basil's.

Basil's deployment of conceptualization in his theology is polemically motivated; indeed, it is necessitated by his opponent's disparagement of the term. It has been suggested that Origen's use of conceptualization has both Mesoplatonist and anti-Gnostic motivations.[68] A brief look at Philo will help us elucidate the Mesoplatonist concerns. When speaking of human knowledge of God, he states: "Though the substrate is one and the same, the names differ in conceptualizations" (εἰ καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἕν καὶ ταὐτόν ἐστιν, ἐπινοίαις αἱ κλήσεις διαφέρουσι).[69] The transcendence and simplicity of God necessitates that the human mind pass from the singularity of the divine essence to a plurality of human thoughts about God; these are the conceptualizations. They permit a circumscription of God, not knowledge of the divine essence itself. The human mind in its complexity and finiteness cannot comprehend the simple God as a whole but must be content with piecemeal conceptual perspectives on God. Once accurate thoughts about God are formulated they can be given names. Thus the different names for God correspond to the various conceptualizations.

---

[68] See Marguerite Harl, *Origène et la Fonction révélatrice du Verbe Incarné* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958), 94–95; Michael Ghattas, "Die ἐπίνοια-Lehre bei Origenes und Didymos dem Blinden von Alexandria," in W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg, eds., *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts* (Leuven: University Press, 1999), 527; Henri Crouzel, "Le contenu spirituel des dénominations du Christ selon le Livre I du *Commentaire sur Jean* d'Origène," in idem and Antonio Quacquarelli, eds., *Origeniana Secunda: Second colloque international des études origéniennes* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1980), 131–132; and Henri Crouzel, "Le Christ Sauveur selon Origène," *Studia Missionalia* 30 (1981): 68.

[69] Philo, *Her.* 23, 1-2 (PO 3: 5 Wendland).

Origen has much the same theory about Christ, whose "substrate is one, but with respect to the conceptualizations, there are many names for the different things."[70] This fact is the basis of Origen's theological methodology: a full understanding of Christ demands determining what each of the names of Christ means.[71] The names scripture uses for Christ—like 'word'—cannot be taken in their ordinary sense; when applied to Christ, each has a meaning that differs from its meaning in mundane contexts, though the two meanings are analogous. Therefore, like Basil, Origen sees conceptualizations as derived notions. The theologian reflects on the basic notions that correspond to the ordinary sense of the names and from that sense determines the conceptualization of that name, that is, what it means when used of Christ. For example, a 'door' is that which one enters in order to get to another place (the basic notion), but when 'door' is said of Christ it means that "through which one enters into highest blessedness."[72] The scriptural names for Christ therefore both give access to his conceptualizations and are labels for them once they are known. It must be stressed that for Origen conceptualizations, though true, are not real but conceptual. Henri Crouzel sums it up well: "the distinctions of the ἐπίνοιαι are not distinctions in being: the word ἐπίνοια actually designates a human manner of considering things which are able to have a foundation in reality—such is the

---

[70] Origen, *Hom. Jer*. 8.2, 10-12 (SChr 232: 358 Nautin): τὸ μὲν ὑποκείμενον ἕν ἐστιν, ταῖς δὲ ἐπινοίαις τὰ πολλὰ ὀνόματα ἐπὶ διαφόρων ἐστίν. In the continuation of this passage, Origen describes the different things we think about Christ when is considered as wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and intelligence. See also *Comm. Jo.* 1.200 (even though *epinoiai* are distinguished in the Savior, his *ousia* is not similarly distinguished) and *Comm. Rom.* 5.6.7 (Christ is one in *ousia* but designated in many ways).

[71] The methodology is frequently outlined, but most clearly at: *Princ*. 1.2.1, 1.2.13; *Comm. Jo.* 1.52-57, 1.118-128, and 1.153-157.

[72] *Comm. Jo.* 1.11 [54], 20-21 (SChr 120 bis: 86 Blanc).

case for the ἐπίνοιαι of Christ—but without there being separate realities that correspond to this distinction of concepts: the ἐπίνοιαι is frequently contrasted to the reality designated by ὑπόστασις or πρᾶγμα."[73]

Origen never specifies precisely how he understands the connection between a conceptualization and its associated name. He speaks of conceptualizations being revealed by names,[74] but also of the scriptural authors coining names to express conceptualizations.[75] Hence conceptualizations are primary and names secondary. Some conceptualizations are discovered only by names, whereas others are first discovered then given names. It is clear enough, however, that names function as tags for conceptualizations. Nonetheless, when speaking of the names of Christ, Origen consistently thinks of names as revelatory of conceptualizations.

Origen is clearer about what conceptualizations and their associated names do reveal. He asserts that the names of the Son "do not give his subsistence (ὑπόστασις) nor do they make his substance (οὐσία) clear. We do not yet mean this or that, but what his substance is like."[76] Therefore, the names of the Son do not reveal his essence. Rather, according to Origen, they reveal "the things in respect of which the names are predicated, which names the Son of God is named."[77] These are the so-called "good things" (τὰ

---

[73] Crouzel, "Le contenu spirituel des dénominations du Christ," 131–132.

[74] *Comm. Jo.* 1.19 [118], 51-52 (SChr 120 bis: 120 Blanc); *Comm. Matt.* 16.6, 14-17; see also *Comm. Matt.* 17.6, 165-168.

[75] *Comm. Jo.* 19.22 [149], 41-44 (SChr 120 bis: 138 Blanc).

[76] *Comm. Jo.* 1.24 [151], 9-12 (SChr 120 bis: 134 Blanc): ὑπόστασιν αὐτῷ … οὐ διδόασιν οὐδὲ οὐσιάν αὐτοῦ σαφηνίζουσιν, οὐδέπω φαμὲν τοιάνδε ἢ τοιάνδε, ἀλλ' ὅπως ποτὲ οὐσίαν.

[77] *Comm. Jo.* 1.9 [52], 3-4 (SChr 120 bis: 86 Blanc): τὰ πράγματα καθ' ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα κεῖται, ἃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὀνομάζεται. In *Comm. Jo.* 1.9 [52-57], Origen

ἀγαθά) of Christ, most of which pertain to the things he does "because of us" (ὅσα δι' ἡμᾶς) for the salvation and perfection of humanity.[78] Christ is called "by many different names according to the circumstances and beliefs of those who call him such things,"[79] and they are "based on his activities and powers."[80] Hence the names of Christ are labels for the various conceptualizations that describe the various ways in which humans perceive how Christ acts toward and relates to humanity.

On several occasions, Origen lists the names what he considers to be the primary conceptualizations of Christ. Most often, these are 'light of the world', 'way', 'truth', 'life', 'resurrection', 'door', 'good shepherd', 'bread', 'vine', and 'word'—all from John's gospel—but there are many others that Origen investigates.[81] He divides the various names according to whether the Savior has the associated conceptualization only for others or for both himself and others. 'Wisdom', and perhaps 'word', fall into the latter category, whereas 'shepherd', 'way', 'door', 'light', and 'life' fall into the former.[82] All the names that Basil lists as examples of designations that Christ uses to refer to himself according to different conceptualizations come from Origen.

Basil is similar to Origen in other ways. He affirms that Christ is one in substrate but called by different names that correspond to different conceptualizations. He says that

---

enumerates the principle good things of Christ: life, light, truth, way, resurrection, door, wisdom, power, and word.

[78] *Comm. Jo.* 1.118-128. The quote is from *Comm. Jo.* 1.20 [123], 28-29 (SChr 120 bis: 122 Blanc).

[79] *Princ.* 1.2.1 (GCS 22: 28, 2-4 Koetschau; 122 Görgemanns / Karpp): *multis quidem et diversis nominibus pro rebus vel opinionibus appellantium nuncupatur.*

[80] *Princ*. 1.2.4 (GCS 22: 32, 8-9 Koet.; 128 G. / K.): *hae omnes appellationes ex operibus eius ac virtutibus nominatae sunt*.

[81] *Comm. Jo.* 1.22, 1.52-57, 1.126, 1.154; *Cels.* 2.64 and 7.16.

[82] *Comm. Jo.* 1.123, 1.125-128, 1.248-251, and 32.387.

the conceptualizations themselves describe Christ's activities and relations. Nonetheless, Basil's explanations of what each name reveals about Christ do not always correspond to Origen's. Both Origen and Basil connect 'light' with the illumination that Christ bestows upon believers and 'bread' with nourishment for the soul.[83] But Basil diverges from Origen concerning 'vine'. Origen connected it with the ecstasy that Christ gives to the human heart, whereas Basil saw it as what enables Christians to bear the fruit of good works.[84] But this is merely a minor difference in the content of a particular conceptualization.

Though it may seem at this point that Basil faithfully adopted Origen's understanding of conceptualization, there is actually a vast difference between them. Recall how differently Basil used conceptualization in the third and fourth stages, even though conceptualizations in both cases are derived through a process of intellectual reflection. In the third stage, Basil (like Origen) starts with the scriptural names of Christ and derives their conceptualizations from the basic notion of the name (its ordinary meaning). The name of the basic and derived notion is the same. But 'door' means different things when used in mundane and divine contexts. This goes against Basil's principle that names should mean the same things whenever applied regardless of the context. In the third stage, the meaning of 'door' varies based on the nature of the object of which the term is predicated.

But in the fourth stage, Basil (unlike Origen) starts with basic notions about God and derives from them conceptualizations that have different names. This corresponds to

---

[83] Light: *Comm. Jo.* 1.158-180, 1.267, and 2.133-170. Bread: *Comm. Jo.* 1.130-131, 1.205-208, 6.223, and 10.99-101.

[84] Vine: *Comm. Jo.* 1.130-131 and 1.205-208.

how Basil described conceptualization in the second stage. In the second and fourth stages, Basil assigns names once the conceptualization is determined. The basic notion and the derived notion have different names: ‘grain’ and ‘fruit’, ‘(divine) life’ and ‘unbegotten’. They are not related by analogy. Furthermore, the same basic notion can be productive of multiple conceptualizations: ‘grain’ also gives rise to ‘seed’ and ‘(divine) life’ to ‘incorruptible’.

Therefore, Basil’s understanding of conceptualizations in the third stage is somewhat anomalous. His understanding of the meaning of such names as ‘bread’ and ‘vine’ when applied to Christ through conceptualization is similar to how he views allegorical or metaphorical language. Basil recognized such language as producing meanings “that are not suitable when taken in their obvious sense” but that it should not be straightaway rejected nor understood materially. Rather, inquiry should be made into the notions suggested by such language that are appropriate for God.[85] But Basil would surely not view ‘unbegotten’ as metaphorical.

Accordingly, Basil’s importation of Origen into his account of conceptualization can be interpreted in two ways. The first is that he borrowed from Origen to make two points: (1) conceptualization is valid in both mundane and divine contexts, and (2) in the divine context, the resultant conceptualizations reveal the ways in which God acts toward and relates to human beings. The second way of interpreting Basil is that he is simply being polemical, or outright devious, in his adaptation of Origen. By clearly alluding to the great Alexandrian’s doctrine of conceptualization, despite the differences between them, Basil sought to situate his doctrine fully within longstanding ecclesiastical

[85] *Eun*. 2.24, 1-15. The citation is at lines 8-9 (SChr 305: 98 Sesboüé).

traditions against the innovations of Eunomius. Both interpretations are probably correct. The third stage of his argument crucially moves from mundane applications to divine. This was a necessary step in order to prove his argument about ‘unbegotten’ in the fourth stage. Origen had shown that Christ could be known through conceptualization and Basil did well to draw on him. At the same time, one cannot underestimate the polemical advantage Basil gained through his use of Origen.

III. Possible sources for Basil’s notionalist theory of names

As we have seen, one of the chief points of Basil’s theory of names is that names primarily signify notions rather than things. In this, his theory parallels ideas found in both Neoplatonist commentators upon Aristotle and the Homoiousians. I suggest that the Neoplatonists established an intellectual context in which notionalist theories like those of the Homoiousians’ or Basil’s could have developed, but argue that Homoiousian texts constituted one of Basil’s proximate sources for his notionalism. Hence I propose that the development of Christian notionalist theory of names begins with the Homoiousians, even if the theory is most fully articulated by Basil of Caesarea. The Homoiousians formulated precise notions for the names ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ when applied to the divine beings. Basil builds upon the Homoiousians, but differs from them in significant ways, and Basil’s theory has a coherence that is absent from Homoiousian theology.

A Neoplatonist background for Basil’s notionalist theory of names?

In his *On Interpretation* Aristotle rejected the naturalist theory of names in favor of a conventionalist view.[86] But comments in the same work were also the source of a later Aristotelian and Neoplatonist interpretation in which spoken words were held to symbolize primarily thoughts and secondarily things.[87] It may be the case that this Aristotelian/Neoplatonist understanding—which is expressed most clearly in the early fourth-century Dexippus—constitutes, at least in part, the philosophical context in which the Homoiousians and Basil began to formulate a notionalist view of names. In this section I would like to explore this Neoplatonist context to determine the likelihood of its influence upon them.

In *On Interpretation* Aristotle wrote:

> Spoken words are the symbols of experiences in the soul and written words are the symbols of spoken words. Just as the letters are not the same for all people, so neither are speech sounds the same. But the experiences of the soul, which these speech sounds primarily symbolize, are the same for all. And the realities of which our experiences are the likenesses are also identical for all.[88]

Here Aristotle makes a distinction between inner, mental experiences and external realities, which are the same for all human beings, and the vocal and written expressions of them, which differ from language to language. The latter pair is the basis for his

---

[86] *De Interp.* 16a19-29.

[87] See PC III 7a3-12.

[88] Aristotle, *De Interp*. 16a3-8: Ἔστι μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθημάτων σύμβολα, καὶ τὰ γραφόμενα τῶν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ. καὶ ὥσπερ οὐδὲ γράμματα πᾶσι τὰ αὐτά, οὐδὲ φωναὶ αἱ αὐταί· ὧν μέντοι ταῦτα σημεῖα πρώτων, ταὐτὰ πᾶσι παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ ὧν ταῦτα ὁμοιώματα πράγματα ἤδη ταὐτά.

conventionalist view of language. This passage generated much commentary among Aristotelian and Neoplatonist commentators, particularly concerning whether it was in fact true that experiences in the soul are the same for all.[89] But two other interpretive issues are most pertinent to our discussion: (1) what experiences are, and (2) the relationship between mental experiences and external realities.

Directly after the passage cited above, there is a sentence in which Aristotle appears to make a cross-reference to his work *On the Soul*.[90] He then continues: "Just as there are in the soul thoughts which do not involve truth or falsity, and also those which must be either true or false, so too it is in speech."[91] Aristotelian and Neoplatonist commentators interpreted the 'thoughts' (νοήματα) in this line to be the same as the 'experiences' (παθήματα) in the passage cited above, an interpretation which Sorabji notes has some justification in Aristotle himself.[92] Thus Aristotle was interpreted as saying that names (understood as utterances or vocal sounds) signify thoughts primarily and things secondarily.

Clement of Alexandria provides us with one of the earliest pieces of evidence for this interpretation of Aristotle in the eighth book of his *Stromata*, which is probably an unfinished collection of notes published posthumously. Clement writes:

---

[89] Particularly the second-century C.E. Aristotelians Aspasius and Herminus, one of the teachers of Alexander of Aphrodisias; see PC III 7a3-4.

[90] On the problems with the cross-reference, see PC III 2a22.

[91] Aristotle, *De Interp.* 16a9-11: ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ὁτὲ μὲν νόημα ἄνευ τοῦ ἀληθεύειν ἢ ψεύδεσθαι ὁτὲ δὲ ἤδη ᾧ ἀνάγκη τούτων ὑπάρχειν θάτερον, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ·

[92] Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 3.206.

> There are three things connected with vocal sounds. First, the names, which are symbols of thoughts primarily and secondarily of substrates. Second, the thoughts, which are likenesses and impressions of the substrates. Hence in all cases the thoughts are the same because in all cases the same impression is produced from the subjects. But this is not the case for the names because the languages are different. Third, the substrates, which are things from which the thoughts are impressed in us.[93]

Here Clement has summarized the passage from *On Interpretation* cited above, but in every case substituted "thoughts" (νοήματα) for "experiences" (παθήματα). Names are not symbols of experience as in Aristotle, but of thoughts. Similarly, thoughts are the likenesses of things, not experiences as in Aristotle. Likewise, not experiences but thoughts are the same for all. In addition, Clement has made the hierarchy of signification that was merely implicit in Aristotle explicit: "names are symbols of thoughts primarily and secondarily of the substrates." Therefore, Clement is a witness to an interpretation of Aristotle that must have been current among the Aristotelians of his day and would later find favor among Neoplatonists.

The clearest Neoplatonist expression of this interpretation is found in Dexippus, who argued against the view of Sosigenes (one of the teachers of Alexander of Aphrodisias), who held that Aristotle meant that utterances signify things, not thoughts.

---

[93] Clement, *Str.* 8.8.23.1 (GCS 17: 94 Stählin / Früchtel): Τρία ἐστὶ περὶ τὴν φωνήν· τά τε ὀνόματα σύμβολα ὄντα τῶν νοημάτων κατὰ τὸ προηγούμενον, κατ᾽ ἐπακολούθημα δὲ καὶ τῶν ὑποκειμένων, δεύτερον δὲ τὰ νοήματα ὁμοιώματα καὶ ἐκτυπώματα τῶν ὑποκειμένων ὄντα (ὅθεν ἅπασι καὶ τὰ νοήματα τὰ αὐτά ἐστι διὰ τὸ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ὑποκειμένων ἅπασιν ἐγγίνεσθαι τύπωσιν, οὐκέτι δὲ καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα διὰ τὰς διαλέκτους τὰς διαφόρους)· τρίτον δὲ τὰ ὑποκείμενα πράγματα, ἀφ᾽ ὧν ἡμῖν τὰ νοήματα ἐντυποῦνται.

"The ancients," says Dexippus, "declare that the only things signified are objects of thought. Since these are about things and arise from things, it is thoughts which are signified primarily, but on a secondary level things also."[94] One of his key arguments against Sosigenes is that it is possible to speak about past and future events, and non-existent things (like hippocentaurs and goat-stags), and to use meaningless words (like "he is saying nothing"). If utterances signified things, when the items listed in the previous sentences were spoken, they would have to be brought into existence. If this did not happen, then we would be unable to speak about such things. Therefore, Sosigenes cannot be correct and utterances cannot signify things. Rather, they must signify thoughts.[95] I referred to this passage before when discussing the first stage of Basil's account of conceptualization. It constitutes the clearest—but only—demonstrable parallel between Basil and the Neoplatonists.

Something similar to this may lie behind Porphyry's statement (recorded by Iamblichus) that it does not matter what names are used for the gods, since it is the notion (ἔννοια) that the name signifies that counts. Iamblichus rejects Porphyry's idea, saying that only on the basis of a conventionalist view of names does it not matter what names are used. He then affirms a naturalist view of names, saying that names depend on the nature of things.[96] But it seems likely that Iamblichus has not understood the intention of Porphyry's statement. The intent of Porphyry may not have been to assert or deny a

---

[94] Dexippus, *in Cat.* 1.3 (CAG 4.2: 9, 22-25 Busse): μόνα δὲ σημαινόμενα οἱ ἀρχαῖοι λέγουσι τὰ νοήματα, ἐπειδὴ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐστὶ ταῦτα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν πραγμάτων. προηγουμένως μὲν τὰ νοήματα, κατὰ δεύτερον δὲ λόγον καὶ τὰ πράγματα σημαίνεται [partially=PC III 7a6].

[95] See Dexippus, *in Cat.* 1.3 (CAG 4.2: 7, 8 – 8, 23 and 9, 22 – 10, 32 Busse) [= PC III 7a5-6].

[96] Iamblichus, *Myst.* 7.7 (257, 1-8 Des Places).

conventionalist view of names, but rather to express the interpretation of Aristotle under discussion, that that names signify primarily thoughts. Accordingly, Porphyry's point is that what really matters is whether the thought or notion a name signifies is appropriate for the gods, not the vocal sounds used.[97]

I suggest that the Aristotelian and Neoplatonist interpretation of Aristotle as claiming that spoken words symbolize primarily thoughts and secondarily things is the philosophical context for the Homoiousians' and Basil's development of a notionalist view of names. The chief similarities are (1) the insertion of a notional level between names and things, and (2) the fact that names signify notions primarily and things secondarily. But since there is only one demonstrable parallel, it cannot be claimed that either the Homoiousians or Basil were directly influenced by either Aristotelian or Neoplatonists. Perhaps they knew of the passage from Clement, but then again, there is not evidence for it. Nonetheless, the parallels in thought are striking.

This Neoplatonist interpretation seems to have been one of the current topics of debates within philosophical schools starting from the early fourth century. Those Christians who contributed to formulating the notionalist theory of names may have become aware of this interpretation in the course of their education. We know that George of Laodicea studied philosophy in Alexandria before becoming a presbyter in that city.[98] Basil of Ancyra had been a physician before becoming bishop, signaling that he was an educated man.[99] We know more about Caesarean Basil's education. In 348/49 he

---

[97] For other instances of Porphyry's acceptance of this interpretation of Aristotle, see PC III 7a4 and 7a9-10.

[98] Philostorgius, *h.e.* 8.17 (GCS 21: 115 Bidez / Winkelmann); Theodoret, *Haer.* 1.26 (PG 83: 381).

[99] Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 89.

spent a year studying in Constantinople, for a while under the famous rhetor Libanius. From 349/50 to 355/56, he and his friend Gregory studied rhetoric and philosophy in Athens. Basil is known to have studied under the renowned rhetors Prohaeresius (who was a Christian) and Himerius, among others.[100] We do not know what sort of philosophical education was available in Athens at this time, and still less do we know with whom Basil might have studied philosophy.[101] But the culture of the intellectual life of the city shortly after his time there is preserved in Eunapius.[102] At any rate, Basil was trained in rhetoric and philosophy at some of the best institutions of his day. Since both the Homoiousians and Basil of Caesarea had superb educations by contemporary standards, they could have encountered the Aristotelian /Neoplatonist interpretation of Aristotle's *On Interpretation* during their schooling. While this may constitute a context in which they could have developed a notionalist theory of names, there is no evidence that it was determinative for them.

The Homoiousian notions of 'Father' and 'Son'

The Homoiousians were among the first Christian theologians to respond to Heteroousian theology, and they rejected the Heteroousians' theory of names. I suggest that their initial formulation of the notionalist theory of names is best viewed as a

---

[100] Socrates, *h.e.* 4.26.6; Sozomen, *h.e.* 6.17.1.

[101] See my earlier discussion of what we know of Athenian philosophy in the middle of fourth century in Chapter Two, p. 76f.

[102] Eunapius, *VPS*. Eunapius studied in Athens from 362/3 to 366/7; see Robert J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis*, ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs, 28 (Leeds: Francis Cairnes, 1990), 2–4. Prohaeresius and Himerius are included in Eunapius's account; on them, see Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists*, 83–94 and 97–100.

reaction against their opponents' theory. It needs to be said at the outset, however, that Homoiousian notionalism is inchoate and never theorized as in Basil. It is only retrievable from its application.

At the beginning of the theological discussion in the statement of faith produced by the Homoiousian synod held in Ancyra in 358, Basil of Ancyra affirms that Christian faith is in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not in the names favored, or thought to be favored, by the Heteroousians. Basil cites Matthew 28:19 not merely as a scriptural testimony for using these names instead of those preferred by the Heteroousians—namely, 'unbegotten' and 'something begotten'—, but also as a commandment of the Lord to his disciples, that they should use *these* names and no others. Immediately after the citation, Basil adds: "we who are born again in this faith ought to think piously about the notions that arise from the names (τὰς ἐκ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐννοίας)."[103]

This statement does not merely acknowledge the contemporary disagreement over what 'Father' and 'Son' signified. Rather, it suggests a new tactic. As a way out of the confusion, Basil proposes investigating "the notions that arise from the names," in other words, what they mean when applied to divine beings. And so, Basil continues, being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

> when we hear the names, based on the natural notions (ἀπὸ τῶν φυσικῶν ἐννοιῶν)[104] we think of (ἐννοῶμεν) the Father as cause of a substance

[103] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.3.2 (GCS 37: 271, 11-12 Holl / Dummer).

[104] Here I emend Holl / Dummer's ἐν οἷς to ἐννοιῶν and repunctuate his sentence. Holl recognized that the text at this point was corrupt and suggested an addition: πατὴρ ἀεὶ ὅμοιον υἱὸν γεννᾷ. Dummer retained this addition in the apparatus. But this seems unnecessary. The emendation I suggest attempts to make sense of the text as it is, and the phrase is paralleled elsewhere, at *Pan.* 73.7.4 (GCS 37: 274, 6-7 H. / D.): ἡ φυσικὴ ἔννοια.

> like him (αἴτιον ὁμοίας αὐτοῦ οὐσίας), and when we hear the name 'Son', we conceive of (νοήσωμεν) the Son as like (ὅμοιον) the Father whose Son he is.[105]

When we hear the names 'Father' and 'Son', the natural notions that these names trigger in our minds (ἀπὸ τῶν φυσικῶν ἐννοιῶν) enable us to know what these names mean.

This emphasis of the notions of names is revolutionary. Seeing the theories of names of the era as a theological dead-end, they refocus the debate on the notions that lie between the divine names and the divine beings. It is unclear what resources the Homoiousians have drawn upon in making this shift. Of the few possibilities, none can be claimed as a direct influence. Above I discussed the Neoplatonist context as a possibility. But other philosophical sources are possible. Even if my emendation of ἐν οἷς to ἐννοιῶν is not correct, it may well be the case that here Basil of Ancyra is drawing upon the philosophical idea of a common notion, also discussed above. Therefore, Basil may be appealing to the natural notion of the terms 'father' and 'son' that are the common property of all human beings. Indeed, Basil says: "every father is understood as father of a substance like him."[106]

Origen may also have been a source for the Homoiousians. It is well known that in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* Origen explored the meaning of the various titles given to Christ in the scriptures. When speaking of what it means to call him 'Word', Origen spoke about how "one must explain the notion of what is named from the

---

[105] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.3.1-3 (GCS 37: 271, 7-18 H. / D.). See also *Pan.* 73.4.4 (GCS 37: 273, 10-11 H. / D.), where Basil says that 'Father' does not mean "father of an activity but of a substance like him."

[106] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.4.2 (GCS 37: 273, 3 H. / D.).

naming."[107] He adds that it is useful to examine "the notions in relation to which the names are used."[108] He further recommends such a method of investigation for all the other names besides 'Word'.[109] In this regard, the Homoiousians appear to have taken his advice to heart. In the final analysis, however, there is no strong argument for any of these source claims. This turn to notions may be one of the unique achievements of the Homoiousians.

Whatever his sources, Basil of Ancyra specifies what these notions are. As we saw above, according to Basil, 'Father' signifies the one who is the cause of a substance like him (αἴτιον ὁμοίας αὐτοῦ οὐσίας), and 'Son' signifies the one who is as like (ὅμοιον) the Father whose Son he is. George of Laodicea employs the same notions, saying that "the Father is Father of a Son like himself and the Son is like the Father, from which Father he is understood to be Son"[110] and also that the one called 'Father' is "the cause of a Son like himself."[111] The Homoiousians are the first theologians to offer such precise definitions of names applied to God. Note that Basil's understanding of the notions of 'father' and 'son' that he uses to understand 'Father' and 'Son' excludes any corporeal overtones. Basil of Ancyra leaves unexpressed something that Basil of Caesarea does express: it is possible to abstract from our everyday understandings of

---

[107] Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 1.24 [153], 19-20 (SChr 120: 136 Blanc): ἀπὸ τῆς ὀναμασίας ἀναπτυκτέον τήν ἔννοιαν τοῦ ὀνομαζομένου

[108] Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 1.24 [156], 34 (SChr 120: 136 Blanc): τὰς ἐννοίας καθ' ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα κεῖται.

[109] Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 1.157.

[110] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.14.1 (GCS 37: 286, 17-19 Holl / Dummer).

[111] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.14.6 (GCS 37: 287, 5 H. / D.).

what it means to be a father or son, and arrive at a purified notion. As we have seen, purified notions are central to Basil of Caesarea's account of divine names.

What the Homoiousians have done, then, is to introduce a notional order into theological epistemology. A name does not simply communicate substance; rather, a name communicates a notion that is true of the substance to which the name is applied. The Homoiousians not only inserted notions between substances and their names, but also formulated precise notions for the names. The earlier authors, of course, recognized that names had meanings. But these meanings were largely assumed and unexpressed. The Homoiousians are the first to shift attention to the meaning of names and to focus on determining the precise notions associated with the names 'Father' and 'Son'. Hence it seems probable that Basil of Caesarea has taken the Homoiousian focus upon the notions of 'Father' and 'Son' as the starting point for his notionalist theory of names.

Conclusion

Basil formulated his new notionalist theory of names chiefly to attack Heteroousian theology at its foundations. While a name immediately discloses substance in the Heteroousian theory of names, in Basil's notionalist view each name (when uttered or read) primarily gives rise to a mental notion, which is comprised of the meaning of the name. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, this notion in turn describes, or at least corresponds to, a real feature of the name-bearer, but not its substance. Thus the key difference between the Heteroousian and Basilian theory of names is the insertion of a notional level between the nominal and substantial levels.

The advantage of the notionalist theory is that attention can be given to the meanings of names in a way that is impossible with Eunomius's theory. While in the Heteroousian theory, name and substance were inseparable and effectively identical, in Basil's notionalist theory, because of the "mental space" between name and referent in the notional order, the meanings of names can be manipulated. In other words, for Basil there is a creative role for the human mind in understanding and even constructing what names mean when applied to the divine beings. It is not simply a matter of determining, as Eunomius had done, the most accurate descriptor for a substance based on assumed meanings. Rather, one figures out how all the names for God, which have been handed down by scripture and tradition, can be used in a way that is appropriate for God.

While Eunomius envisioned basically a one-to-one correspondence between 'unbegotten' and the divine substance (with other names being synonymous with 'unbegotten'), Basil believes that multiple, non-synonymous names can applied to any substance, even God's, since they primarily refer to notions, which in turn (as we shall see in Chapter Seven) correspond to different non-essential features of that substance. Hence for Basil there is a one-to-one correspondence between names and their notions, not between names and substance as Eunomius had maintained. Eunomius held that each name could have many meanings depending on the dignity of the name-bearer and that a single meaning could be expressed by many names in the case of simple beings. Basil rejects such a theory as rendering human speech about God as effectively meaningless. We can say something true about God using human language, provided that we recognize its limitations by purifying it of inappropriate connotations. Nonetheless, there remains no human word that captures the divine essence.

In general, then, Basil and Eunomius differ over the role of the notional in semantics. For Eunomius, terms give immediate access to ontology; for Basil, a notional level stands between terms and ontology. For Eunomius, a single term correctly names the substance of God. For Basil, many terms can be correctly applied to God, each with their specific notional content; none names the substance of God, but each is true of God. Both Basil and Eunomius appealed to common notions, but Eunomius's appeal seems quite odd given his neglect of notions in his theory of names. In contrast, Basil is very concerned to define the notions of the names that are applied to God.

Unlike Eunomius, Basil does not believe that names common to God and created beings are homonymous; rather, he posits a strong correlation between the use of words in divine and mundane contexts. Basil holds that each name has a notion that holds true for every object to which the term is applied, regardless of whether the term is used in a mundane or divine context. His theory therefore endorses a strong form of univocity for names said commonly of God and creatures. Theological language for Basil is not divorced from how language operates in the created realm. Rather, a term conveys a specific meaning whenever it is used.

However, the notion of a term does not correspond to its ordinary usage in mundane contexts. Such usage saddles a term with inappropriate connotations that are inapplicable when the same term is used of God. Therefore, ordinary language must be purified of its inappropriate connotations in order to be validly used of God. It is this purified meaning conveyed by a term that holds good whether the term is used of created realities or God. Accordingly, the names used of God must be purified of their created or material connotations. Therefore, Basil's univocity comes with a twist.

Basil's notionalist theory of names recognizes a number of sources for notions. In theological contexts, the most important are the basic notions derived from purified common usage, and the conceptualizations formulated by reflection upon them. Some names for God correspond to basic notions, others to conceptualizations. Yet in both cases names operate in the same way: they primarily signify the notion, not the object that bears the name. And so, Basil does not envision all names as corresponding to conceptualizations, but his theory of conceptualization is part of a more comprehensive notionalist theory of names.

Determining the sources for Basil's theory of names is difficult. I have suggested that it represents an appropriation of an interpretation of Aristotle that emerged among second-century Aristotelians (and is witnessed to by Clement) and was adopted by third- and fourth-century Neoplatonists such as Porphyry and Dexippus. Despite a strong but singular parallel between Basil and Dexippus in their proof that names signify primarily notions, there is no evidence for direct influence. One can only conjecture that Basil learned of this interpretation in the course of his studies at Athens. For this reason, I have pointed to the Homoiousians as a proximate source for Basil. Like him, they made the notions connected with names central in their theology. Basil may have recognized the seeds that they planted and nurtured them into maturity, resulting in his notionalist theory of names.

Chapter Six

Basil's Decentralization of 'Unbegotten'

In Chapter One I discussed the centrality of the name 'unbegotten' in the Heteroousian theory of names. In the previous chapter I demonstrated how Basil decentralized 'unbegotten' by categorizing it as one a several conceptualizations derived from basic notions about God. Basil therefore went against the long-standing tradition that considered the term uniquely revelatory of God. But that was not the only way in which Basil decentralized 'unbegotten'. In this chapter, I turn to Basil's arguments against 'unbegotten' in order to prove the primacy of the name 'Father'. Basil's attack on the preferred Heteroousian name for God is two-pronged: not only is 'unbegotten' not a privileged term, but it is also not a particularly useful term for designating God when compared to 'Father'.

Basil's arguments against 'unbegotten' are mostly negative; that is, he argues for its inappropriateness or incorrectness. In addition, his arguments have been adapted from those of others. Accordingly, this chapter not only demonstrates the second way in which Basil decentralized 'unbegotten' but also investigates his complex use of sources. This chapter begins with an investigation of how Basil drew upon Athanasius and Basil of Ancyra in his deployment of Christ's baptismal command in Matthew 28:19, which they had used to argue against non-scriptural divine names, one of which was of course 'unbegotten'. I argue that in this case Basil has drawn upon Athanasius rather than Basil of Ancyra. But I claim as well that Basil of Ancyra's argument provides clues for reconstructing Heteroousian arguments about the Father and Son that were employed in

the late 350s. Next I turn to Basil's arguments for the primacy of 'Father' over against 'unbegotten'. I demonstrate that once again Basil has borrowed from his predecessors, but in this case I argue that Basil owes more to George of Laodicea than Athanasius. Therefore, Basil's arguments against 'unbegotten' for the primacy of 'Father' represents a paradigmatic case for his adaptation of Athanasius through the modifications of the Homoiousians, Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea.

I. "The names that belong to the saving faith"

Basil maintained that belief in the Father and Son was essential for Christian identity. In an effective piece of rhetoric, he equates Eunomius's rejection of the primacy of 'Father' and 'Son' for Christian belief and worship as a lapse into Greek polytheism or Judaism. Following an established tradition, Basil appeals to Christ's baptismal command from Matthew 28:19 to demonstrate the centrality of 'Father' and 'Son' for Christians. While both Athanasius and Basil of Ancyra make a similar argument, I argue that in this case Basil of Caesarea is indebted to Athanasius alone. Nonetheless, I contend that Basil of Ancyra's argument provides us with an insight into contemporary Heteroousian syllogisms employed to prove their main thesis, difference in substance.

I have noted that Eunomius's preferred names for the God of the universe and the Word were 'unbegotten' and 'begotten'. In contrast, Basil of Caesarea argues that the names 'Father' and 'Son' have primacy. In addition to the specific reasons that he separately gives for preferring each name, he maintains that 'Father' and 'Son' are "the names that belong to the saving faith."[1] He judges that Eunomius uses the names

[1] *Eun.* 1.16, 27 (SChr 299: 230 Sesboüé): τὰ τῆς σωτηρίου πίστεως ὀνόματα.

'unbegotten' and 'begotten' instead of these as a surreptitious way of inculcating his blasphemy:

> Since he wants to show that the only-begotten Son and God is unlike the God and Father, he keeps silent about the names of 'Father' and 'Son,' and simply discusses the 'unbegotten' and the 'begotten.' He conceals the names that belong to the saving faith and hands over the doctrines of his blasphemy unveiled, so that, when he has practiced his impiety first with things and then shifted to persons, he might not seem to have said anything slanderous while maintaining that his blasphemy has been prepared by the implication of his account.[2]

But Basil thinks that Eunomius is not simply guilty of subterfuge. For he estimates that Eunomius's statement that God could never admit a begetting if he is unbegotten utterly destroys belief in the Father and the Son.[3] If this were true, Basil writes, "then God is not Father and there is no…."[4] He leaves the consequent unexpressed. Following the ellipsis, Basil adds: "It is better for us to leave this blasphemous statement incomplete."[5] This is one of two instances in the *Contra Eunomium* where Basil is so horrified at the impieties of Eunomius that he cannot even bring himself to utter what he considers a terrible blasphemy.[6] Accordingly, belief in the Father and the Son, and in the Father's begetting of the Son, are deemed essential to Christianity.

---

[2] *Eun.* 1.16, 24-32 (SChr 299: 228–30 Sesboüé).

[3] *Eun.* 1.16, 32 – 17, 13.

[4] *Eun.* 1.17, 11 (SChr 299: 232 Sesboüé).

[5] *Eun.* 1.17, 11-12 (SChr 299: 232 Sesboüé).

[6] The other is at *Eun.* 2.15, 3-4.

Basil identifies such beliefs as that which distinguishes Christianity from both Greek paganism and Judaism, as well as from schismatics, all of whom also believe that God is the founder and creator:

> As I see it, while there is much that distinguishes Christianity from Greek error and Jewish ignorance, I think there is no doctrine in the gospel of our salvation more important than faith in the Father and the Son. For even schismatics, whatever their error might be, agree that God is the founder and the creator (κτίστην καὶ δημιουργόν).[7]

Basil thinks that Eunomius's Christianity is tenuous since he "declares that 'Father' is a pseudonym and that 'Son' only goes so far as a mere designation and thinks that it makes no difference whether one confesses 'Father' or 'founder,' and whether one says 'Son' or 'something made'."[8] Basil's claim that 'Son' is a "mere designation" (προσηγορία ψιλῆ) may be an allusion to Aetius.[9] It is nonetheless an accurate assessment of his opponent's thought because Eunomius viewed 'Son' as synonymous with 'something begotten' and 'something made' and similarly revelatory of the Only-Begotten's substance.[10] But when Basil says that Eunomius thinks of 'Father' as a "pseudonym" (ψευδώνυμον), he does not refer to any text of Eunomius. This is, rather, an interpretation of Eunomius. It is a somewhat tendentious charge that Eunomius thinks that God is called 'Father' falsely, since Eunomius could have said the same about Basil. Eunomius, reviving an earlier Eusebian position, held that 'Father', which because of its

---

[7] *Eun.* 2.22, 15-20 (SChr 305: 88–90 Sesboüé).

[8] *Eun.* 2.22, 20-23 (SChr 305: 90 Sesboüé).

[9] See *Synt*. 8.

[10] *Apol.* 12, 14, 17-19, 22 and 24.

corporeal connotations could not disclose the divine substance, instead indicated God's power or activity of begetting.[11] In contrast, Basil believed that 'Father' indicated "he who provides to another the beginning of being in a nature like his own."[12] Therefore Basil's characterization of Eunomius's thought here amounts to nothing more than a statement that his opponent does not agree with his own understanding of God's Fatherhood. In any event, because of his denigration of 'Father' and 'Son' in favor of certain other terms, Basil maintains that Eunomius's belief is therefore more akin to that of the Greeks and Jews, though in the *Contra Eunomium* Basil does not decide in which group he should be placed. In a later homily, he specifically compares the Heteroousians to the polytheistic Greeks because they worship both God and one of God's works (the Son).[13]

Unlike Eunomius, those of us who true Christians, says Basil, "have not put our faith in the creator (δημιουργός) and something made (ποίημα); rather, we have been sealed in the Father and the Son through the grace received in baptism."[14] It is in this context that Basil appeals to the baptismal practice based on Matthew 28:19: *Go, baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.* Basil's rejoinder here is an example of a charge made by others before him based on how they thought, or wanted to think, their opponents understood the names 'Father' and 'Son', not which names were actually used in the baptismal ritual.[15] Basil's charge is reminiscent of both Athanasius

---

[11] *Apol*. 16.8, 11.12-14 and 24.21-22.

[12] *Eun*. 2.22, 49-50 (SChr 305: 92 Sesboüé).

[13] *Hom.* 24.1.

[14] *Eun.* 2.22, 27-29 (SChr 305: 90 Sesboüé).

[15] See Richard Paul Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 258–9. Jeffery N. Steenson, "Basil of Ancyra and the

and the Homoiousian Basil of Ancyra because all three accuse their opponents of altering the baptismal formula and appeal to Matthew 28:19 in the context of refuting 'unbegotten' (or 'ingenerate' in Athanasius's case).

But before investigating how either Athanasius or Basil of Ancyra may have influenced Basil of Caesarea, it must first be noted that there was a long tradition of citing the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19 as a summary of Christian belief. It was included in the creed used at the church of Caesarea in Palestine that was cited by Eusebius of Caesarea in 325.[16] The same Eusebius later cited the verse in an anti-Marcellan context as a summary of the gospel taught by the Lord himself.[17] Matthew 28:19 is also cited in the Second Dedication Creed of 341[18] and is alluded to the Sirmium Confession of 357.[19] Appeal to Matthew 28:19 as a summary of Christian belief is therefore not unique to Athanasius or Basil of Ancyra. Nonetheless, the way in which they polemically employed this verse is unique and parallels that of Basil of Caesarea. In what follows, I will examine the deployment of the verse on the part of both Athanasius and Basil of Ancyra in order to assess their influence on Basil of Caesarea.

On four different occasions spanning nearly twenty years, Athanasius had variously charged that his opponents baptized into the creator (κτίστην) and creature, the maker (ποιητὴν) and thing-made, the ingenerate and generate, or the uncreated and

---

Course of Nicene Orthodoxy" (D.Phil. diss. Oxford, 1983), 136 n. 14, lumps this charge together with the charge that the Heteroousians baptized into the death of Christ. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, 332–44, has shown that they are different and that the latter has some plausibility.

[16] Urk. 22.5.

[17] *Marc.* 1.1.9.

[18] Dok. 41.4.

[19] Dok. 49.

creature, instead of Father and Son.[20] In three out of the four contexts Athanasius cites Matthew 28:19 because it is the Lord's commandment to first teach, then baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Athanasius states that baptizands need first to learn the correct meanings of the names in order to have correct belief in those named; only when belief is correct will baptism be effective.[21] Athanasius appeals to the baptismal formula as a self-evident refutation of "Arian" pairs of names he listed, provided that the names are understood as he understands them.

The Homoiousians have a more nuanced argument. At the beginning of the theological section in the statement of faith produced by the Homoiousian synod held in Ancyra in 358, Basil of Ancyra says:

> Our faith is in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For thus our Lord Jesus Christ taught his disciples, saying: *Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* [Matt 28:19]. Therefore, we who are born again in this faith ought to think piously about the notions that arise from the names. For he did not say: "Baptizing them in the name of the fleshless and enfleshed," or "of the immortal and the one who died," or "of the unbegotten and begotten," but *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*[22]

---

[20] *Or.* 1.34.4-6; *Or.* 2.42.3-4; *Decr.* 31.3; and *Syn.* 36.3.

[21] *Or.* 2.42.4.

[22] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.3.1-3 (GCS 37: 271, 7-15 Holl / Dummer).

Basil of Ancyra makes a distinction between names and notions that is not found in Athanasius at all.[23] Basil notes that those who have been baptized according to the Trinitarian formula of Matthew 28:19 must "think piously about the notions that arise from the names (τὰς ἐκ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐννοίας)"—the names that the Lord himself instructed his disciples to use, not the names favored by the Heteroousians. I discussed this passage and incipient Homoiousian notionalism in Chapter Five.[24]

Scholars have noted the similarity between the Homoiousian passage just cited and the four texts in Athanasius mentioned earlier.[25] It seems very likely that Basil has modeled his argument on Athanasius's, but the similarities should not blind us to the differences between them. First, Basil of Ancyra's citation of Matthew 28:19 may have been as much motivated by Athanasian usage as it was by earlier Eusebian usage—here I mean both the bishop and the alliance—and a desire to rescue the verse from its blasphemous usage in the Sirmium Confession of 357. Second, Athanasius's and Basil's lists of pairs into which one may be baptized do not overlap. Basil listed the fleshless and enfleshed, the immortal and the one who died, and the unbegotten and begotten; Athanasius the creator and creature, the maker and thing-made, and the ingenerate and generate (or the uncreated and creature). If we allow for an equivalence in meaning between Athanasius's ingenerate-generate (or uncreated-creature) and Basil's

---

[23] Thus I disagree with Steenson's statement that "Basil of Ancyra and Athanasius occupy the same position against what might be described as the nominalism characterizing the radical Arian treatment of these names" ("Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy," 136).

[24] See above p. 221–5.

[25] Jaakko Gummerus, *Die homöusianische Partei bis zum Tode des Konstantius* (Leipzig: Georg Böhme, 1900), 69 n. 1; Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979), 158; and Steenson, "Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy," 136.

unbegotten-begotten pairs, there is still only one correspondence between them. Therefore, if Basil is drawing on Athanasius, he is modifying him considerably.[26]

While the difference in pairs used by Athanasius and Basil has little impact on the overall point of their arguments, it may be of some significance for reconstructing contemporary Heteroousian argumentation. For the first two pairs listed by Basil may indicate what sort of syllogistic arguments the Heteroousians were employing in the late 350s. Based mainly on a statement in Eunomius's *Apologia apologiae*, Kopecek argues that the Heteroousians employed those pairs listed by Basil to argue that the Father was different from the Son in substance.[27] Syllogisms employing such pairs would have proceeded thus:

(1) That which is enfleshed has nothing in common with that which is fleshless.

(2) By nature, the Father is fleshless and the Son is enfleshed.

Therefore, there is no commonality of nature between Father and Son.

Kopecek's suggestion finds additional support in a text from Aetius:

> If the Word became flesh, he became composite in nature. He would not have become this, if he were not receptive of composition by nature. How, then, can the one who is obviously receptive of this be identical with the Father who, according to any account, does not admit of composition?[28]

Unlike the hypothetic syllogism set out above, in this passage it is the composition inherent in the incarnation that precludes the possibility of a shared nature between Father and Son. Another corroboration of Kopecek's suggestion is found in George of

---

[26] As Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 158, correctly notes.

[27] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 158–61.

[28] Text 4. See also Text 5.

Laodicea, who affirms that the Father is "fleshless and immortal," and that the Son "assumed flesh according to the will of the Father and underwent death for us."[29] George has the habit of using the expressions and formulations of the Heteroousians against them, and he makes these affirmations to clarify "the exact knowledge of the persons,"[30] not to distinguish the substances of Father and Son as the Heteroousians had done.[31] Accordingly, it appears as if George has used the descriptions of the Father and Son that the Heteroousians used to prove their difference in substance in order to make a different point against them. He does not deny their language, but judges that it does not have the import that they claim it has. Therefore, it appears possible that in the late 350s the Heteroousians were using the pairs "the fleshless-the enfleshed" and "the immortal-the one who died" in syllogistic arguments aimed at proving the difference in substance between the Father and Son. But it remains highly unlikely that the Heteroousians were actually baptizing with such formulas. Basil of Ancyra's argument, then, like that of Athanasius discussed earlier, is based upon how he thought his opponents understood the names 'Father' and 'Son', not the names they actually employed in the baptismal ritual.

Basil of Caesarea therefore is located squarely within the Athanasian-Homoiousian trajectory: he expresses a distorted, polemical view of his opponents' baptismal practice. Nonetheless, it seems that in this case Basil owes more to Athanasius than to the Homoiousian. Basil's use of the pair of 'creator' and 'thing-made' has a precedent in Athanasius, but not in the Homoiousians. Basil seems to have combined

---

[29] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.14.3 (GCS 37: 286, 24-27 Holl / Dummer).

[30] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.14.3 (GCS 37: 286, 23 H. / D.): ἡ ἀκρίβεια τῆς τῶν προσώπων ἐπιγνώσεως.

[31] Cf. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 193–5, who sees George as backing off of Basil's criticisms of such language.

Athanasius's pairs 'creator' and 'creature', and 'maker' and 'thing-made'. In addition, even though Basil uses the term δημιουργός, not κτίστης in his rejoinder to Eunomius, immediately before this he twice uses κτίστης, in passages cited above.[32] This is only time in the *Contra Eunomium* that Basil speaks of God as the κτίστης. Elsewhere he employs the terms δημιουργός and ποιητής. Accordingly, it appears that when Basil was articulating his argument about Matthew 28:18 he borrowed Athanasius's terminology for the unscriptural pair and was particularly influenced by the Athanasian usage of κτίστης for the creator, a term found only in this context in the *Contra Eunomium.*

And so, Basil's argument concludes, since 'Father' and 'Son' are particular to Christian belief, they are to be preferred to Eunomius's 'unbegotten' and 'begotten'. While Basil's argument for the centrality of 'Father' and 'Son' borrows from Athanasius's "anti-Arian" argument, he deploys it in a context where he sets up a distinction between Christianity and other systems of belief, something that is not found in Athanasius.[33] Yet it is unlikely that Basil's appeal Christian distinctiveness over

---

[32] The rejoinder is at *Eun.* 2.22, 27-29 (SChr 305: 90 Sesboüé): true Christians "have not put our faith in the creator (δημιουργός) and something made (ποίημα); rather, we have been sealed in the Father and the Son through the grace received in baptism." Immediately before this Basil writes at *Eun.* 2.22, 15-27 (SChr 305: 90 S.): "As I see it, while there is much that distinguishes Christianity from Greek error and Jewish ignorance, I think there is no doctrine in the gospel of our salvation more important than faith in the Father and the Son. For even schismatics, whatever their error might be, agree that God is the founder and the creator (κτίστην καὶ δημιουργόν). Now in which group should we put Eunomius? He declares that 'Father' is a pseudonym and that 'Son' only goes so far as a mere designation. He thinks that it makes no difference whether one confesses 'Father' or 'founder' (κτίστην) and whether one says 'Son' or 'something made.' So in what party should we count him? Among the Greeks or the Jews? For whoever denies the power of piety and the distinctive character (so to speak) of our worship will not affiliate himself with Christians."

[33] However, Athanasius does note the 'ingenerate' is a "Greek" word.

against both Judaism and Greek paganism was thought to be a clinching argument, not least of all because he also offers specific arguments against 'unbegotten' in favor of 'Father' and against 'begotten' in favor of 'Son'. The argument is most effective as rhetoric since it depicts Eunomius as having more in common with Judaism and paganism than with Christianity. I now turn to his more convincing arguments.

II. Argument for the primacy of 'Father'

Even before Basil of Caesarea's foray in the debate, the argument for the primacy of 'Father' had two components: (1) arguments against 'unbegotten', and (2) arguments in favor of 'Father'. But even the argument for 'Father' is mostly a negative argument against 'unbegotten'. In this section I would first like to explore arguments for the primacy of 'Father' over against 'unbegotten' previous to Basil in order to establish the influences on him. I begin by recalling my earlier discussion of how the Eusebians provoked their opponents to examine the word 'unbegotten', and then review in more detail the arguments of Athanasius, George of Laodicea, and Basil of Caesarea against 'unbegotten' and in favor of 'Father'. I argue that George was influenced by Athanasius but modified him considerably, and that Basil is indebted to George.

Athanasius and the Homoiousians

In Chapter Three I outlined the features of pre-fourth century use of 'unbegotten' and noted how a tradition of opposition to 'unbegotten' arose in reaction to its Eusebian usage.[34] The debate had not advanced sufficiently for Alexander to oppose it. Though

[34] See Chapter Three, p. 111–46.

Arius accused Alexander of teaching that there were two unbegottens, and Alexander keenly denied this, Alexander agreed without complaint that the Father was legitimately called 'unbegotten'.[35] Athanasius is the real fountainhead of opposition to 'unbegotten', rejecting it as useless for designating the Father.[36] His refutation arises in the context of answering Asterius's retort, mentioned earlier, whether the unbegotten is one or two.[37] And so, Arius, Asterius, and other Eusebians provoked their opponents to reconsider the term. Note that in his works before the mid-350s Athanasius wrote against 'ingenerate' and after that used the same arguments against 'unbegotten'. The words are synonymous for Athanasius.[38]

Athanasius has three distinct arguments against 'unbegotten', which I also mentioned earlier, but will discuss in more detail here.[39] First, the term is unscriptural, by which Athanasius means that it is nowhere used in scripture of the Father and is on the contrary derived from Greek philosophy.[40] In contrast, the name 'Father' is used by the Lord himself and so receives dominical approbation.[41] In this context, Athanasius cites John 14:9-10 and 10:30, and Matthew 6:9 (or its parallel Luke 11:2) and Matthew 28:19.

---

[35] Urk. 14.19; 14.46.

[36] *Or.* 1.30-34; *Decr.* 28-31; and *Syn.* 46-47. The second discussion closely follows the first. See Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 165–72; and Xavier Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006), 211–17. Morales has a helpful comparative chart on p. 567.

[37] Asterius, *Fr.* 44 V.

[38] The differences may simply be due to ms. confusion as well. See also my comments on these two terms in Chapter Three, p. 111–3.

[39] See Chapter Three, p. 143–5.

[40] *Or.* 1.30.3-4; *Decr.* 28.1-3; *Syn.* 46.2.

[41] *Or.* 1.34.3-4; *Decr.* 31.2-3.

Note that all these passages are examples of Christ himself calling God 'Father'. Hence, Athanasius is not merely citing scriptural precedent for the use of 'Father', but is claiming that the name has been sanctioned by Christ himself.

Second, the term 'unbegotten' is ambiguous. He lists four distinct senses of the term, though two are dismissed as absurd.[42] Athanasius points out that even the Son can be called 'ingenerate' according to one of the two remaining senses, "that which has not been made, but which is always."[43] Hence the polyvalence of 'ingenerate' renders it useless as a designation for the Father. Nonetheless, Athanasius's identification of two viable senses of 'ingenerate' made an important contribution, which he later expressed as the difference between 'unbegotten' and 'uncreated'.[44]

Third, like Alexander, Athanasius makes much of the status of 'Father' and 'Son' as relative terms. He objects to 'ingenerate' because it contrasts the Father, not with the Son, but with "the things which came to be through the Son"[45] and includes the Son among the generated (i.e. created) beings. Hence, it is more fitting to name God by correlating him with the Son. Athanasius assumes God's relation with the Son is primary and essential to being God; God's relation to created beings does not define who he is as his relation with the Son does. Hence Athanasius is suggesting that 'Father' is a more accurate description of God's nature than 'ingenerate'. Whereas 'ingenerate' is

---

[42] *Or.* 1.30.5-33.8; *Decr.* 28.4-29.4; *Syn.* 46.2-3. The latter lists only the two viable senses.

[43] *Or.* 1.30, 22-23 and 25 (AW I/1: 140–1 Metzler / Savvidis). The definitions of the senses in *Decr.* and *Syn.* vary slightly; see Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, 214–5.

[44] *Syn.* 46.2.

[45] *Or.* 1.33, 10-11 (AW I/1: 143 M. / S.).

polyvalent, 'Father' is "simple and scriptural and truer and signifies only the Son."[46] 'Father' is clearer in its reference than 'ingenerate'. Because 'ingenerate' correlates the Father only to generated (i.e. created) beings (and includes the Son among them), it says nothing about the unique status of the Son. But since 'Father' correlates to the Son, by implication it includes the works made through the Son and so is more accurate.[47]

Therefore, Athanasius advances three distinct arguments preferring 'Father' to 'unbegotten' as names: (1) scriptural usage, (2) the ambiguous meaning of 'unbegotten', and (3) the correlatives 'Father-Son' are more accurate than 'ingenerate-generate'. In so doing, Athanasius has distinguished two fundamental ways in which God relates to existents: (1) as the uncreated creator of all, and (2) as the unbegotten Father of the begotten Son. He claims that his opponents, the "Arians," blur the distinction. In the end, 'Father' is the preferred name because it primarily signifies the Father's relation to his Son, and by extension to the all created beings made by God through the Son. Note that Athanasius never explicitly denies the validity of 'ingenerate' for the Father, since he would agree that God the Father is ingenerate. Yet he contests the primacy which the "Arians" have given it.

In his rejection of 'unbegotten' and promotion of 'Father', the Homoiousian George of Laodicea was indebted to Athanasius, but diverges from him significantly. He adapts his first and third arguments, but omits his second completely and replaces it with his own.

First, George rejects 'unbegotten' because it is unscriptural, by which he means that Paul never uses it of God, unlike the terms 'incorruptible', 'invisible', and

---

[46] *Or.* 1.34.2 (AW I/1: 144 M. / S.)

[47] *Or.* 1.33.8; *Decr.* 30.4.

'immortal'.[48] Like Athanasius, George appeals to scriptural texts that speak of God as 'Father'. I will return to this aspect of his argument below.

Second, like Athanasius in his third argument, George argues for the lack of comprehensiveness of the term 'unbegotten' when compared to 'Father', but does so quite differently. He writes:

> Those who are wise in the things of God realize that 'unbegotten' is narrower in scope than the name 'Father'. For 'unbegotten' means that he has not been begotten but does not in any way signify whether he is also Father. Now 'Father' is wider in scope than the name 'unbegotten'. For in 'unbegotten', I say, (1) the Father's power does not appear, but in the name 'Father' there appear together (2) that the Father is not Son, if indeed he is understood to be Father in the proper sense, and (3) that he is the cause of a Son like himself.[49]

Hence for George, 'unbegotten' has a single implication: that God has not been begotten. It "never signifies the notion of 'Father'."[50] Note that for George it does not correlate God to generated beings (we will return to this below). In contrast, 'Father' implies three things about God. The Father is the one who (1) has the power (presumably to beget), (2) is not the Son, and (3) is the cause of a Son like himself. Hence the notions of 'Father' and 'unbegotten' are not the same: 'Father' has a much richer notion than 'unbegotten'. The same was true for Athanasius, but the comprehensiveness of 'Father' was understood differently. For Athanasius, 'Father' primarily signified the Son but also by extension all

---

[48] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.19.1

[49] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.14.5-6 (GCS 37: 286, 31 – 287, 5 Holl / Dummer).

[50] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.19.2 (GCS 37: 291, 31-32 H. / D.).

the created beings made through the Son. George views the comprehensiveness of 'Father' in another way: it does not imply God's relation to created beings through the Son at all but speaks solely of God's relation to his Son. There are three aspects to this.

(1) George is presumably speaking of the Father's power to beget. Perhaps he is acknowledging the Heteroousian and early Eusebian understanding of 'Father' as naming a power (or activity). George, however, does not limit 'Father' to communicating God's power to beget, but it is only one of three things that the title implies. Therefore, George suggests that the Heteroousian understanding of 'Father' is reductionistic.

(2) George appears to be making an anti-Marcellan claim because he points out that the Father is not the Son. But it also echoes the Second Dedication Creed of 341, which had claimed that the Father was "truly Father." George similarly speaks of being Father "in the proper sense" (κυρίως). George does not specify what he means by κυρίως here, but he must mean that the Father always remains Father and never becomes Son. Thus the Father is not Son. God's Fatherhood is thereby distinguished from human fatherhood, wherein a man can be a father and a son simultaneously. In contrast, God is always Father and never Son.

(3) When God is called 'Father', it communicates that he is the cause of the Son. This is a unique understanding of the notion of fatherhood that the Homoiousians developed, as discussed earlier.

And so, George's argument for the comprehensiveness of 'Father' adopts a different tactic than Athanasius in his third argument. Athanasius had claimed that 'Father' was more accurate, not naming God in reference to his works as 'unbegotten' does, but in reference to the Son and by extension to the works made through the Son. In

contrast, George does not speak of greater accuracy, but claims that 'Father' conveys more information about God than 'unbegotten'. While in both theologians, 'Father' has a comprehensiveness that 'unbegotten' lacks, George focuses solely on God's relation to his Son.[51]

In his third argument against 'unbegotten', George again adapts Athanasius. Like him, he points to the status of 'Father' and 'Son' as relative terms to argue for their superiority to 'unbegotten' and 'begotten'. Each of the names 'Father' and 'Son' signify "a relation to something" (τὴν πρός τι σχέσιν), even if either name is used alone.[52] 'Father' includes the notion of 'Son' and 'Son' the notion of 'Father'. But George does not view the names 'unbegotten' and 'begotten' as relatives; they have none of the kinds of mutual entailment that relatives have. This differs markedly from Athanasius, who correlated 'ingenerate' with 'generated'. Furthermore, the pair 'Father' and 'Son', because they are relative terms, communicate their "affinity of nature" (τῆς φύσεως τὴν οἰκειότητα),[53] whereas the 'unbegotten-begotten' pair does not. Accordingly, George rejects 'unbegotten' and 'begotten' because they do not communicate a relationship with one another and do not signify a shared nature.[54]

Therefore, George advances three reasons for rejecting 'unbegotten' in favor of 'Father': (1) it is unscriptural, (2) it lacks the comprehensiveness of 'Father', and (3) it is

---

[51] See Steenson, "Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy," 223–4. But Steenson is incorrect when he says that George's notion was "apparently not taken up in subsequent theological discussion" (p. 224). As we shall see, Basil makes the same argument.

[52] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.19.3. I discuss the use of arguments from correlativity more fully in Chapter Seven.

[53] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.19.4.

[54] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.20.1.

not a relative term. He does not appeal to Athanasius's second argument, the ambiguity of 'ingenerate'. This may be due to the fact that George realized that the Heteroousians would not have accepted the premise that 'unbegotten' was ambiguous. We have seen that George's view of the comprehensiveness of 'Father' differs from Athanasius's. While George correlates 'Father' to 'Son' much as Athanasius did, he rejects the other half of Athanasius's argument that was based on the correlation of 'ingenerate' to 'generated'. Accordingly, we can conclude that in his argument against 'unbegotten' George was influenced by Athanasius, but modified him considerably.

At this point I return to George's appeal for 'Father' based on scriptural precedence to provide a further indication of his distance from Athanasius. I postponed it until this point because it is inseparable from his understanding of the correlativity of 'Father' and 'Son'. Like Athanasius, George points to Christ's own practice of calling God 'Father' to argue for its primacy, but, in line with his stress on the correlation between 'Father' and 'Son', he adds the point that Christ also calls himself by the relative name 'Son'. When explaining why 'Father' and 'Son' is to be preferred to 'unbegotten' and 'begotten', he writes:

> The first reason is that we who have been called from the nations have not been baptized in the unbegotten and begotten, but into the Father and Son [cf. Matt 28:19]. The second reason is that no passage can be found in which the Son has called his Father 'unbegotten', but he has always called God 'Father' and always called himself 'Son of God'.[55]

[55] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.20.1-2 (GCS 37: 292, 20-25 Holl / Dummer).

First, George alludes the charge that the Heteroousians had altered the baptismal formula, as Basil of Ancyra had done, retrieving an Athanasian argument against the "Arians." This was discussed above. Second, George appeals to Christ's own practice of naming. At this point he cites several scriptural verses to prove his point: John 14:28, John 10:36, John 8:42,[56] and John 16:28. All of these scriptural verses support George's claim about how scripture records the Christ's manner of speaking of himself and his Father, and none are the same as Athanasius's.

But then George adds to this list Peter's confession: *You are the Christ, the Son of God* [Matt 16:16]. While the verse includes 'Son of God', at first glance this Petrine usage does not appear to support his argument. But if one recalls the scriptural context of this verse, George's appeal to it makes sense. After Peter says this, Christ replies: *Blessed are you, Simon Barjona! For flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, by my Father who is in heaven* [Matt 16:17]. Thus Peter's use of 'Son of God' is but a mediation of the Father's own nomenclature. This point becomes even clearer in what follows. George cites the Father's words from heaven: *This is my beloved Son* [Matt 17:5],[57] and comments: "Therefore, because the Father makes mention of the Son in this way and the Son likewise of the Father, and by these names (I will say it again) we are sealed, we will always use them, rejecting the *godless prattle* [1 Tim 6:20] directed against the apostolic faith."[58] Hence George has expanded his initial claim that 'Father' and 'Son' reflect the usage of Christ himself: it also reflects the usage of the Father. Therefore, George is not

---

[56] Note that George's citation ("I came forth from the Father") differs from the standard version ("I came forth from God").

[57] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.20.3-4.

[58] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.20.4 (GCS 37: 292, 32 – 293, 2 Holl / Dummer).

merely citing scriptural precedent for the use of 'Father' and 'Son', but rather is claiming that these names have been sanctioned by the Father and Son themselves. It is a stronger argument than Athanasius's.

Basil of Caesarea

We are now ready to discuss Basil of Caesarea's arguments for the rejection of 'unbegotten' in favor of 'Father'. While Basil agrees that God can be called 'unbegotten', he prefers not to employ it as the primary designation for the God of the universe since the name has no scriptural warrant and is, furthermore, the basis for Eunomius's heretical doctrine.[59] Therefore, Basil adopts the non-scriptural argument of both Athanasius and George. But Basil also outlines why 'Father' is better name than 'unbegotten'. He writes:

> The term 'Father' means the same as 'unbegotten', yet it has the additional advantage of implying a relation, thereby introducing the notion of the Son. For the one who is really Father is the only one who is from no other, and being 'from no one' is the same as being 'unbegotten'. Accordingly, we should not designate him the 'unbegotten' instead of 'Father', at least if we are not going to claim a wisdom superior to the teachings of the Savior who said: *Go, baptize in the name of the Father* [Matt 28:19], but not in the name of the unbegotten.[60]

---

[59] *Eun.* 1.5, 63-67 (SChr 299: 174–6 Sesboüé): "For my part, I would say that we would be justified in passing over the designation 'unbegotten' in silence, even if it seems to harmonize particularly well with our notions, on the grounds that it is nowhere to be found in Scripture and furthermore is the primary building block of their blasphemy."

[60] *Eun.* 1.5, 67-75 (SChr 299: 176 Sesboüé).

Basil's argument here is a version of George of Laodicea's argument on the comprehensiveness of 'Father' over against 'unbegotten'. Basil here gives three reasons for preferring 'Father' over 'unbegotten'.

First, he states that both 'Father' and 'unbegotten' mean 'from no one'. This is not to say that 'father' in every case means 'from no one'. Rather, only when God is called 'Father' does it mean 'from no one' because he is the only one who is uncaused and the cause of all. Thus this corresponds to George's idea that the Father is "Father in the proper sense," as described above. Basil is drawing out the implications of George's account. For George never stated that 'unbegotten' means the same thing as 'from no one', but that it meant 'not begotten'.

Second, 'Father' is a relative term which implies the notion of 'Son', but 'unbegotten' has no such relative status. Like George, he speaks of 'Father' introducing a relation and the notion of the Son. We have seen how the relative status of 'Father' and 'Son' was central to both Athanasius's and George's arguments, but George denied that 'unbegotten' was similarly relative. Basil makes the same point here.

Finally, Basil cites Matthew 28:19 to demonstrate that the Savior himself instructed Christians to call him 'Father', not 'unbegotten'. Both Athanasius and George cite or allude to this passage in their accounts. Above I discussed how another of Basil's citations of this verse was an example of charge of altering the baptismal formula found in both Athanasius and Basil of Ancyra. There I argued that Basil was more influenced by Athanasius than Basil of Ancyra. In contrast, here Basil of Caesarea is more influenced by George. As we saw above, George's first reason for preferring 'Father' to

'unbegotten' was Matthew 28:19. Coupled with the fact that Basil's first two reasons for preferring 'Father' to 'unbegotten' are derived from George, his third is probably as well.

There may be another indication of George's influence on Basil in this context. In the previous chapter I discussed how Basil had argued that 'unbegotten' named a conceptualization of God, on par with God's incorruptibility, invisibility, and immortality.[61] As mentioned above, George similarly connected 'unbegotten' with 'incorruptible', 'invisible', and 'immortal' when he claimed that it was not scriptural, which is to say Pauline.[62] Even though George does not consider these conceptualizations, perhaps Basil adopted George's list of alpha-privatives in his own discussion of 'unbegotten'.

But there is one aspect of Basil's demotion of 'unbegotten' that is new to him. He rejects the Eusebian/Heteroousian equation of 'unbegotten', 'beginningless', and 'eternal'. He writes:

> Since the Father's beginninglessness is called 'eternal,' these men declare that 'eternal' is the same as 'beginningless'. Since the Son is not unbegotten, they do not confess that he is eternal. But the notional difference between these two terms is great. For 'unbegotten' is said of that which has no beginning and no cause of its own being, while 'eternal' is said of that which is prior in being to every time and age. Therefore, the Son is eternal but not unbegotten.[63]

---

[61] *Eun.* 1.9, 26 – 10, 27.

[62] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 73.19.1.

[63] *Eun.* 2.17, 51-58 (SChr 305: 68–70 Sesboüé).

The context of this passage is Basil's argument for the eternity of the Son. Note that Basil's distinction of the meaning of these terms is in line with his notionalist view of names. Each name gives rise to a distinct notion; they are non-synonymous. His point here demonstrates his awareness of the Eusebian/Heteroousian view of these names. 'Unbegotten' is not the privileged term that the Eusebians and Heteroousian thought it was; it communicates a single property of God that is paralleled by other similar and equally important properties, all of which together contribution to the human understanding of God.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how Basil further argued for the decentralization of 'unbegotten'. The arguments that he used against Eunomius's 'unbegotten' and for the primacy of 'Father' is rooted in the work of his predecessors. Athanasius's influence upon Basil is for the most part mediated through the Homoiousians, though in his appeal to Matthew 28:19 against imagined Eunomian distortions of the baptismal formula, his debt to Athanasius is immediate. His argument about the lack of scriptural support for 'unbegotten', the comprehensive of 'Father', and its status as a relative term locate him within the Athanasian-Homoiousian trajectory, though George of Laodicea is his proximate source. Yet despite Basil's "traditionalism" in these cases, his capacity for innovation must not be overlooked. For I demonstrated in the previous chapter how his classification of 'unbegotten' as a conceptualization relegated a term, which had been one of the primary, if not the primary, designations for God in previous centuries and

especially among his contemporaries, to secondary status. Therefore, in his decentralization of ‘unbegotten’ Basil both drew upon the resources available to him and took novel approaches.

Chapter Seven

Basil on Names as Revelatory of Properties

In Chapter Four I discussed how Basil criticized Eunomius for claiming that the divine names revealed the substance of God. In this chapter, I demonstrate the alternative theory of names that Basil advanced: a name does not reveal substance, but signifies primarily a notion and secondarily properties. In other words, a name gives rise to the notion that corresponds to the property or properties that are considered in connection with the substance. For example, when someone hears the name 'Basil', he or she receives a thought whose content is a set of characteristics that describes Basil and thereby enables him or her to distinguish him from among other people and to identify him. We see here the two main features of Basil's theory of names: (1) a name primarily signifies a notion, as discussed in Chapter Five, and (2) the content of this notion is a single property, or a set of properties, that enable identification. This second feature of Basil's theory of names is the subject of the present chapter.

In contrast to Eunomius, Basil does not believe that names give access to substance, but that they allow one to recognize a substance or an individual of a substance by means of its properties. In other words, Eunomius and Basil agree that a name *refers* to the objects that bear the name, but differ over the *sense* of that name. For Eunomius, a name discloses the essence of the name-bearer, whereas for Basil, a name reveals certain properties that allow the identification of the object, not knowledge of its essence.

In the *Contra Eunomium*, Basil discusses four kinds of names in order to refute Eunomius's theory of names: (1) proper names, (2) absolute names, (3) relative names, and (4) what I will call "derived" names because they name conceptualizations. My main goal in this chapter is to argue that in each case Basil advances a consistent notionalist theory in which a name gives rise to a mental notion whose content is properties of the substance, as described above. At the same time, it is necessary to show that the properties that various names reveal are not of the same order: some belong to individuals, others to a substance common to individuals.

My second goal in this chapter is to contextualize Basil's discussions of the first three kinds of names within previous philosophical, grammatical, and Christian traditions, not only to make source claims about Basil but also to highlight the novelty of his approach.[1] Not only is Basil indebted, in an eclectic way, to a variety of philosophical and grammatical understandings of names in his account of proper, absolute, and relative names, as well as to earlier Christian arguments based upon relative names, he was also innovative in his approach with respect to the sources available to him as he struggled to articulate a theory of names in which names and the objects to which they refer are separated far more than existing understandings would have allowed.

I. Proper names

In this section I begin my investigation of what Basil thought names signify. Here I will discuss a special class of names known as proper names—that is, names unique to the individual thus named, like 'Socrates'. Basil advanced a theory of proper names for

[1] The background of Basil's theory of conceptualization was discussed in Chapter Five.

the sole purpose of refuting Eunomius's theory of names. According to Basil, proper names reveal, not an individual's substance, but an individual's "distinctive features" (ἰδιώματα) or "distinguishing marks" (ἰδιότητες)—these terms for properties are synonymous for Basil. No other Christian writer besides Origen discussed proper names, yet Basil's theory differs significantly from Origen's. In addition, his theory has precedents in philosophical discussions. For this reason, it has attracted the attention of scholars of ancient philosophy and been the subject of two recent studies.[2]

I will begin this part by discussing Basil's theory of proper names, describing the kinds of distinguishing marks which Basil thinks proper names disclose and demonstrating how proper names signify them by being productive of mental notions. Second, I will argue that Basil's understanding of the distinguishing marks that proper names reveal as elements of unique personal narrative constitutes an innovative contribution to ancient debates over how individuals persist over time. Third, I will suggest that in his theory of proper names Basil has appropriated a bundle theory of individuals from Platonist philosophy in a highly selective manner. Finally, I will demonstrate that Basil's theory of proper names is little indebted to the theories of the Stoics, Origen, or the grammarians.

Basil's theory of proper names

---

[2] Paul Kalligas, "Basil of Caesarea on the Semantics of Proper Names," in Katerina Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 31–48; and David G. Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 83 (2002), 1–19; see also Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 3.226–8.

Basil begins his discussion of proper names with a clear expression of the polemical context:

> [Eunomius] thinks that "the difference in substance is made clear by the distinctions in names." But what sane person would agree with the logic that there must be a difference of substances for those things whose names are distinct? For the designations of Peter and Paul and of all people in general are different, but there is a single substance for all of them. For this reason, in most respects we are the same as one another, but it is only due to the distinguishing marks (τοῖς ἰδιώμασι) considered in connection with each one of us that we are different, each from the other. Hence the designations do not signify the substances, but rather the distinctive features (τῶν ἰδιοτήτων) that characterize the individual.[3]

Peter and Paul, as human beings, both have a single substance—by "substance" here Basil means the common substance shared by individuals in a logical sense, that is, human nature of which are predicated the multiple essential properties such as rationality and mortality that all humans possess.[4] The shared possession of the essential properties that are predicated of human nature make us "in most respects … the same as one another." Yet Peter and Paul have different names. Therefore, the Heteroousian epistemological principle cannot be right; a difference in names cannot indicate a difference in substance, as Eunomius thinks. Then what do names indicate?

---

[3] *Eun*. 2.3, 29 – 4, 9 (SChr 305: 18–20 Sesboüé).

[4] Volker Henning Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea: Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 63; Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 42–3; Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," 12–13.

Distinguishing marks that are "considered" in individuals. These are the respects in which human beings differ from one another. As we will see, they are not material distinguishing traits like "snub-nosed," but rather non-substantial, non-definitional properties. When combined, these distinguishing marks characterize, that is, constitute a "character" that sufficiently differentiates the individual from other individuals of the same substance. Their purpose is to enable recognition and identification.

Basil's example of Peter in what follows indicates what sort of non-substantial, non-definitional properties serve as distinguishing marks:

> So whenever we hear 'Peter', the name does not cause us to think of (νοοῦμεν) his substance—now by 'substance' I mean the material substrate which the name itself cannot ever signify—but rather the notion (ἔννοια) of the distinguishing marks (ἰδιωμάτων) which are considered in connection with him is impressed upon our mind. For as soon as we hear the sound of this designation, we immediately think of (νοοῦμεν) the son of Jonah (see Matt 16:17), the man from Bethsaida (see John 1:44), the brother of Andrew (see Matt 4:18), the one summoned from the fishermen to the ministry of the apostolate (see Matt 4:18-19), the one who because of the superiority of his faith was charged with the building up of the church (see Matt 16:16-18). None of these is his substance, understood as subsistence. As a result, the name determines for us the character of Peter; it cannot ever communicate the substance itself.[5]

[5] *Eun*. 2.4, 9-20 (SChr 305: 20 Sesboüé).

It is to be noted first that Basil by his parenthetical remark now introduces a different sense of substance than a few lines ago. Whereas earlier he spoke of the common substance shared by individuals in a logical sense, in the parenthetical remark he speaks of substance as the material substrate underlying an individual.[6] This accords with his usage of the term in the reminder of his discussion of proper names. A few lines after this, Basil says no single distinguishing mark is the "substance, understood as subsistence (*hypostasis*)."[7] A little further on, Basil also cites Job 33:6 as an illustration of the "common nature" of Peter and Paul: "the passage: *You have been formed from clay, as also have I* [Job 33:6] signals nothing other than that all human beings are the same in substance (*homoousios*)." Taking "substance" in the sense of "subsistence" (*hypostasis*) points to a concrete rather than logical reality,[8] and humanity's consubstantiality is viewed by Basil as a function of its sharing the same material stuff, Job's "clay." Therefore, Basil is saying that names do not communicate to us the exact nature of the material substrate of the individual which he shares with all human beings.

The example of Peter shows that proper names do not directly signify distinguishing marks (let alone substance) but act as a trigger for the impression of the notion (ἔννοια) of the distinguishing marks upon the mind of the person who hears the name. For example, the name 'Peter' evokes the notion of all the distinguishing marks

---

[6] Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea*, 63–64; Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," 12–3. Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 43, sees the usage of "substance" here as "the material object, the 'peculiar substance'." But for Basil the name "Peter" designates the particular individual substance (primary substance in the Aristotelian sense) Peter, but does not name the material he shares with all other human beings.

[7] *Eun*. 2.4, 18 (SChr 305: 20 Sesboüé).

[8] Stephen M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 62.

listed above that constitute the "character" of Peter. Distinguishing marks are thus a sufficient set of an individual's characteristics that differentiate him from other individuals of the same common substance. Basil runs through a similar example for Paul. Here he says that 'Paul' signals a "concurrence"—which, as we shall see, is a Neoplatonist term—of distinguishing marks (ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομή): "the man from Tarsus (see Acts 22:3), the Hebrew (see Phil 3:5), as to the law a Pharisee (see Phil 3:5), the disciple of Gamaliel (see Acts 22:3), the zealous persecutor of the church of God (see Gal 1:3), the man who was brought to knowledge by a terrifying vision (see Acts 9.3-4; 22.6-8; 26.12-19), the Apostle to the Gentiles (see Rom 11:13)."[9] Therefore, according to Basil, a proper name signifies a set of non-substantial, non-constitutive features of an individual, the concurrence of which is unique to that individual and productive of a unique "character" that distinguishes him from others. This "character" is entirely notional and is in fact the synthetic notion that is impressed upon the mind of the person who hears a name.

This theory of proper names is operative in how Basil understands the names 'Father' and 'Son', for he thinks of them as proper names. Just after concluding his discussion of proper names, Basil says: "it is clear from what has been said that in the case of both 'Father' and 'Son' the names do not communicate substance, but rather they are revelatory of the distinguishing marks."[10] Elsewhere Basil connects 'Father' and 'Son', respectively, with the distinctive features unbegottenness and begottenness, and with the distinguishing marks fatherhood and sonship.[11] It ought to be noted that it is in

---

[9] *Eun*. 2.4, 21-25 (SChr 305: 20 Sesboüé).

[10] *Eun*. 2.5, 1-3 (SChr 305: 22 Sesboüé).

[11] *Eun.* 2.28-29.

this context that Basil seems to make a distinction between a distinctive feature and a distinguishing mark. He twice says that "the begotten and the unbegotten are distinctive features that enable identification (γνωριστικὰι ἰδιότητες)"[12] But "fatherhood and sonship are distinguishing marks."[13] 'Distinguishing feature' is consistently applied to the unbegotten-begotten pair, whereas 'distinguishing mark' to the fatherhood-sonship pair. Furthermore, only a distinctive feature is spoken of as "enabling identification." Though Basil seems to be making some distinction in usage here, his understanding of how both distinctive features and distinguishing marks function is the same.

In his fullest explanation of what distinctive features are, Basil writes that "distinctive features, which are like particular characters and forms considered in the substance, distinguish what is common by means of the peculiarizing characters and do not sunder the substance's sameness in nature."[14] This definition includes three points. First, a distinctive feature is like a character or form that is considered (ἐπιθεωρούμεναι) in the substance; it is not substance itself. Second, a distinctive feature make distinctions within the common substance. Third, the substance is not ruptured by distinctive features.

Basil describes a distinguishing mark in a similar way. The nature of a distinguishing mark is "to show otherness in the identity of the substance."[15] Basil likens distinguishing marks to the differentiae of a genus ("the winged and the footed, the

---

[12] *Eun.* 2.28, 27-28 (SChr 305: 118 Sesboüé); 2.29, 8-9 (SChr 305: 122 S.).

[13] *Eun*. 2.28, 35-36 (SChr 305: 120 Sesboüé).

[14] *Eun*. 2.28, 32-35 (SChr 305: 120 Sesboüé): γὰρ τοι ἰδιότητες, οἱονεὶ χαρακτῆρές τινες καὶ μορφαὶ ἐπιθεωρούμεναι τῇ οὐσίᾳ, διαιροῦσι μὲν τὸ κοινὸν τοῖς ἰδιάζουσι χαρακτῆρσι• τὸ δὲ ὁμοφυὲς τῆς οὐσίας οὐ διακόπτουσιν.

[15] *Eun*. 2.28, 43-44 (SChr 305: 120 Sesboüé).

aquatic and the terrestrial, and the rational and the irrational") which can be contraries. His point is that just as differentiae do not rupture the unity of the substance, neither do distinguishing marks. Hence the function of a distinguishing mark as outlined here is the same as that of a distinctive feature described above. But of course Basil does not think of divinity as a genus and fatherhood and sonship as differentiae—for this would define what the Father and Son are. Instead, fatherhood and sonship are means of distinguishing the common divine substance, and correspond to something real, and yet are not the essence of God.

It is through the combination of the common substance and the distinctive features or distinguishing marks that an accurate comprehension of the truth arises. In other words, when the distinctive features of unbegotten and begotten, or the distinguishing marks of fatherhood and sonship, are combined with the common divinity, we gain the proper notions of the Father and the Son, which enable one to identify the individuals who share the common divine substance. It must be stressed that both distinguishing marks and distinctive features are productive of notions. Basil says that "the begotten and the unbegotten are the distinctive features that enable identification and are observed in the substance, which lead to the distinct and unconfused *notion* (ἔννοιαν) of the Father and the Son."[16] When the distinctive feature of unbegotten or begotten is combined with the common divinity we "think of" (νοεῖν) the Father and "receive the notion of the Son" (τὴν τοῦ Υἱοῦ λαμβάνειν ἔννοιαν).[17] The distinctive features of begotten and unbegotten characterize the common substance and enable our

[16] *Eun*. 2.28, 27-30 (SChr 305: 118 Sesboüé).

[17] *Eun*. 2.28, 38-41.

understanding to "penetrate" (διικνοῖτο) it.[18] Similarly, distinguishing marks "implant the activity of what they identify (τῶν γνωρισμάτων) as a kind of light in our soul, and guide to an understanding attainable by our minds."[19] Finally, "it is impossible to receive a notion of the Father or the Son that distinctly identifies him, unless our thinking is nuanced by the addition of the distinguishing marks."[20] Hence the distinguishing marks and distinctive features enable the knowledge of God as Father and Son. By means of the distinguishing marks and distinctive features we can differentiate the Father from the Son, identify them, and know them, without knowledge of the divine essence itself.

The bundle theory of individuals

According to Basil, the distinguishing marks signified by the proper name are a sufficient set of the individual's characteristics that, when combined, differentiate the individual from others. No single distinguishing mark identifies the individual because no single distinguishing mark is unique to the individual. For instance, other men besides Peter were from Bethsaida and a fisherman summoned to the apostolate; other men besides Paul were from Tarsus and disciples of Gamaliel. Rather, it is a unique concurrence of distinguishing marks that marks one individual off from another.[21]

Accordingly, Basil's understanding of how proper names can identify individuals is inseparable from his understanding of what differentiates individuals. Richard Sorabji has identified three interrelated ancient philosophical theories concerning what

---

[18] *Eun*. 2.29, 9-10.

[19] *Eun*. 2.28, 51-53 (SChr 305: 120 Sesboüé).

[20] *Eun.* 2.29, 11-13 (SChr 305: 122 Sesboüé).

[21] *Contra* Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.226, who maintains that each distinguishing mark is unique to the individual.

differentiated individuals: (1) unique bundles of distinctive qualities, (2) place, and (3) matter.[22] Basil's theory that a proper name reveals a unique bundle of distinguishing marks suggests that his understanding of what differentiates one individual from another has some relation to the first philosophical theory mentioned above. Both Platonists and Stoics subscribed to this theory in some form. In what follows, I will describe the Platonist and Stoic bundle theory of individuals in order to argue that Basil is an heir to the Platonist tradition of viewing individuals as bundles of distinctive characteristics solely for identificatory purposes.

The bundle theory of individuals can be traced back to Plato himself. He advanced a theory in which an individual is perceived to be a kind of 'assemblage' (ἄθροισμα) of distinctive characteristics, all of which must be perceived in order to identify the 'differentness' (διαφορότης) that one individual has from another.[23] The distinctive characteristics of Theaetetus that Plato lists as examples are snub-nosed and prominent eyes. These are unique to Theaetetus, whereas the characteristics "with a nose" and "with eyes" could apply any human being. Myles Burnyeat has noted that these distinctive characteristics constitute a "set of recognitional clues" that say nothing about the essential features of the subject.[24] They merely serve to distinguish and identify. The word 'assemblage' (ἄθροισμα) appears to have become a technical term in Hellenistic

---

[22] Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.169–74.

[23] Plato, *Theaet.* 157b8-c2 ('man' and 'stone' are aggregates) and 209a1-d3 (correct perception of individuals requires grasping the bundle of distinctive characteristics of the individual). See Jonathan Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 343; Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 38 n. 21 and 43 n. 44.

[24] Miles Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1990), 221–5.

philosophy, being used in the Platonic sense by, for example, Epicurus and the Mesoplatonist Alcinous.[25]

Something similar to this Platonic theory is found in Carneades's Academic theory of perception (recorded by Sextus Empiricus), that we recognize an individual such as Socrates when we receive the "concurrence of impressions" (συνδρομὴ τῶν φαντασιῶν) of the customary characteristics that uniquely connote the individual.[26] Sextus's Carneades lists "customary characteristics" (τὰ εἰωθότα) such as color, size, shape, coat, and position—all perceptible features. Paul Kalligas notes in this context that the identification of an individual "will thus be accomplished not through the determination of the presence of some specific, uniquely qualifying property, but instead through the conjoined ascertainment of a variety of particular distinguishing features."[27]

We turn now to the Neoplatonists. While Plotinus described an individual perceptible substance as "a conglomeration (συμφόρησις) of qualities and matter,"[28] Porphyry thought of an individual as an assemblage of qualities alone.[29] Indeed, the classic formulation of the idea that individuals were bundles of distinctive characteristics belongs to Porphyry.[30] In his shorter commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* Porphyry suggests that human beings do not differ from each other "in virtue of specific

---

[25] John Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 70–1; Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 343.

[26] Sextus Empircus, *M*. 7.176-9. See Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 344, for other similar texts in Sextus.

[27] Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 38.

[28] Plotinus, *Enn*. 6.3 [44] 8, 19-23. See Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 343–4, and PC III 3e1, on Plotinus's understanding of sensible substances.

[29] Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 345.

[30] See Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.165.

differentiae" (εἰδοποιοῖς διαφοραῖς) but rather "in virtue of the distinctive feature made up of a concurrence of qualities" (ἰδιότητι συνδρομῆς ποιοτήτων).[31] In other words, human beings *qua* human being, share the same differentiae of the genus 'animal' which serve to define what a human being is. Individuals of the same species, however, are distinguished from one another by their distinctive concurrence of qualities. Porphyry elaborates this idea in his *Isagoge*:

> Socrates is said to be an individual (ἄτομα), and so are *this* white thing, and *this* person approaching, and the Son of Sophroniscus (should Socrates be his only son). Such items are called individuals because each is constituted of distinctive features (ἐξ ἰδιοτήτων συνέστηκεν), the assemblage (τὸ ἄθροισμα) of which will never be found the same in anything else—the distinctive features of Socrates will never be found in any other of the individuals. On the other hand, the distinctive features of man (I mean, of the common man) will be found the same in several items—or rather, in all individual men in so far as they are men.[32]

Though Porphyry adopts both the Platonic term 'assemblage' and the Carneadean term 'concurrence', and uses them with the term 'distinctive feature' (ἰδιότης), his terminology is inconsistent. In the shorter commentary, he implies that the "concurrence of qualities" *is* the "distinctive feature" whereby individuals in the same species are differentiated. In the *Isagoge*, it is the "assemblage" of the "distinctive features" that constitute each individual which accounts for the individual's uniqueness. The term

---

[31] Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 129, 9-10 Busse). Strange translates: "in virtue of a particular combination of qualities." (p. 140).

[32] Porphyry, *Isa.* 2 (CAG 4.1: 7, 19-26 Busse); trans. [modified] Barnes 8.

'distinctive feature' is used for both the resultant concurrence of properties and the properties that constitute the assemblage. Nonetheless, despite the inconsistency, Porphyry's point is clear enough: an individual is a bundle of characteristics whose uniqueness differentiates him from others.[33]

Other Neoplatonists criticized Porphyry's bundle theory of individuals. Dexippus rejected it because he believed a concurrence of qualities only suffices to differentiate individuals in quality, not in number. Rather, the distinctness of individuals resides in their ability to be counted.[34] Jonathan Barnes gives a droll summary of Dexippus's objection: "how could Socrates, a thing of flesh and blood, be made or constituted by a set of qualities or accidents? If you add snub-nosedness to baldness you get a complex quality—you do not get a chap."[35] Some Neoplatonists such as Proclus, Simplicius, and possibly Philoponus criticized Porphyry's bundle theory of individuals as Aristotelian, making individuals consist of accidents.[36] Others Neoplatonists such as the sixth-century David claimed that Porphyry did not mean that individuals are constituted by accidents, but rather that individuals are recognized and characterized by them.[37]

Hence there seems to have been a tension within the Platonic tradition between individuals being understood as *constituted* by distinctive characteristics and as *recognized* and *identified* by means of them. Plato himself and Carneades seem to have had the latter understanding, whereas the Neoplatonists (who accepted the theory) the

---

[33] See Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.169.

[34] Dexippus, *in Cat.* 1.35 (CAG 4.2: 30, 20-34 Busse). See Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 345 and PC III 6d7.

[35] Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 345.

[36] See PC III 6b2 and 6b5-6, and Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 342–3.

[37] Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 343.

former. Even though Barnes is correct to affirm that Porphyry only speaks of constitution and not of recognition in the *Isagoge*, [38] Porphyry's understanding of *propria* (τὰ ἴδια) in *Isagoge* 4 as able to identify species would seem to indicate that his concurrences or assemblages of distinctive characteristics (ἰδιότητες) were identificatory as well as constitutive. The Neoplatonist critique of Porphyry's bundle theory of individuals on the part of David would appear to signal an interpretation of the theory in this way.

We turn now to the Stoics. Similarly to the Platonists, the Stoics held that each individual had a distinctive quality (ἴδια ποιότης) that distinguished it from other individuals, a crucial aspect of their epistemology.[39] The Stoics denied that there could be two individuals (οὐσίαι) with the same distinctive quality.[40] Each individual had by definition a unique distinctive quality inherent in it: if two individuals possessed the same unique distinctive quality, it meant that the two were fact numerically identical. Only by means of a cognitive impression (φαντασία καταληπτικός), which could accurately comprehend an individual's distinctive quality, could an individual be unmistakably recognized. Hence, the Stoic 'distinctive quality' was both *constitutive* and *identificatory*.

Yet it is not clear whether the Stoic distinctive quality was a bundle of distinctive characteristics, as was the case for the Neoplatonists. They did not use such language. It seems that recognition of individuals was a matter of receiving a cognitive impression of a single unique distinctive quality. Yet in a passage of Origen, thought to be Stoic-

---

[38] Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 343.

[39] David Sedley, "The Stoic Criterion of Identity," *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 255–75; Michael Frede, "Stoic epistemology," in K. Algra *et al.*, eds., *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 295–322; and Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.173.

[40] Testimonia of this Stoic teaching are found in Philo, *Aet.* 48 [=LS 28P]; Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077C-E [=LS 28O]; and Cicero, *Acad.* 2.83-5 [=LS 40J].

inspired, it seems as if there was for the Stoics a separate distinctive quality for an individual's body, soul, and mind.[41] If Origen is correctly interpreting the Stoics, then it would seem possible that the overall distinctive quality was a kind of bundle of three separate ones.[42] Nonetheless, even in this case, knowledge of individuals requires cognition of some specific, uniquely qualifying properties.

Therefore, the Platonist and Stoic traditions viewed individuals as assemblages of distinctive features, though there were significant differences among them. These distinctive features were sometimes thought to be constitutive of the individual, sometimes identificatory, sometimes both. Basil is indebted to the tradition of viewing the bundled distinctive characteristics of individuals as identificatory, not constitutive. Accordingly, I suggest that he has more in common with the Platonists than with the Stoics, and at the same time more in common with the Platonist tradition of viewing individuals as bundles of distinctive characteristics that are solely identificatory and not in any way constitutive.

Basil is clear that a bundle of distinguishing marks does not constitute an individual but only serves an identificatory purpose. None of the distinguishing marks that he lists for Peter and Paul define what they are essentially, but allow one to distinguish them from each other and from other human beings, and recognize them for

---

[41] Origen, *Or.* 24.2, cited below on p. 276. On the Stoic-inspiration for this passage, see Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 36 n. 17 and Sorajbi, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.226. Sorabji (p. 173) notes that for the Stoics, an individual's soul was his or her pneuma disposed in a certain way.

[42] Dexippus's critique of the bundle theory of individuals may be directed at the Stoics; see Dillon, *Dexippus on Aristotle Categories*, 63 n. 109; Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.173. Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 345, esp. n. 50, thinks it is directed against Porphyry. See also Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.171.

who they are as individuals. Paul Kalligas has observed that for Basil proper names do not refer to

> exclusive, self-sufficient or stable properties. While they undoubtedly possess some descriptive content, they do not even attempt to define, by listing them exhaustively, the basic constituting properties of the object so as to determine its nature absolutely in its individuality, but only to individuate it, distinguishing it, by means of a sequence of *characterizations*, from its peers.[43]

Presumably additional distinguishing marks could be added to the lists that Basil supplied. For example, Peter also has the distinguishing mark of "the one who denied Christ three times before the cock crowed" (see Matt 26:75; Luke 22:61); similarly, Paul was also "the co-worker of Apollos" (see Acts 18-19; 1 Cor 3). Nonetheless, only a minimal set of all possible distinguishing marks that suffices to constitute the "character" of the individual is needed to identify either.

But there is a problem with this that appears to undermine Basil's bundle theory of individuals. David Robertson has noted that the last item on each list that Basil supplies is "a property which is strikingly unique to the individual, given what is said about him in the New Testament."[44] For Peter alone is the rock on which the church is built and Paul alone is the apostle to the Gentiles. While it seems as if no particular distinguishing mark should be more important than another, these "strikingly unique" properties would seem to have a privileged role in distinguishing either Peter or Paul since they could suffice by themselves to distinguish Peter and Paul. Furthermore, each

---

[43] Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 43. Emphasis his.

[44] Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," 17.

of the distinguishing marks listed for each are based on scriptural passages that uniquely describe the individual: for example, Peter is the only brother of Andrew mentioned in the scriptures and Paul is zealous persecutor of the church *par excellence*.[45]

Nonetheless, Basil clearly does not intend such "strikingly unique properties" alone to be sufficient for identifying either Peter or Paul; only when they are combined with other distinguishing marks in a concurrence to constitute a character do they contribute to distinguishing Peter from Paul. Perhaps the distinguishing marks Basil chose to list are simply due to the fact that scripture does not record physical characteristics such as 'bald' or 'snub-nosed' which the philosophers used as examples of properties that combined to constitute or identify an individual. Perhaps Basil simply overlooked the implications of the "strikingly unique" distinguishing marks he listed. Nonetheless, it is clear that Basil envisions individuals as having a bundle of distinguishing marks by which they can be identified.

The persistence of individuals

Despite the problems I just noted with the distinguishing marks that Basil listed for Peter and Paul, I suggest that they were not idly chosen. Paul Kalligas has noted that Basil's distinguishing marks are "the components of some relevant narrative."[46] Both Peter and Paul are distinguished from other human beings by the facts of their history. Basil's lists for each begins with their familial origins and follows the course of their pre-Christian and ecclesiastical careers. Together they delineate "an absolutely original

[45] This fact must be the basis of Sorabji's assertion that the distinguishing marks are each unique to the individual (*The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.226).

[46] Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 44.

profile of an individual person."[47] That distinguishing marks correspond to narratological elements provides further evidence that any given concurrence of distinguishing marks is not static but can be expanded as the narrative of a person's life extends. For example, Basil was called 'Basil' before he became the bishop of Caesarea, yet the notional character impressed on the mind when the name 'Basil' was heard after his episcopal consecration could include the distinguishing mark of "the bishop of Caesarea" though this fact of his narrative was not included earlier.

Basil's idea that distinguishing marks are narratological contributes innovatively to ancient debates over how individuals persist over time: what accounts for the stability of individuals given the inevitability of change? The paradox of the Ship of Theseus highlighted the problem: if every plank of wood on Theseus's ship had been replaced, was it still the same ship?[48] The persistence of matter itself could not account for individual stability. Nor could properties of the soul like habits and disposition preserve the individual, since these too change through life.[49] Hence most ancient theories ascribed an individual's persistence over time to the individual's form, that is, to that which gave shape to the body. For example, the same form perdures through biological growth, even though bodily matter is continually replaced (Aristotle and Alexander), or the same bodily and psychological form is reproduced with new material in the next life after the conflagration (the Stoics) or in the resurrection (Origen).[50]

---

[47] Bernard Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité: Un acte théologique au IV^e siècle* (Paris: Descleé, 1998), 79.

[48] PC III 6h38.

[49] Plato, *Symp*. 207c9-208b6.

[50] Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 176–83.

Taking a new approach, Basil conceptualizes the persistence of individuals to be a matter of a continually progressing narrative. The facts of our histories, whether chosen (like studying with Gamaliel) or not (like being born in Tarsus), collectively contribute to who we are as individuals. In a sense, we are the product of our histories. Basil's narratological distinguishing marks are strikingly different from the stable, defining distinctive characteristics of the Platonists and Neoplatonists, and still more from the constitutive distinctive qualities of the Stoics. Basil's distinguishing marks are open-ended, in that they can be added to. Who we are as individuals is not a product of distinctive characteristics or qualities that define who we are from birth and persist until death and beyond, but in a sense we construct our own identities as individuals through our choices. According to Basil, an individual is not static, but constantly and dynamically being formed. One only has to read Plutarch's *Lives* to get a sense of the widespread notion that human character is static and set at birth. While this viewpoint continued within the Christian tradition, Basil appears to be advocating a far richer notion of individuality that does not merely allow for human development but also makes the individual person the deciding factor in who he or she is.

Basil's sources

Above I argued that Basil's understanding of an individual as a "concurrence of distinguishing marks" owes something to Platonists and Neoplatonists. It is now time to investigate whether Basil's understanding of how a proper name functions owes anything to preceding philosophical and grammatical discussions. I argue that Basil owes very little to them. Since the Stoics are credited with inventing the grammatical category of the

proper name, it makes sense to begin with them.[51] Richard Sorabji considers both Origen and Basil heirs of the Stoic theory of proper names as descriptions in which "the description associated with a name is a description uniquely true of the individual named."[52] Paul Kalligas and David Robertson, however, conclude that he is only remotely influenced by the Stoics.[53] I concur with the assessment of Kalligas and Robertson, and maintain that Basil's similarities with the Stoics and Origen are superficial.

The best report on the Stoic theory of the proper name can be found in Diogenes Laertius's report on Diogenes of Babylon:

> A designation (προσηγορία) is the part of speech signifying a common quality (σημαῖνον κοινὴν ποιότητα), such as 'man' and 'horse'; a name (ὄνομα) is a part of speech indicating a distinctive quality (δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα), such as 'Diogenes' and 'Socrates'.[54]

Note that the Stoics—more specifically Chrysippus and Diogenes of Babylon—are responsible for the distinction between the proper name (ὄνομα) and the common name (προσηγορία). Yet both indicated qualities. Since Stoic distinctive qualities permanently determine a nature by defining what constitutes it (as mentioned above), proper names thus disclose the defining qualities of a nature. Therefore, a Stoic proper name does not

---

[51] Jacques Brunschwig, "Remarks on the Stoic theory of the proper noun," in *Papers in Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39–56, at 39. Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 33–4 discusses precedents in Aristotle.

[52] Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 3.226.

[53] Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," and Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names."

[54] Diogenes Laertius, *VP* 7.58; cf. SVF 2.147. For discussion, see Brunschwig, "Remarks on the Stoic theory of the proper noun," 44–6; Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 34–37; Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," 1–3.

indicate a qualified individual, but a single, specific quality that is nonetheless constitutive of the qualified individual.

In contrast, Basil's proper name impresses a character upon the mind of the hearer that consists of a concurrence of distinguishing marks which collectively enable a purely notional differentiation that does not correspond to anything substantial in the individual. Stoic distinctive qualities determine a nature by defining what constitutes it; Basil's distinguishing marks describe an individual in a sufficient way so as to distinguish it from others. In addition, while Stoic distinctive qualities are descriptive like Basil's distinguishing marks, the former have a permanence that the latter do not have. Hence the Stoic position is that proper names denominate defining qualities of the nature; Basil's proper names signify the notional "character" that consists in the concurrence of distinguishing marks.[55]

Therefore, Basil appears to be little indebted to the Stoic theory of the proper name. There is a superficial likeness between them in terms of proper names being descriptions of individuals and communicating distinctive characteristics that are identificatory. I have argued above that Basil more indebted to the Platonists in this regard. Basil differs from the Stoics in that they emphasized a single distinctive quality having both constitutive and identificatory functions, whereas Basil stresses the conglomeration of distinguishing marks and their non-constitutive function. Distinguishing marks do not bring substantial knowledge of individuals as was the case for the Stoics.

---

[55] Kalligas, "The Semantics of Proper Names," 35–36.

Origen's theory of proper names is thought to be Stoic-inspired.[56] A comparison of Basil's theory of proper names with Origen's not only reveals the distance him and the Stoics, but also the distance between him and Origen. Origen writes:

> A name (ὄνομα) is an encapsulating designation (προσηγορία) that communicates the distinctive quality (ἰδιά ποιότης) of the one named. For example, Paul the Apostle has a certain distinctive quality of his soul by which he is such as he is, of his mind by which he contemplates certain things, and of his body by which he exists in a certain way. Thus, the distinctiveness of these qualities and their incompatibility with anyone else—for there is no one indistinguishable from Paul in these respects—is indicated by the name 'Paul'. But for human beings, in cases of a change in distinctive qualities, there is normally, according to scripture, a corresponding change in the names. For when the quality of Abram changed, he was called 'Abraham', when that of Simon changed, he was named 'Peter', and when that of Saul, the persecutor of Jesus, changed, he was designated 'Paul'.[57]

Note that here Origen indiscriminately uses the verbs "called" (ἐκλήθη), "named" (ὠνομάσθη), and "designated" (προσηγορεύθη) when referring to the proper names of Abraham, Peter, and Paul. Basil displays a similar lack of precision in using the Stoic technical terms "designation" (προσηγορία) and "name" (ὄνομα). He does not use them

---

[56] See n. 41 above.

[57] Origen, *Or.* 24.2.

in the strict technical way that the Stoics use them, but interchangeably.[58] At least in lack of terminological precision, Basil follows the lead of Origen.

Yet Origen adheres closely to Stoic doctrine when he considers that a bundle of specific psychic, intellectual, and corporeal qualities determine an individual, such that when these distinctive qualities change the name also changes, indicating that the individual is no longer in some sense the same person (though there must be a certain continuity in the individualities that Origen does not address). While Basil views the character of an individual as a bundle of features, this bundle is not determinative of the individual as it is for Origen and the Stoics but is a purely notional reality that enables distinction among individuals. For Origen, Simon/Saul and Peter/Paul have different peculiar qualities. In contrast, Basil considers the man who is alternatively called 'Simon', 'Peter', and 'Cephas' as a polyonym, for "all these names converge upon a single meaning" and each one signifies "the same thing as the others."[59] Because Basil views distinguishing marks as elements of a historical narrative, the various names that Peter and Paul bear in the course of their lives can equally signify, that is, identify, the individual who is described by the concurrence of these elements. Basil's idea of the polyonymy of human beings demonstrates his distance from Origen's Stoic theory of proper names.

Grammarians did not accept the Stoic distinction between proper and common names, reverting to the older custom of indicating all names by the term ὄνομα. In the *Technê grammatikê* attributed to Dionysius Thrax, it is explicitly asserted that "the

---

[58] For example, in *Eun*. 2.4, Basil refers to 'Peter' and 'Paul' alternatively as a προσηγορία, an ὄνομα, and a φωνή.

[59] Basil, *Eun*. 1.8, 25-28 (SChr 299: 194 Sesboüé).

designation is a subspecies of the name."[60] This statement appears to be directed against the Stoics.[61] The *Technê* lists thirty-one species of names, two of which are the proper name (κύριον [ὄνομα]) and the designative name (προσηγορικόν [ὄνομα])—what we would call a common noun. But the species of names are not exclusive of one another.[62] The scholiasts recognized this, noting that every name falls under two primitive species, the proper and the designative, and that either can possess an addition significance (i.e. fall under another species).[63] So in a certain sense the grammarians retained the Stoic distinction between proper and designative names as basic, though as two species of the genus 'name'.

There are two grammatical traditions with respect to what proper and designative names signify, associated respectively with the *Technê grammatikê* attributed to Dionysius Thrax (c. 170 – c. 90 B.C.E.) and Apollonius Dyscolus (2nd cen. C.E.). Apollonius was considered the greatest grammarian in antiquity and the *Technê* was enormously influential in the same period. Given that it remains unresolved in the

---

[60] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê* 12 (GG 1.1: 23, 2-3 Uhlig): ἡ γὰρ προσηγορία ὡς εἶδος τῷ ὀνόματι ὑποβέβληται.

[61] See Kalligas, "Basil of Caesarea on Proper Names," 38 n. 23.

[62] See Eleanor Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises, from Their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 127. I discuss this in more detail below at p. 289f.

[63] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 232, 20-24 Hilgard): Ὃν δὲ τρόπον εἰρήκαμεν, ὅτι πᾶν ὄνομα ὑπὸ τὰ δύο εἴδη ἐστὶ τὰ πρῶτα, οὕτω καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἐροῦμεν, ὅτι πᾶν ὄνομα ὑπὸ τὰ δύο εἴδη ἐστὶ τὰ πρῶτα, φημὶ κύριον καὶ προσηγορικόν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦ εἶναι κύριον ἢ προσηγορικὸν καὶ ἑτέρῳ συμβαίνει σημαινομένῳ κατέχεσθαι, οἷον ἐπιθέτῳ καὶ ἑξῆς. The same is repeated at (385, 1-6) and (552, 15-18).

scholarship whether the attribution of the *Technê* to Dionysius Thrax can be trusted, it is impossible to claim which tradition precedes the other.[64]

Apollonius both retained and modified the Stoic understanding of what a name signified: "A name is a part of speech with case which assigns a common or distinctive quality to each referent, whether a corporeal entity or object of thought."[65] He retains the Stoic idea that a name signifies a quality, which implied a qualified substance. In other

---

[64] The attribution of the *Technê* to Dionysius Thrax was questioned even in antiquity. If there is any current scholarly consensus on this issue, it would be that at least portions of the *Technê*, in the version we possess it, are later than Dionysius, quite possibly from the third or fourth centuries C.E. On Dionysius and the *Technê grammatikê* attributed to him, see Alan Kemp, "The *Tekhnê grammatikê* of Dionysius Thrax. Translated into English," in Daniel J. Taylor, ed., *The History of Linguistics in the Classical Period* (Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1987), 169–89 (includes an English translation, with an introduction on the problem of authenticity, along with some notes); Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 77–80; R. H. Robins, *The Byzantine Grammarians: Their Place in History* (Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993), 41–86; Jan Pinborg, "Classical Antiquity: Greece," in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Current Trends in Linguistics. Volume 13: Historiography of Linguistics* (The Hague / Paris: Mouton, 1975), 103–6; Vincenzo di Benedetto, "Dionysius Thrax and the *Tekhnē Grammatikē*," in Sylvain Auroux, E. F. K. Koerner, Hans-Josef Niederehe, and Kees Versteegh, eds., *History of the Language Sciences* (Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 394–400; and Vivien Law and Ineke Sluiter, eds., *Dionysius Thrax and the Technē grammatikē* (Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 1995) (A collection of articles focusing on the issues of dating and authenticity; most favor a late date for at least portions of *Tekhnê grammatikê*).

[65] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 524, 8-10 Hilgard): Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι οἱ περὶ Ἀπολλώνιον καὶ Ἡρωδιανὸν οὕτως ὁρίζονται τὸ ὄνομα· ὄνομά ἐστι μέρος λόγου πτωτικόν, ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὑποκειμένων σωμάτων ἢ πραγμάτων κοινὴν ἢ ἰδίαν ποιότητα ἀπονέμον. Also see *Constr.* 22 (GG 2.2: 142, 1-2 Uhlig): Ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων θέσις ἐπενοήθη εἰς ποιότητας κοινὰς ἢ ἰδίας, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, Πλάτων. On translating ὑποκείμεμον as 'referent', see Jean Lallot, *Apollonius Dyscole: De la construction* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1997), 2.243; on πρᾶγμα as 'object of thought' or 'abstract entity', see Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters, "Content and Context in (Translating) Ancient Grammar," in idem ac idem, eds., *Ancient Grammar: Content and Context* (Leuven / Paris: Peeters, 1996), 131–4. On the difference between a σῶμα and a πρᾶγμα, a scholiast comments (GG 1.3: 524, 13-15 Hilgard): "A corporeal object is that which extends in three dimensions, length, width, and depth, and which is accessible to touch and sight; an abstract entity is that to which none of these apply, but is thought only by the mind" (Σῶμά ἐστι τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν, μήκει πλάτει βάθει, ἁφῇ τε καὶ θέᾳ ὑποπῖπτον· πρᾶγμα, ᾧ μηδὲν τούτων ἔπεται, νῷ δὲ μόνῳ νοεῖται).

words, a name denotes the first two Stoic genera. Another Apollonian definition of the name shows this even better: "Names signify substance with quality."[66] But he departs from Stoic materialism when he asserts that names can denote both corporeal and incorporeal entities, though to what extent is not clear.[67]

The understanding of what names signify in the *Technê* departs even further from the Stoics:

> So then, a proper name is that which signifies the distinctive substance (ἰδίαν οὐσίαν), such as 'Homer' and 'Socrates'. But a designative name is that which signifies the common substance, such as 'man' and 'horse'.[68]

By 'distinctive substance' Dionysius means the individual, for example, Socrates. On this passage, Jacques Braunschwig comments: "the reform introduced by the grammarians draws attention to what is felt to be paradoxical in the Stoic definitions: namely, the idea that a noun (whether proper or common) signifies a quality (ποιότης) rather than object qualified in a particular manner (ποῖόν τι)."[69] Others see a shift from a Stoic to an Aristotelian notion of substance in the definition of the *Technê*.[70] Therefore, according to

---

[66] Apollonius Dyscolus, *Pron.* (GG 2.1: 27, 9-10 Schneider): οὐσίαν σημαίνουσιν αἱ ἀντωνυμίαι, τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα οὐσίαν μετὰ ποιότητος.

[67] Anneli Luhtala, "On Definitions in Ancient Grammar," in Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters, eds., *Grammatical Theory and Philosophy of Language in Antiquity* (Leuven / Paris: Peeters, 2002), 267–8.

[68] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê* 12 (GG 1.1: 33, 6 – 34, 2 Uhlig)· Κύριον μὲν οὖν ἐστι τὸ τὴν ἰδίαν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον, οἷον Ὅμηρος Σωκράτης. Προσηγορικὸν δὲ ἐστι τὸ τὴν κοινὴν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον, οἷον ἄνθρωπος ἵππος. For discussion, see Kalligas, "Basil of Caesarea on the Semantics of Proper Names," 38–9, and Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," 3–9.

[69] Brunschwig, "Remarks on the Stoic theory of the proper noun," 44.

[70] Luhtala, "On Definitions in Ancient Grammar," 269–70, reiterating a position that goes back to Steinthal and is held by many others.

David Robertson, "under the influence of Dionysius, many grammarians held things or substances to be the significations of names."[71] It is unclear whether the proper name, as defined by the grammarians, has both sense and reference. It is clear enough that it denotes the bearer of the name, which is to say has reference. If the grammatical definition is viewed as fundamentally Stoic, it would seem that the proper name also conveys information about the name-bearer. But this seems less likely on an Aristotelian reading.

Basil's divergence from the grammatical tradition is indicated not least of all by his failure to use the technical term for the proper name κύριον ὄνομα, instead using a variety of terms interchangeably. The tradition associated with Apollonius Dyscolus maintains that a proper name signified the distinctive quality of the individual named, whereas the *Technê* the distinctive substance. The former is more Stoic than the latter and views the quality revealed by a proper name as constitutive of the individual name. But Basil's distinguishing marks are identificatory, not constitutive. Basil explicitly denies the latter grammatical tradition, saying: "the designations [of Peter and Paul] do not signify substances. … the name … cannot ever communicate the substance itself.." Therefore, Basil appears to have willfully departed from the grammatical theories in which he was presumably trained.

---

[71] Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," 4. In n. 7 he notes exceptions. The Dionysian theory of the proper name has similarities with the Heteroousian theory of names. Aetius spoke of names 'signifying' and 'revealing' substance, using Stoic and grammatical terminology. Both Aetius and Eunomius understood the substance communicated by God's proper name to be that which defined what he is—unbegottenness. But as we have seen the Heteroousian theory of names rooted their insistence that names discloses substances in divine simplicity. Therefore while the Heteroousians and Stoic-inspired grammarians may have shared some terminology, the bases of their respective views of how names operate stand far apart.

Concluding remarks on Basil's theory of proper names

Basil develops a unique theory of proper names that reflects an eclectic and heavily adaptive use of earlier (mostly Platonist) philosophical theories of what differentiates individuals and what accounts for the persistence of individuals. It is a theory that exhibits marked originality. This should come as no surprise since Basil developed his own theory for specifically polemical purposes, in order to undermine Eunomius's theory of names, not to make a contribution to ancient philosophical or grammatical theories. He differs from the Stoics, Origen, and grammarians in claiming that proper names do not communicate a subject's ontology, but rather a synthetic notion of the subject's character, the concurrence of distinguishing marks, by which he is distinguished from other subjects of the same substance.

Paul Kalligas, David Robertson, and Richard Sorabji agree that, in terms of modern theories, Basil's theory of proper names is descriptive rather than designative. That is, for Basil proper names are tags for descriptive expressions about the object in addition to being denotative designations for concrete realities. Accordingly, Basil's proper names possess both denotation (reference) and connotation (descriptive content). As Robertson notes, unlike ancient descriptivist theories, Basil's proper names obtain their descriptive material from the notions impressed upon the mind when the name is heard, not from inherent (usually etymological) aspects of the names themselves.[72] This amounts to a rejection of the classic naturalist theory of names wherein, as we saw in Chapter Two, etymology provided clues to the nature of the name-bearer. In Basil's

[72] Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," 19.

notionalist theory of names, meaning is not a function of etymology that discloses nature, but is determined by the notion that corresponds to the name, which is unrelated to its etymology. Hence Basil can purify names of inappropriate connotations when applied to God. If the connotations of a name were inherent to the name itself, as in Platonist naturalist theories, they could not be mentally excluded when the name was applied to God. This feature is connected with Basil's emphasis upon customary usage as a source for basic notions about God. Because the descriptive content of names is not a function of their etymologies, but of their notions (which itself is based on its common usage), they can be easily stripped of their inappropriate content.

II. Absolute names

Basil of Caesarea discusses absolute and relative names in tandem, distinguishing one from the other.[73] In this, he follows established grammatical and philosophical accounts, which similarly treated them in concert and contrasted them. But Basil discusses absolute names only to contrast them to relative names (to be discussed in the next part). As a result, his treatment of them is undeveloped. Nonetheless, his understanding of absolute names (insofar as it can be reconstructed) betrays myriad influences, but I argue that he is mainly indebted to grammatical sources, though there are striking parallels with Neoplatonist ideas. In addition, he is clear that absolute names reveal distinguishing marks, not substance, much as was the case for proper names. For this reason, some scholars have suggested a close connection in Basil's mind between proper and absolute names. I argue that this understanding is mistaken because Basil

[73] *Eun*. 2.9, 11-27.

views all names as revealing properties that are identificatory not constitutive. I suggest that the distinguishing marks that Basil thinks absolute names reveals are akin to Porphyrian *propria*.

Basil's grammatical description of absolute names

Basil's description of absolute terms includes how they are expressed, what they signify, and examples. He writes:

> Now who does not know that some names are expressed absolutely and in respect of themselves, signifying the things which are their referents. … For example, 'man' and 'horse' and 'ox' each communicate the very thing that is named.[74]

Basil's description of how absolutes are expressed—"some names are expressed absolutely and in respect of themselves" (τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν ἀπολελυμένως καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ προφερόμενα)—echoes the grammatical definition of absolute names.[75] The highly influential *Technê grammatikê* attributed to Dionysius Thrax defines them as

---

[74] Basil, *Eun*. 2.9, 11-13 and 14-16 (SChr 305: 36 Sesboüé): τίς οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν ἀπολελυμένως καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ προφερόμενα τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτοῖς πραγμάτων ἐστι σημαντικά. … οἷον, ἄνθρωπος μὲν καὶ ἵππος καὶ βοῦς αὐτὸ ἕκαστον τῶν ὀνομαζομένων παρίστησιν.

[75] On the grammatical understanding of absolutes, see Alfons Wouters, "The Grammatical Term ἀπολελυμένον in the School Book Brit.Mus.Add.MS.37533 (=Pack^2 2712)," *Chronique d'Égypte* 68 (1993): 168–77; Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns in Ancient Grammar," *Orbis* 38 (1995): 153; and Pierre Swiggers, *Histoire de la pensée linguistique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 41.

follows: "An absolute name is that which is conceived in respect of itself , such as 'god' or 'reason'."[76]

The scholiasts unpack this terse definition. Following the *Technê*, they consistently define an absolute name—both ἀπόλυτον and ἀπολελυμένον are used—as that which is conceived in respect of itself.[77] In other words, "an absolute is that which is not conceived together with another."[78] This means that absolutes "do not have a correspondence or relation to another."[79] One scholiast notes that all other terms are somehow conceived relative to another term; for example, a comparative is considered relative to its positive (e.g. 'more beautiful' to 'beautiful'), a patronymic is relative to another name from which it is derived (e.g. 'Atreides' comes from 'Atreus'), and relatives are always conceptualized in relation to another (e.g. 'left' and 'right').[80] In contrast, an absolute is "unrelated, which is to say it does not have a relation to any

---

[76] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê grammatikê* 12.23 (GG 1.1: 44, 6-7 Uhlig): ἀπολελυμένον δέ ἐστι ὅ καθ' ἑαυτὸ νοεῖται.

[77] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 70, 25 Hilgard): τούτου χάριν ἀπόλυτα καλεῖται, ἅτε δὴ καθ' ἑαυτὰ νοούμενα καὶ θεωρούμενα; (398, 28-29): Ἀπόλυτον γάρ ἐστιν, ὃ καθ' ἑαυτὸ δύναται νοεῖσθαι; (243, 9): Ἀπολελυμένον ἐστὶν ὃ δύναται καθ' ἑαυτὸ θεωρεῖσθαι.

[78] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 243, 14 Hilgard): καὶ γὰρ ἀπολελυμένον ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ μεθ' ἑτέρου νοεῖται.

[79] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 70, 21-24 Hilgard): Ἐπειδὴ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα τῶν εἰδῶν ἢ σὺν ἑτέροις ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρων νοεῖται, τὸ δὲ θεός παίδευσις λόγος πεπρωμένη πρὸς ἕτερον λόγον ἢ σχέσιν οὐκ ἔχει; see also (398, 10-12): Ἐπειδὴ ἀπήλλακται καὶ ἐκτός ἐστι καὶ ὥσπερ ἐλεύθερον τοῦ πρὸς ἕτερόν τι νοεῖσθαι, διὰ τοῦτο ἀπολελυμένον αὐτὸ εἶπε ("For it [sc. an absolute] is removed from and outside of and as it were free from being conceived relative to something else. For this reason he [sc. Dionysius] says that it is absolute").

[80] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 398, 12-18 Hilgard). The grammatical understanding of relatives is treated in more detail below.

other."[81] An absolute "does not produce a relation with another, which is to say an attachment" and it is "used alone."[82]

Hence the grammatical understanding of absolutes is that they "do not derive their meaning from other words, nor show a semantic relationship with other words."[83] They express concepts that are not linked with others and which are detached from others.[84] Similarly to Dionysius Thrax and the scholiasts, Basil used the perfect participle of ἀπολύω (albeit adverbially) and the reflexive pronoun in the κατὰ phrase. Basil does not use typical the Stoic terminology for one variety of absolutes, τὰ κατὰ διαφοράν.[85] It appears to be of little import that Basil considered absolutes to be "expressed," or "uttered," (προφερόμενα) in respect of themselves, whereas for Dionysius Thrax and the scholiasts they are "conceived" (νοεῖται) in respect of themselves. Both are speaking about names rather than things. Accordingly, Basil's understanding of absolutes appears to be derived from grammatical sources.[86]

---

[81] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 398, 27-28 Hilgard): ἄσχετόν ἐστι, τουτέστιν οὐκ ἔχει πρὸς ἄλλο σχέσιν.

[82] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 243, 10-12 Hilgard): τοῦτο <γὰρ> πρὸς ἕτερον οὐ ποιεῖται τὴν σχέσιν, τουτέστι τὴν ἐξάρτησιν· πάντα γὰρ τὰ εἴδη τὰ ὑποπεπτωκότα πρός τι καὶ κατὰ συζυγίαν εἴρηται, τοῦτο δὲ μοναδικόν.

[83] Wouters, "The Grammatical Term ἀπολελυμένον," 171; Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 153.

[84] Swiggers, *Histoire de la pensée linguistique*, 41.

[85] Simplicius, *in Cat.* 7 (CAG 8: 165, 32 – 166, 30 Kalbfleisch), reporting on the Stoic difference between the relative and the relatively disposed [partially = LS 29C]; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.161-2, reporting on skeptical teaching; and *M.* 10.263-5, reporting on Pythagorian teaching. See also, Sextus, *PH* 1.14 [1.137] [=LS 72I], and LS 28M-N. This phrase will be discussed in more detail below.

[86] Another, later grammatical tradition regarding absolutes viewed them as the positive form of adjectives; see Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.161-162; Diogenes Laertius, *VP* 3.108-109. Such usage is found in Herodianus but not Apollonius Dyscolus. On this tradition,

Despite Basil's grammatical definition of absolutes, his description of how absolute names function—"signifying the things which are their referents" (τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτοῖς πραγμάτων ἐστι σημαντικά)—is strikingly reminiscent of the Neoplatonist Dexippus. In his final explanation of what predications signify, Dexippus writes:

> When they say, "'animal' is predicated of 'man'," they are saying that the term that signifies (σημαντικὴ) animal, which is the name 'animal', is predicated of the concept (νοήματος) signified by the term 'man' and of the thing which is its referent (τοῦ ὑποκειμένου τούτῳ πράγματος).[87]

Except for the change from the singular to the plural, Basil's phrase τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτοῖς πραγμάτων is exactly the same as Dexippus's. In Chapter Five I raised that possibility that Neoplatonists like Dexippus could have provided the philosophical context in which Basil developed his notionalist theory of names. But note that in his description of absolutes, Basil, unlike Dexippus, omits mentioning that names signify concepts as well as things. If he had done so, it would have made my case for Basil's notionalism easier to demonstrate. It may be the case that Basil is less clear than I want him to be because in this section Basil discusses absolute names only to contrast them to relative terms. Nonetheless, Basil does not say that absolute names give rise to notions,

---

see Wouters, "The Grammatical Term ἀπολελυμένον," 173–4. Basil shows no contact with this tradition.

[87] Dexippus, *in Cat.* 1.3 (CAG 4.2: 10, 27-30 Busse): ὅταν γὰρ λέγωσι, τὸ ζῷον κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατηγορεῖται, λέγουσιν ὅτι ἡ σημαντικὴ λέξις τοῦ ζῷου, ἥτις ἐστὶ τὸ ζῷον ὄνομα, κατὰ τοῦ σημαινομένου νοήματος ὑπὸ τῆς ἄνθρωπος λέγξεως καὶ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου τούτῳ πράγματος κατηγορεῖται; trans. [modified] Dillon 30.

but that they signify the things which are their subjects, which is to say the entities that bear the names.

The same understanding of what absolute names signify is seen in his examples of absolute names. Terms like 'man' (ἄνθρωπος: more accurately, 'human being'), 'horse', and 'ox', says Basil, "communicate the very thing that is named" (αὐτὸ ἕκαστον τῶν ὀνομαζομένων παρίστησιν). Absolute names refer to the entities that bear them. Basil's triad of the absolute names 'man', 'horse', 'ox' was commonly used as an example of species of the genus 'animal' from Aristotle onwards, including by Porphyry and Dexippus.[88] A scholiast on the *Technê* attributed to Dionysius Thrax likens the division of the genus 'animal' into 'man, horse, ox' to the division of the genus 'name' into its species.[89] Both Diogenes Laertius and Sextus Empiricus list 'man' and 'horse' among other examples of absolute things.[90] In the *Technê* 'man' and 'horse' are given as examples of a noun (ὄνομα) "said commonly" (κοινῶς λεγόμενον) and the designative noun (προσηγορικόν ὄνομα).[91] A scholiast adds 'ox' to the examples of the designative noun.[92] In the *Technê* 'ox' and 'horse' (as well as 'vine' and 'olive') are listed as examples of the specific noun, which names a species that results from the division of a genus.[93] A scholiast uses the triad of 'man, horse, ox' when explaining the generic noun,

---

[88] Aristotle, *GA* 732a34; see also Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 96, 11 Busse); Dexippus, *in Cat*. 1.13 (CAG 4.2: 19, 21 Busse). Note that the English translation of the latter mistakenly omits "or a horse" (Dillon, *Dexippus. On Aristotle Categories*, 43).

[89] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 551, 21-25 Hilgard).

[90] Diogenes Laertius, *VP* 3.108, presenting the teaching of Plato; Sextus Empiricus, *M*. 10.263, presenting Pythagorean but actually Old Academic teaching (see n. 187 below).

[91] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê* 12 (GG 1.1: 24, 4-5 and 34, 1-2 Uhlig).

[92] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 232, 26-29 Hilgard). See also (385, 32-34).

[93] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê* 12 (GG 1.1: 43, 3 – 44, 1 Uhlig).

which names a genus, saying: "A generic noun is one in which many unlike species are contained and included. In the [genus of] 'animal', there are many species: 'man, horse, ox'."[94] Therefore, Basil's examples of absolute names are ultimately derived from philosophical examples of the species of the genus 'animal' that were taken over by the grammarians as examples of both designative and specific names. Basil chose not to use the typical grammatical examples of absolutes found in the *Technê* and the scholiasts, 'θεός' and 'λόγος', probably because their supreme theological significance would have obscured his point.

Even though Basil's examples of the absolute name are taken from the grammatical examples of the designative name and the specific name, he is not merely conflating the three of them. Grammatically, both an absolute name and a specific name are kinds of the designative name. The *Technê* lists two main species of nouns: the primitive and the derivative. There are seven subspecies of derivative nouns, which are distinguished by form, and twenty-four subspecies of primitive nouns, which are distinguished by content.[95] Among the twenty-four primitive nouns are the proper name (κύριον) and designative name (προσηγορικόν), as well as the relative name (πρός τι ἔχον) and the absolute name (ἀπολελυμένον), and the generic name and the specific name.

---

[94] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 242, 23-25 Hilgard). See also (397, 18-19), which lists the same triad as examples of the generic name. See also (385, 11-12), where 'dog' is added to the triad as an example of the generic name.

[95] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê* 12 (GG 1.1: 25,6 – 29, 4 and 32, 2 – 45, 2 Uhlig). See Kemp, "The *Tekhnê grammatikê* of Dionysius Thrax," 187 n. 16; and Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 127–8.

However, on further examination the grammatical taxonomy of names in the *Technê* is more complex. The species enumerated are not exclusive of one another.[96] For example, there can be homonyms of both proper and designative names, whereas eponyms (e.g. Apollo is also called 'Phoebus') and gentilics (e.g. 'Galatian, Phrygian') appear to be kinds of proper names, and collectives (e.g. 'people, chorus, crowd'), generic names (e.g. 'animal'), and specific names (e.g. 'horse') kinds of designative name. The scholiasts recognized this, noting that every name falls under two primitive species, the proper and the designative, and that either can possess an addition significance (i.e. fall under another species).[97] Yet the scholiasts ignore the fact that other species of nouns have no overlap with either proper or designative names, such as the attached noun (e.g. 'fast, slow'), which was placed next to either a proper or designative name,[98] as well as the interrogative noun (e.g. 'who?'), the indefinite noun (e.g. 'whoever'), and the distributive noun (e.g. 'each'). In any event, both relative and absolute names, and generic and specific names, appear to fall under the designative name. Accordingly, Basil is using examples for absolute names that the grammarians used for the class under which absolute names fell, the designative name, as well as another species of the designative name, the specific. Hence Basil is treating absolute names as designative names.

---

[96] See Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 127.

[97] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 232, 20-24 Hilgard): Ὃν δὲ τρόπον εἰρήκαμεν, ὅτι πᾶν ὄνομα ὑπὸ τὰ δύο εἴδη ἐστὶ τὰ πρῶτα, οὕτω καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἐροῦμεν, ὅτι πᾶν ὄνομα ὑπὸ τὰ δύο εἴδη ἐστὶ τὰ πρῶτα, φημὶ κύριον καὶ προσηγορικόν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦ εἶναι κύριον ἢ προσηγορικὸν καὶ ἑτέρῳ συμβαίνει σημαινομένῳ κατέχεσθαι, οἷον ἐπιθέτῳ καὶ ἑξῆς. The same is repeated at (385, 1-6) and (552, 15-18).

[98] Gk. ἐπίθετον. This term was rendered in Latin as *nomen adjectivum* and later acquired the status of a separate part of speech—the adjective.

This is further demonstrated by how he describes what absolute names convey. We saw above that he said that absolute names signify "the things which are their referents" (τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτοῖς πραγμάτων ἐστι σημαντικά) and "communicate the very thing that is named" (αὐτὸ ἕκαστον τῶν ὀνομαζομένων παρίστησιν). But in the *Technê* the designative name is said to be "that which signifies the common substance."[99] Basil's account of what absolute names convey seems deliberately vague, as if he is trying to exclude the possibility of understanding them conveying the *substance* (understood as essence) of the name-bearer.

Basil seems to have been aware of the ambiguity of his first two descriptions of what absolute names convey since he clarifies what he means. He writes: "we indicated a little before that, even if absolute names seem most of all to reveal some referent, they too do not communicate the substance itself, but delineate certain distinguishing marks in connection with it."[100] Basil is referring to his earlier discussion of proper names.[101] He affirms against Eunomius that even absolute names do not reveal the substances of their subjects, but rather emphasizes that they, like proper names, communicate the distinguishing marks that are connected with the substance.

On account of this fact, Bernard Sesboüé has suggested that there must be some connection in Basil's mind between a proper name and an absolute name, and argues that Basil believes that there are two kinds of absolute names, both of which nonetheless

---

[99] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê* 12 (GG 1.1: 34, 1-2 Uhlig): Προσηγορικὸν δέ ἐστι τὸ τὴν κοινὴν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον.

[100] Basil, *Eun*. 2.9, 24-27 (SChr 305: 38 Sesboüé): καίτοι γε μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν ἐδείκνυτο παρ' ἡμῶν ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἀπολελυμένα τῶν ὀνομάτων, κἂν τὰ μάλιστα δοκῇ ὑποκείμενόν τι δηλοῦν, οὐκ αὐτὴν παρίστησι τὴν οὐσίαν, ἰδιώματα δέ τινα περὶ αὐτὴν ἀφορίζει.

[101] Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité*, 79.

express distinguishing marks, not substance.[102] He calls the kind of absolute names discussed here "absolute common names" (*noms communs absolus*) and the other kind "absolute proper names" (*noms propers absolus*). According to Sesboüé, then, in Basil's understanding there is a genus of "name" and it has two species: absolute and relative names. "Absolute name" is further subdivided into two species: absolute proper names and absolute designative names.

This seems to be a reasonable taxonomy, but its divergence from both Stoic and grammatical categorizations needs to be noted. The Stoics considered the proper name (ὄνομα) and the designative name (προσηγορία) as two of the five distinct kinds of language expressions.[103] There was no Stoic genus above these two kinds of names. In the *Technê*, the ὄνομα (name or noun) is viewed as one of eight parts of speech.[104] Above I summarized the grammatical classification of nouns as found in the *Technê*. There I showed how absolute names were classified as designative names and have no connection with the proper name, apart from being another species of names. Thus Sesboüé's taxonomy distorts the classification of nouns commonplace in ancient grammar.

Sesboüé furthermore notes that his absolute proper names and absolute common names do not communicate the same "registre" of distinguishing marks.[105] He extrapolates from the case of his absolute proper names to describe his absolute common names. Since proper names indicate properties which, when taken together, make an

---

[102] Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et le Trinité*, 81. See also Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea*, 64–5.

[103] Diogenes Laertius, *VP* 7.57-58.

[104] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê* 11 (GG 1.1: 23, 1-3 Uhlig).

[105] Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité*, 81–2.

individual distinct from others, Sesboüé suggests that designative names indicate "ce qui est commun à tous les individus d'une même substance et constitue tout en même temps les propriétés distinctives de cette substance par rapport à d'autres."[106] Sesboüé's basic point that proper and absolute names disclose different kinds of distinguishing marks is surely correct, but there are a number of problems with his interpretation. First, he views absolute proper names as signifying the Stoic ἰδίως ποῖον, that is, that which defines the individual. As discussed earlier, this is mistaken. Second, he views absolute designative names as signifying the Stoic κοινῶς ποῖον, that is, that which defines the substance. Thus, for Sesboüé, designative names communicate essential properties and proper names personal properties, and in each case these properties determine the substance or individual.[107] But as discussed earlier, distinguishing marks that proper names reveal are for Basil not defining properties but non-essential attributes, the concurrence of which enable distinction between individuals. Accordingly, Sesboüé's understanding of absolute names seems to be incorrect.

Basil's distinguishing marks and Porphyry's propria

That Sesboüé's interpretation of Basil's understanding is incorrect is corroborated if we attempt to determine what sort of distinguishing marks Basil thought absolute names reveal. I suggest that the Neoplatonist commentary tradition helps us understand what Basil might have had in mind: the Porphyrian *proprium* (τὸ ἴδιον). Porphyry describes his fourth division of propria (said to be κυρίως ἴδια) as "where 'alone and all

[106] Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité*, 81.

[107] Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité*, 81–2; idem, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome suivi de Eunome Apologie*, SChr 299 (Paris: Cerf, 1982), 78–81.

and always' coincide."[108] In other words, a proprium is always true of a species, and only true of that species, yet does not define it (a species is defined by the differentiae of a genus). Hence, a proprium is sufficient for identifying a species. In fact, Porphyry remarks that his fourth division of propria are κυρίως propria "because they reciprocate."[109] Porphyry offers two examples of propria: the laughing of men and the neighing of horses.[110] These were commonplace examples, even among grammarians.[111] You know it's a horse if there's neighing; you know there's neighing if it's a horse. The proprium alone suffices for identification. Note that a proprium is different from an accident (συμβεβηκότος): accidents "come and go without the destruction of their subjects,"[112] whereas propria are connatural (σύμφυτον).

Positing Porphyrian propria as the distinguishing marks disclosed by absolute names is confirmed by other passages in Basil's corpus. A single excerpt suffices to demonstrate this. The context is the explanation why God called the earth 'dry' in Genesis 1:9.

> Dryness is the distinguishing mark, the characteristic (as it were), of the nature of the subject, but 'earth' is a mere designation of a thing. For just as rationality is the proprium of man but the term 'man' signifies the

---

[108] Porphyry, *Isa.* 4 (CAG 4.1: 12, 17 Busse); trans. Barnes 12; see *Isa.* 4 (CAG 4.1: 12, 20 Busse) for κυρίως ἴδια. Propria are also discussed at *in Cat*. (CAG 4.1: 93, 29 – 94, 17 Busse).

[109] Porphyry, *Isa.* 4 (CAG 4.1: 12, 20-21 Busse).

[110] Porphyry, *Isa.* 4 (CAG 4.1: 12, 17-22 Busse).

[111] Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 208. For example, a scholiast commenting upon the *Technê* writes: "A *proprium* is that which appertains to only one and is not shared with another, as the laughing of 'man' and the neighing of 'horse'. But white or black, or fast or slow, are accidents" (GG 1.3: 214, 31-33 Hilgard).

[112] Porphyry, *Isa.* 5 (CAG 4.1: 12, 24-25 Busse); trans. Barnes 12.

> animal to which the proprium belongs, so too is dryness the proprium of earth and its particular trait. Just as that to which dryness distinctively (ἰδίως) belongs is called 'earth', so too that to which neighing distinctively belongs is called 'horse'. This holds true not only in the case of earth, but each of the other elements also has a distinctive quality allotted to it, through which it is distinguished from the others and what sort of thing it is is known. Water has the distinctive quality of coldness; air, moistness; fire, heat.[113]

Here Basil uses 'distinguishing mark' and 'proprium' interchangeably—it is that which distinguishes one species from another and enables one to know what sort of thing it is when compared to others. The parallels with Porphyry are clear, though we need not posit a direct influence because the idea of propria was well-known. While Basil uses the commonplace example of neighing as the proprium of horse, he oddly considers rationality (one of the differentiae of the genus 'animal') the distinguishing mark of a human being.[114] But he must view rationality as the distinguishing mark of man because it is unique to him in the class of animals.

In another passage, Basil explains how when each animal was created it was given a distinguishing mark by means of which it could be distinguished from other animals.[115] Here he states that the distinguishing mark of an ox is 'being sturdy' (εὐσταθής) and that of a horse as follows: "a horse burns with desire for the mare."[116]

---

[113] *Hex*. 4.5 (GCS n.f. 2: 64, 24 – 65, 10 Mendieta / Rudberg).

[114] Others used propria to state differentiae; see Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction*, 217.

[115] *Hex*. 9.3.

[116] *Hex*. 9.3 (GCS n.f. 2: 149, 15 Mendieta / Rudberg).

These characteristics hardly seem to function as Porphyrian propria: other animals are sturdy and desire to reproduce. Yet, at least in the case of the horse, Basil is not simply being inconsistent. Influenced by Jeremiah 5:8 (*They became horses in heat, each one neighing for his neighbor's wife*), Basil appears to have connected a horse's neighing with its urge to reproduce, remarking: "a horse in heat neighs for its neighbor's wife."[117] One can only imagine in what way 'being sturdy' is connected with distinguishing oxen from other animals. Perhaps the sturdiness of oxen was proverbial.

Finally, Basil considers names said commonly of both Father and Son, such as 'light', 'life', 'good', and 'power', as absolute names that indicate the proprium of their common substance.[118] Such names are predicated "as the substance of God," which is to say that "the very thing which God is is life as a whole, light as a whole, and good as a whole,"[119] and they are "the ways of indicating his distinctive feature."[120] The divine substance is not defined by such features, but cannot be conceived apart from them.

Concluding remarks on Basil's understanding of absolute names

Therefore, I maintain against Sesboüé that there is no special connection in Basil's mind between proper and absolute names. First, he thinks that the distinguishing marks that both proper and absolute names reveal are defining properties. I have shown in the previous part and here that distinguishing marks are identificatory only. Secondly,

---

[117] *Ps*. 48.8 (PG 29: 452a).

[118] Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "'Seek and You Shall Find': Divine Simplicity and the Knowledge of God in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007), 154–60 and 179–88.

[119] *Eun*. 2.29, 18-19 (SChr 305: 122 Sesboüé).

[120] *Eun*. 2.29, 18-19 and 21-22 (SChr 305: 122 Sesboüé):

in Basil's notionalist theory of names, all names—including proper and absolute names—do not communicate substance but properties, often called distinguishing marks. Different kinds of names simply disclose different kind of properties. Proper names indicate distinguishing marks that distinguish individuals of a common species from one another; absolute names indicate distinguishing marks that distinguish one substance from another. The former belong to individuals; the latter to substances. Basil confusingly uses the same terminology for both, but the epistemological function of distinguishing marks in each case is quite different.

Because of the brevity of Basil's discussion of absolute names, he does not say that they primarily give rise to notions and secondarily to distinguishing marks. But when discussing 'light' as a common term for both the Father and the Son, Basil affirms against Eunomius that there is a single notion of light.[121] He even writes: "according to the very definition of light, there is neither a verbal nor a notional difference between a light and a light."[122] He implies a similar understanding of life and power. The single notion of light, life, and power is true of the common divine substance. Therefore, even though Basil does not explicitly say that absolute names signify notions, his discussion testifies to this fact.

In his understanding of absolute names, once again we see Basil drawing upon a eclectic array of sources. His description of absolute names is primarily grammatical in origin, but the parallel with Dexippus suggests a possible Neoplatonist influence. In addition, the examples of absolutes that he uses were drawn from grammatical sources, who themselves drew upon philosophical sources. Finally, Basil's understanding of the

[121] *Eun.* 2.25-28.

[122] *Eun.* 2.25.

distinguishing marks that absolute names reveal have much in common with Porphyrian propria.

III. Relative names

Basil presents his theory of relatives specifically to argue that Eunomius's preferred name for the Son, 'something begotten', does not reveal substance.[123] Basil also views the names 'Father' and 'Son' as relative terms; in this, he is following a Christian tradition that was well-established by his day. In this part I argue that, in line with his theories of proper and absolute names, Basil views relative names as communicating notions connected with properties, not substance. In this context, Basil never explicitly says that a relative name signifies a distinguishing mark; rather, he asserts that a relative name signifies a relation. Nonetheless, I maintain that Basil understands the relation that relative names reveal as a characteristic property that is parallel with the distinguishing mark or marks that proper and absolute names reveal. All names for Basil disclose particular properties of the substance or individual to whom the name is applied; his nomenclature simply differs.

Another goal of this part is to situate Basil's discussion of relatives within preceding traditions. Though the concept of relatives is found in Plato, when Aristotle made it one of his categories, he fixed its philosophical usage for centuries.[124] Neoplatonist commentators upon Aristotle in particular explored all of aspects of relatives and discussed the *aporiai* raised in connected with them. The Stoics were also

---

[123] Basil, *Eun*. 2.9, 1-10 (SChr 305: 36 Sesboüé).

[124] See Plato, *Soph*. 255d, *Rep*. 438ab, and *Parm*. 133d; Aristotle, *Cat.* 7. See Steven K. Strange, *Porphyry: On Aristotle Categories* (London: Duckworth, 1992), 113 n. 307.

interested in relatives.[125] In addition, these philosophical discussions of relatives influenced grammatical treatments of them. Basil's account of relatives undoubtedly owes something to previous discussions. In the scholarship, there is a widespread assumption that an Aristotelian understanding of relatives was commonplace in the fourth century.[126] This assumption, coupled with the fact that Basil was familiar with the *Categories*, [127] may have influenced Bernard Sesboüé and Volker Henning Drecoll to view Basil's theory of relatives as Aristotelian, or at least inspired by the Aristotelian tradition.[128] Against Sesboüé and Drecoll, David Robertson argued that Basil of Caesarea's theory of relatives has its direct antecedents in Stoic-inspired grammatical discussions.[129] Lewis Ayres rejects a Stoic background for Basil's theory of relatives and situates Basil within the Neoplatonist-Aristotelian tradition rooted in *Categories* 7.[130]

Ayres also notes the usage of the technical language of relatives by other fourth-century theologians previous to Basil. To my knowledge, there is no comprehensive study of this Christian tradition of using relatives in Trinitarian arguments, though studies of its use by individual theologians have been made. I will argue that two Christian

---

[125] Mario Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," in Jonathan Barnes and Mario Mignucci, eds., *Matter and Metaphysics* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1988), 189.

[126] For example, R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 AD* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 85; and Xavier Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006), 201–3.

[127] *Eun*. 1.9.

[128] Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée* (SChr 299), 84, and Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea*, 65 n. 56.

[129] David G. Robertson, "Relatives in Basil of Caesarea," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 277–87.

[130] Lewis Ayres*, Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 201–2, esp. nn. 52-3.

traditions of using relatives in theological contexts developed. The first is an Aristotelian tradition that seems to have been used predominantly by Alexandrian theologians of the third and early fourth century. The second is a grammatical tradition that developed in Eusebian circles in the middle of the fourth century. I place Basil within this second, grammatical tradition of using relatives in theological arguments.

This part begins by demonstrating the existence of these two traditions. In each case, the demonstration requires summarizing the philosophical or grammatical discussions of relatives and then showing how Christian theologians appropriated them. Next, I turn to Basil's theory of relatives with two goals in mind, demonstrating (1) that relative names operate similarly to proper and absolute names, and (2) that Basil is an heir of the Christian-grammatical tradition of using relatives in theological debate.

The Aristotelian understanding of relatives

Since the Aristotelian understanding of relatives was largely mediated through the commentary tradition, in the following exposition I will use some Neoplatonist commentators because they represent interpretations of Aristotelian roughly contemporary with the fourth-century theological debates. In his first of two descriptions of the category of relative in *Categories* 7, Aristotle says: "We call *relatives* (τὰ πρός τι) all such things as are said to be just what they are, *of* or *than* other things, or in some way *in relation to* something else (πρὸς ἕτερον)."[131] Hence relatives are *things* that inherently imply a reference to other *things*, that is, *things* related to *things*—Aristotle is

[131] Aristotle, *Cat*. 7 (6a36-37); trans. Ackrill. Cf. 6b6-8. Porphyry notes that "in some way *in relation to* something else" was Aristotle's addition to Plato's definition (*in Cat.* [CAG 4.1: 111, 28-29 Busse]).

not speaking of relative *terms*. Commenting upon Aristotle, Porphyry explains that "relatives are not absolute (οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπόλυτα τὰ πρός τι), but exist in a relation of one thing to another (ἐν σχέσει τινὸν πρὸς ἄλλο τι)."[132] I cite this comment of Porphyry because it exhibits two of the most important technical terms used when discussing relatives: 'relation' (σχέσις) and 'relatives' (τὰ πρός τι).

One of the principle features of relatives is that they reciprocate. Aristotle says that provided that they are "properly given" (οἰκείως ἀποδιδῶται),[133] "all relatives are spoken of in relation to correlatives that reciprocate" (πάντα δὲ τὰ πρός τι πρὸς ἀντιστρέφοντα λέγεται).[134] Aristotle uses the example of a master and a slave: the slave is called the slave of a master and the master is called the master of a slave.[135] Commenting on Aristotle, Porphyry claims that "being said in relation to correlatives that reciprocate" is the proprium (ἴδιον) of relatives insofar as they are relatives.[136] In other words, something is a relative if and only if it possesses a relational property, the very property that makes a relative a relative. Mario Mignucci sums up Aristotle's

---

[132] Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 112, 1-2 Busse); trans. Strange 113.

[133] By "properly given" Aristotle means that the relative is stated in relation to something non-accidental. Relatives are improperly given when one term "extends" (πλεονάζειν θάτερον: Porphyry, *in Cat.* [CAG 4.1: 117, 27-28 Busse]) farther than the other. For example, 'wing' is improperly given as 'of a bird' because other creatures besides birds have wings. 'Wing' is properly given as 'of the winged'. Similarly, 'slave' is improperly given as 'of a man' because 'being a man' is merely accidental to 'being a master' and there are many men who are not masters. Therefore, 'slave' is properly given as 'of a master' because only a master has a slave. Relatives properly given ensures that they are convertible. See Aristotle, *Cat*. 7 (6b36-7a5 and 7a31-b9) and Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 116, 6-14; 117, 2-8, and 117, 27-31 Busse).

[134] Aristotle, *Cat*. 7 (6b28); trans. Ackrill.

[135] Porphyry notes that when relatives reciprocate thus, "the term from which the relation proceeds is given in the nominative case, and the term to which it is related is given in the genitive case" (Porphyry, *in Cat.* [CAG 4.1: 112, 9-10 Busse]; trans. Strange 113).

[136] Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 115, 17-18 Busse).

understanding thus: "a property F is said to be a relative property if, and only if, it can be expanded into a relation that determines F univocally."[137] Mignucci calls this the "constitutive relation" of the relative property. Hence what makes a slave a slave is his relation to a master: this is the constitutive relation of the property 'being a slave'. Accordingly, Aristotle says, "if that in relation to which a thing is spoken of is properly given, then, when all the other things that are accidental are stripped off (πάντων περιαιρουμένων τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα συμβεβηκότα ἐστίν) and that alone is left to which it was properly given as related, it will always be spoken of in relation to that."[138] In other words, in the case of properly given correlatives that reciprocate, a relation can be abstracted from the two relatives, each of which has a relative property that relates them solely to each other. This will not work for improperly given relatives that do not reciprocate: when the accidental features are stripped away, the relation evaporates as well.

In a second description of the category meant to prevent substances and their parts from being relatives, Aristotle suggested that for those things that are relatives "being is the same as being somehow related to something" (τὸ εἶναι ταὐτόν ἐστι τῷ πρός τί πως ἔχειν).[139] The fifth-century commentator Ammonius explained Aristotle's meaning thus: "relatives are things whose being and essence is nothing other than their relation to

---

[137] Mario Mignucci, "Aristotle's definitions of relatives in *Cat*. 7," *Phronesis* 31 (1986): 104.

[138] Aristotle, *Cat*. 7 (7a31-34); trans. Ackrill.

[139] Aristotle, *Cat*. 7 (8a32); trans. Ackrill. The phrase πρός τί πως ἔχειν could also be translated "relatively disposed to something." It also occurs in *EN* 1101b10-27, *Phys*. 246b3-20, *Top*. 142a.26-31 and 146a36-b4. Simplicius attributed the phrase to unnamed members of Plato's Academy (*in Cat.* 8 [CAG 8: 217, 8-32 Kalbfleisch]). The same phrase was adopted by the Stoics for their so-called fourth genera.

another."[140] In other words, what principally defines or at least describes a thing that is relative is its relation to the connected relative. For example, the relative property "being a master" principally means having a slave. "Being a master" says nothing about the substance of the man who is a master; "being a master" is accidental to him *qua* man. But "being a master" is not accidental *qua* slave; rather, a master's relation to the slave defines what a master is. Ammonius says: "If something is a relative, not only is it spoken of with reference to another thing, but it stands in a relation to that thing."[141]

Another pertinent feature of relatives is their simultaneity. Aristotle writes: "relatives seem to be simultaneous by nature (ἅμα τῇ φύσει); and in most cases this is true."[142] When there is a master, there is a slave; when there is a slave, there is a master. Aristotle distinguishes between simultaneity by nature from that in respect of time (κατὰ χρόνον): "Those things are called simultaneous without qualification and most strictly which come into being at the same time; for neither is prior nor posterior. … But those things are called simultaneous by nature which reciprocate as to implication of existence, provided that neither is in any way the cause of the other's existence."[143] At the same time, simultaneity implies that "each eliminates the other (συναναιρεῖ)."[144] In other words, when there is no slave, there is no master; when there is no master, there is no slave. Hence, Porphyry comments that "whenever things introduce or eliminate each

---

[140] Ammonius, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.4: 77, 28-29 Busse); trans. Cohen / Matthews 93.

[141] Ammonius, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.4: 78, 2-3 Busse); trans. Cohen / Matthews 93.

[142] Aristotle, *Cat.* 7 (7b15-16); trans. Ackrill.

[143] Aristotle, *Cat*. 13 (14b24-29); trans. Ackrill. Cf. *Cat*. 13 (15a7-12).

[144] Aristotle, *Cat*. 7 (7b19).

other, they are simultaneous"[145]—that is, simultaneous by nature. Aristotle did not go so far as to claim that all relatives were simultaneous by nature.[146] Later interpreters such as Porphyry viewed Aristotle's hesitation as a dialectical argument[147] and considered simultaneity by nature a proprium of all relatives.[148]

Because of the Aristotelian tradition's emphasis on the reciprocation and simultaneity of relatives, as well as relatives being defined by their relation, it can be characterized as endorsing what has been called "ontological entailment." In order words, the existence of one relative implies the existence of the other relative to which it stands in relation. Aristotelian relatives are co-eval because of their mutual introduction and elimination.

Christian theologians saw the Aristotelian understanding of relatives as a resource for proving that the Father and Son were co-eternal. But Aristotle did not use the father-son relation when discussing relatives in the *Categories*. However, he did point to the pair as an example of the relation between the active and passive that arises at a particular moment of time.[149] Plotinus explicitly denied that a father and son are simultaneous by

---

[145] Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 118, 5-6 Busse); trans. Strange 123.

[146] *Cat*. 7b15-8a12.

[147] Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 119, 4-6 Busse); Ammonius, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.4: 74, 11-26 Busse); Simplicius, *in Cat.* 7 (CAG 8: 190, 31-33 Kalbfleisch).

[148] Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 117, 33-35; 119, 4-6; 120, 23f. Busse); Ammonius, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.4: 73, 23 – 74, 1 Busse); Simplicius, *in Cat.* 7 (CAG 8: 189, 18 Kalbfleisch). Ammonius calls simultaneity by nature a "concomitant" (παρακολούθημα) rather than a "proprium" (ἴδιον) of relatives. The claim that it is a proprium of relatives to be simultaneous by nature was also made by Iamblichus and pseudo-Archytas, both of whom traced the view back to Plato; see Strange, *Porphyry. On Aristotle Categories*, 122 n. 358.

[149] Aristotle, *Metaph*. 5.15 (1021a20-25). See also Alexander of Aphrodisias, *in Metaph.* (CAG 1: 406, 8-10 Hayduck).

nature, noting that a son is still a son even if his father has died.[150] In contrast, Porphyry used the father-son relation as one of his primary examples of relatives that reciprocate and are simultaneous by nature.[151] Dexippus also seems to accept the father-son pair as an example of relatives.[152] So it seems that even among late third-century and early fourth-century Neoplatonists it came to be accepted that the father-son pair were relatives simultaneous by nature.

A Christian tradition of viewing Father and Son as Aristotelian relatives developed in the third century, even if the technical terminology (σχέσις and πρός τι) was not always employed. In its most simple expression, the so-called "argument from correlatives" is based on the view that, since a father and son are relatives that are simultaneous by nature, there cannot be a father without a son.[153] When transferred to theology, it means that the Father's existence entails the Son's existence, and if the Father is eternal, so too is the Son eternal.

This argument was central to Origen's assertion that Fatherhood was intrinsic to God's eternal nature.[154] Origen evinces a knowledge of relatives when discussing how God is almighty. He writes: "Insofar as someone cannot be a father if there is no son, and someone cannot be a master without a possession or a slave, so too God cannot be called

---

[150] Plotinus, *Enn*. 6.1 [42].7, 38-41 (Plotini Opera III: 11 H-S^2).

[151] Porphyry, *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 112, 9; 113, 9; 115, 20-23 and 27; and 118, 8-16 Busse).

[152] Dexippus, *in Cat.* 1.4 (CAG 4.2: 13, 15 Busse).

[153] See Morales, *La théologie trinitaire*, 203. He notes the tradition of commentary on the *Categories.*

[154] Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 69–76.

almighty if there are none over whom he can exercise his might."[155] Just as fatherhood and lordship are impossible without a son or a slave, so too the divine omnipotence is impossible without an object to which God can direct his power. Though he does not use technical terminology, Origen takes it for granted that both the master-slave pair (the typical Aristotelian example) and the father-son pair are uncontroversially relatives.

He deploys the latter pair in specifically theological arguments. "How can anyone," asks Origen, "think or believe that God was ever Father, even for a moment, apart from the begetting of Wisdom?"[156] Hence the Son's eternity is necessary for God's eternal Fatherhood. Such ideas are the basis for Origen's doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son. He writes:

> God did not begin to be Father, prevented as men who become fathers are by the inability to be fathers yet. For if God is always perfect and the power for him to be Father belongs to him and it is good for him to be Father of such a Son, why would he delay and deprive himself of what is good and, so to speak, of a Son on the basis of whom he is able to be Father?[157]

---

[155] Origen, *Princ*. 1.2 [10], 307-310 (SChr 252: 132 Crouzel / Simonetti): *Quemadmodum pater non potest esse quis, si flilis non sit, neque dominus esse quis potest sine possessione vel servo: ita ne omnipotens quidem deus dici potest, si non sint in quos exerceat potentatum*.

[156] Origen, *Princ*. 1.2 [2], 31-34 (SChr 252: 112 Crouzel / Simonetti): *Quomodo autem extra huius sapientiae generationem fuisse aliquando deum patrem, vel ad punctum momenti alicuius, potest quis sentire vel sentire?*

[157] Origen, *De genesi* 1.1 *apud* Marcellus, *Fr.* 21 (20, 11 – 22, 1 Vinzent): οὐ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ εἶναι ἤρξατο κωλυόμενος, ὡς οἱ γινόμενοι πατέρες ἄνθρωποι, ὑπὸ τοῦ μὴ δύνασθαι πω πατέρες εἶναι. εἰ γὰρ ἀεὶ τέλειος ὁ θεός, καὶ πάρεστιν αὐτῷ δύναμις τοῦ πατέρα αὐτὸν εἶναι, καὶ καλὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι πατέρα τοιούτου υἱοῦ, τί ἀναβάλλεται καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ ἑαυτὸν στερίσκει καὶ, ὡς ἔστιν εἰπεῖν, ἐξ οὗ

The argument here assumes that God's perfection and goodness requires that he always be Father. The unexpressed premise of this argument is that that Father and Son are relatives. Therefore, if God is always Father, then the Son must always be with him. Origen does not employ technical Aristotelian language in making this argument, but his endorsement of the ontological entailment of relatives in the case of the Father and Son is clear.

Origen's Alexandrian successors Dionysius and (probably) Theognostus also deployed the same argument from correlativity to demonstrate the necessity of the Son's eternity for God's being eternally Father.[158] A tissue of texts on this topic preserved by Athanasius demonstrates Dionysius's exploitation of the argument of correlatives:[159]

> For there was not when God was not a father. … Christ is always, being Word and *Wisdom* and *Power* [1 Cor 1:24]. For God was not first childless, and then produced a child. On the contrary, the Son has his

---

δύναται πατὴρ εἶναι υἱοῦ; This same fragment is also cited in *Apologeticus pro Origene liber* 48 compiled by Pamphilius and Eusebius (preserved only in the Latin translation of Rufinus), where it is described as a testimony from the first book *De genesi* (*Apologeticus* 47, 2 [SChr 464: 106 Amacker / Junod]). Because this version of the fragment reads *ex quo potest esse pater efficitur pater* (*Apologeticus* 48, 7-8 [SChr 464: 108 Amacker/Junod]) for the last line of the Greek fragment, some editions have emended the final υἱοῦ (which is found in the ms.) to οὐ γίνεται πατήρ; see Eusebius, *C. Marc.* 1.4.22 (GCS 14: 22, 17 Klostermann / Hansen). But see Markus Vinzent, *Markell von Ankyra : Die Fragmente [und] Der Brief an Julius von Rom* (Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1997), 135 n. 28 for why this emendation should be rejected. Though I agree with Vinzent's reasons for retaining the ms. reading, I disagree with his translation of the final clause: "und–wie man sagen kann—dessen, woraus er Vater eines Sohnes sein kann." For a discussion of the place of the passage within Origen's theology, see Widdicome, *The Fatherhood of God*, 70–1.

[158] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 123–6; Morales, *La théologie trinitaire*, 206–7.

[159] Some scholars have claimed that the Dionysian citations in Athanasius's *Sent.* are fourth-century forgeries; for a summary of the scholarship, see Uta Heil, *Athanasius von Alexandrien: De sententia Dionysii* (Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 36–43.

being not from himself but out of the Father. … Being *the radiance of eternal light* [Wis 7:26], he himself is certainly also eternal; for when the light exists always, it is clear that the radiance exists always. For that light exists is perceived by its shining, and it cannot be light unless it is shining light. Now let us return to examples. If there is sun, there is sunlight, there is day. If there is none of these things, it is quite impossible for the sun to be present. So then, if the sun were eternal, the day also would be unceasing. But that is not how it is, but when the sun begins the day begins and when the sun ceases, the day ceases. But God is light eternal, never beginning nor ceasing. Therefore, the radiance lies before him and is with him eternally; it appears before him beginningless and always-begotten, as Wisdom said: *I was that in which he took delight; daily I rejoiced in his presence at every opportunity* [Prov 8:30]. … So then, because the Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, being light from light. For when there is a parent, there is also a child. But if there were not a child, how and of whom can there be a parent? But both of them exists, and they are always.[160]

---

[160] Dionysius *apud* Athanasius, *Sent*. 15.1-5 (AW II/1: 57, 1-16 Opitz): οὐ γὰρ ἦν ὅτε ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἦν πατήρ. … ἀεὶ τὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι, λόγον ὄντα καὶ σοφίαν καὶ δύναμιν, οὐ γὰρ δὴ τούτων ἄγονος ὢν ὁ θεὸς εἶτα ἐπαιδοποιήσατο, ἀλλ’ ὅτι μὴ παρ’ ἑαυτοῦ ὁ υἱὸς ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχει τὸ εἶναι. … ἀπαύγασμα δὲ ὢν φωτὸς αἰδίου πάντως καὶ αὐτὸς αἴδιός ἐστιν. ὄντος γὰρ ἀεὶ τοῦ φωτὸς δῆλον ὡς ἔστιν ἀεὶ τὸ ἀπαύγασμα. τούτῳ γὰρ καὶ ὅτι φῶς ἐστι τῷ καταυγάζειν ὀεῖται, καὶ φῶς οὐ δύναται μὴ φωτίζον εἶναι. πάλιν γὰρ ἔλθωμεν ἐπὶ τὰ παραδείγματα. εἰ ἔστιν ἥλιος, ἔστιν αὐγή, ἔστιν ἡμέρα. εἰ τοιούτων μηδὲν ἔστι, πολὺ γε δεῖ καὶ παρεῖναι ἥλιον. εἰ μὲν οὖν αἴδιος ὁ ἥλιος, ἄπαυστος ἂν ἦν καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα, νῦν δὲ (οὐ γὰρ ἐστιν) ἀρξαμένου τε ἤρξατο καὶ παυομένον παύεται. ὁ δὲ γε θεὸς αἰώνιόν ἐστι φῶς οὔτε ἀρξάμενον οὔτε λῆξόν ποτε. οὐκοῦν αἰώνιον πρόκειται

Dionysius adopts Origen's identification of the Son as *the wisdom and power of God* [1 Cor 1:24], *the radiance of the glory of God* [Heb 1:3], and related expressions found in Proverbs 8:22-25 and Wisdom 7:25-26 in order to show that all of the names given to the Son are relatives.[161] Though Dionysius does not employ Aristotelian technical terminology for relatives, his examples underscore his assumption of the simultaneity of relatives and their ontological entailment.

Alexander of Alexandria follows Origen closely in claiming that the Father is always Father because the Son is always with him:

> So then, since the supposition of *ex nihilo* has been revealed as most impious, it is necessary that the Father is always Father. And he is Father because the Son is always present, on account of whom he is called Father. Because the Son is always present to him, the Father is always perfect, lacking nothing that is good, having begotten the only-begotten neither temporally nor after an interval nor *ex nihilo*.[162]

Like Origen, Alexander argues for the eternity of the Father and Son and the Son's eternal generation from the Father by treating them as relatives. While Origen used

---

καὶ σύνεστιν αὐτῷ τὸ ἀπαύγασμα, ἄναρχον καὶ ἀειγενὲς προφαινόμενον αὐτοῦ, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ λέγουσα σοφία ἐγὼ ἤμην ᾗ προσέχαιρε• καθ ἡμέραν δὲ ηὐφραινόμην ἐν προσώτῳ αὐτοῦ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ. … ὄντος οὖν αἰωνίου τοῦ πατρὸς αἰώιος ὁ υἱός ἐστι, φῶς ἐκ φωτὸς ὤν. ὄντος γὰρ γονέως ἔστι καὶ τέκνον. εἰ δὲ μὴ τέκνον εἴη, πῶς καὶ τίνος εἶναι δύναται γονεύς; ἀλλ' εἰσὶν ἄμφω καὶ εἰσὶν ἀεί.

[161] Origen, *Princ.* 1.2.1 and 1.2.5.

[162] Urk. 14.26 (AW III/1: 23, 28-31 Opitz): ἀσεβεστάτης οὖν φανείσης τῆς ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ὑποθέσεως, ἀνάγκη τὸν πατέρα ἀεὶ εἶναι πατέρα• ἔστι δὲ πατὴρ ἀεὶ παρόντος τοῦ υἱοῦ, δι' ὃν χρηματίζει πατήρ• ἀεὶ δὲ παρόντος αὐτῷ τοῦ υἱοῦ, ἀεὶ ἐστιν ὁ πατήρ τέλειος, ἀνελλιπὴς τυγχάνων ἐν τῷ καλῷ, οὐ χρονικῶς οὐδὲ ἐκ διαστήματος οὐδὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γεννήσας τὸν μονογενῆ υἱόν.

similar arguments to establish certain truths about God's nature, Alexander uses them to affirm certain truths about the Son's ontological status.[163] His goal is to demonstrate the eternal co-existence of Father and Son,[164] whereas Origen is more concerned to establish the eternity of God's Fatherhood. Origen thinks that God's eternal perfection, goodness, and Fatherhood necessitate the eternal existence of the Son, whereas Alexander implies that the eternal existence of the Son insures God's perfection, goodness, and Fatherhood.[165]

Directly following the passage cited above, Alexander employs Origen's additional identifications of the Son from 1 Corinthians 1:24, Hebrews 1:3, Proverbs 8:22-25, and Wisdom 7:25-26, much as Dionysius had done, but adds *the character of the subsistence of God* [Heb 1:3] and *the image of the invisible God* [Col 1:15],[166] in order to make arguments based on these terms being relatives to demonstrate further the co-eternity of Father and Son. He writes:

> What, then? Is it not sacrilegious to claim that the Wisdom of God at some point was not? For he says: *I was beside him forming all things; I was that in which he took delight* [Prov 8:30]. Or that the Power of God at some point did not exist? Or that his Word was at some point cut off [from

---

[163] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 131–5.

[164] See Urk. 14.23.

[165] Note that Alexander omits Origen's argument that the power to be Father always belongs to God (πάρεστιν αὐτῷ δύναμις τοῦ πατέρα αὐτὸν εἶναι), but does say, using the same term πάρεστιν, that God is Father because the Son is always present to him (ἔστι δὲ πατὴρ ἀεὶ παρόντος τοῦ υἱοῦ). Alexander's omission of this aspect of Origen's argument is undoubtedly due to his rejection of the early Eusebian understanding of the name 'Father' as indicating God's power to beget, regardless of whether the Son actually exists or not.

[166] Origen, *Princ.* 1.2.1 and 1.2.5.

> God]? Or that anything else by which the Son is known and the Father characterized? For saying that the *radiance of the glory* [Heb 1:3] does not exist also eliminates (συναναιρεῖ) the archetypal light of which it is the brightness. Moreover, if the image of God was not always, it is clear that the one whose image he is also is not always. In addition, if *the character of the subsistence of God* [Heb 1:3] is not, then he also is eliminated who is wholly characterized by him.[167]

While Dionysius had already treated 'radiance' as a relative, Alexander is unprecedented in viewing 'image' similarly.[168] Alexander even borrows Dionysius's citation of Proverbs 8:30. In this passage Alexander exhibits, in contrast to Origen and Dionysius, some knowledge of Aristotelian technical terminology for relatives when he uses the term 'eliminates' (συναναιρεῖ). We noted above how according to Aristotle the simultaneity (by nature) of relatives implies their mutual elimination. It is this very principle that Alexander appeals to here.

Arius also betrays knowledge of Aristotelian technical terminology for relatives when refuting Alexander. Perhaps owing something, at least in part, to Methodius of Olympus's rejection of Origen's notion of the eternity of creation, Arius rejected Origen's idea of the eternal generation of the Son and thus abandoned the concept of the eternal correlativity of the Father and Son.[169] He described Alexander's position as:

---

[167] Urk. 14.27-28 (AW III/1: 23, 31 – 24, 6 Opitz).

[168] See Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 133. Yet the resources for this were available in Origen; see *Princ*. 1.2.10.

[169] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 126–7, 138, and 143; Rudolf Lorenz, *Arius judaizans? Untersuchungen zur dogmengeschichtlichen Einordung des Arius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 57–60.

"always God, always Son; Father simultaneous with Son (ἅμα πατὴρ ἅμα υἱός)."[170] In this summary, Arius not only acknowledges Alexander's use of the argument that Father and Son are relatives, but he also seems to use the Aristotelian word for simultaneity, ἅμα.[171] Admittedly, the phrase ἅμα πατὴρ ἅμα υἱός is hard to interpret; another possible rendition is: "no sooner Father than Son." But even if this phrase is not sufficient to indicate Arius's knowledge of Aristotelian technical terminology for relatives, another passage provides indisputable evidence. According to Arius, positing the eternal correlativity of the Father and Son results in two unbegotten first principles:

> For [the Son] is not eternal or co-eternal or co-unbegotten with the Father, nor does he have being simultaneously with (ἅμα) the Father on the grounds, some men say, that they are relatives (τὰ πρός τι), thereby introducing two unbegotten beginnings. But as monad and principle of all things, so is God is before all things.[172]

Arius contends that using the argument from correlativity to demonstrate the eternal co-existence of the Son violates God's unique status as unbegotten. Arius uses two Aristotelian technical terms for relatives, ἅμα and τὰ πρός τι. Arius rejects arguments based on Father and Son understood as relatives precisely because of the ontological entailment that such relatives imply.[173] Hence Arius not only rejects a longstanding

---

[170] Urk 1.2 (AW III/1: 2, 1 Opitz).

[171] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 133.

[172] Urk. 6.4 (AW III/1: 13, 10-13 Optiz): οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐστιν ἀΐδιος ἢ συναΐδιος ἢ συναγεννήτος τῷ πατρί, οὐδὲ ἅμα τῷ πατρὶ τὸ εἶναι ἔχει, ὥς τινες λέγουσι τὰ πρός τι, δύο ἀγεννήτους ἀρχὰς εἰσηγούμενοι. ἀλλ' ὡς μονὰς καὶ ἀρχὴ πάντων, οὕτως ὁ θεὸς πρὸ πάντων ἐστί.

[173] On this passage, see P. Arnou, "Arius et la doctrine des relations trinitaires," *Gregorianum* 14 (1933): 269–72; J. de Ghellink, "Qui sont les ΩΣ ΤΙΝΕΣ ΛΕΓΟΥΣΙ

Alexandrian use of arguments based on viewing the Father and Son as relatives, he also provides the strongest evidence for knowledge of Aristotelian technical terminology for discussing relatives.

Athanasius never uses the two technical terms σχέσις and πρός τι but clearly deploys the idea of relatives in his arguments.[174] In a passage where he argues for the co-eternity of the Father and the Son, Athanasius claims that the Son is proper, or intrinsic, to the Father because what it means for the Son to be the Son is that he is related to the Farther. He writes:

> The Son is such as the Father is, of whose substance he is the proper (ἴδιον) begotten-thing, Word, and Wisdom. For this is proper to (ἴδιον) the Son, to be relative to the Father (πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα) and this shows that the Father is proper to (ἴδιον) the Son.[175]

Just after this passage, Athanasius says that God is never without his Word and asks: "when was God separated from what is proper to him?"[176] Therefore, for Athanasius the category of "being proper to" means something like "being essentially and by definition related to, such that you cannot have one without the other." It is Athanasius's way of

---

de la lettre d'Arius?," in Giovanni Mercati, ed., *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati,* Vol. 1 (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946), 127–44; G. C. Stead, "The Platonism of Arius," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 15 (1964): 16–31 at 28–30; L. W. Barnard, "What was Arius' Philosophy?," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 28 (1972): 110–17 at 114–16; Lorentz, *Arius Judaizans?*, 56–7; Morales, *La théologie trinitaire*, 205–6.

[174] Morales, *La théologie trinitaire*, 208–17.

[175] Athanasius, *Or*. 1.19.10 (AW I/1, 129, 31-34 Metzler / Savvidis).

[176] Athanasius, *Or*. 1.20.1 (AW I/1, 129, 36 Metzler / Savvidis).

endorsing ontological entailment. Athanasius also deploys the idea of relatives in his argument against the term 'unbegotten', which was mentioned earlier.[177]

And so, there seems to have been an Alexandrian tradition of using the argument from correlatives to stress ontological entailment. Because of this, it appears that this Alexandrian tradition is rooted in Aristotelian-Neoplatonist philosophy, by whatever channels and however many levels of mediation. But the evidence for the appropriation of this philosophical tradition by Alexandrian theologians is not limited to endorsement of ontological entailment. Though theologians like Origen, Dionysius, and Athanasius do not use Aristotelian technical terminology for relatives in their arguments, both Arius (negatively) and Alexander (positively) seem to be aware of it in their argument against or for the ontological entailment of the Father and the Son.

The grammatical understanding of relatives

But even in Alexandria there is evidence for another kind of argument from correlatives that seems less indebted to the Aristotelian-Neoplatonist tradition and more influenced by the grammatical understanding of relatives. In short, while the philosophical tradition considered relatives to be *things*, the grammatical tradition considered them primarily to be *words*. Sometimes these two traditions existed side-by-side. Admittedly, the distinction between these two orders—the ontological and terminological—is not always clear in the sources, and in fact logically the distinction made little difference. Nonetheless, the distinction was made. Following the philosophical tradition, one placed emphasis on the ontological entailment of relatives as

[177] See Chapter Six, p. 242–3.

things; following the grammatical tradition, the emphasis was placed on other kinds of entailment that relative terms displayed.

The grammarians witness to two kinds of entailment of relative terms, which can be called cognitive and terminological entailment. For example, the idea of 'father' implies the idea of 'son' (cognitive entailment) and the name 'father' implies the related name 'son' (terminological entailment). However, the theologians indebted to the grammatical understanding of relatives rarely distinguished them as clearly as the grammarians did. Here I set out three variations to these distinctions that will be useful for analyzing the use of theological arguments based on the entailment of relative terms.

(1) terminological-ontological entailment: one relative name implies the existence of another who bears the related name, e.g. 'Father' implies the existence of the Son.

(2) terminological-cognitive entailment: one relative name implies the notion of another who bears the related name, e.g. 'Father' includes the notion of the Son.

(3) terminological-relational entailment: one relative name implies the relation to another who bears the related name, e.g. 'Father' implies a relation with the Son.

Some theologians use only one kind of entailment; others use more than one in their arguments. It must be emphasized that the distinctions between the kinds of entailment that I have made here are not explicitly recognized in any ancient source. I have categorized the usage of entailment arguments in order to discern patterns of borrowing and influence.

As mentioned above, Basil discusses absolute and relative names together.[178] In this, he follows the grammarians, who treated them similarly. But the grammarians themselves were influenced by preceding philosophical accounts. It is widely recognized that the Stoics decisively influenced the development of ancient grammar.[179] Against this prevailing opinion, Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters have argued that the grammarians' understanding of absolutes and relatives is a synthesis of Old Academic and Stoic treatments, the former predominating.[180]

Swiggers and Wouters claim that the ultimate source of the distinction between absolutes and relatives is Plato. For example, in the *Sophist* he divides beings into those "said in respect of themselves" and those "always said relative to other things."[181] His followers adopted this division. Simplicius reports that Xenocrates of Chalcedon, who was Plato's second successor at the Academy,[182] maintained that all things are classified under "that which is in respect of itself and that which is relative to something else,"

---

[178] *Eun*. 2.9, 11-27.

[179] A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 131–9; Dirk M. Schenkeveld and Jonathan Barnes, "Language" in Keimpe Algra, et al., *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 177–216; Michael Frede, "Principles of Stoic Grammar," in idem, *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987), 301–37, and idem, "The Origins of Traditional Grammar," in idem, *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*, 338–59.

[180] Alfons Wouters, "The Grammatical Term ἀπολελυμένον in the School Book Brit.Mus.Add.MS.37533 (=Pack^2 2712)," *Chronique d'Égypte* 68 (1993): 168–77; Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns in Ancient Grammar," *Orbis* 38 (1995): 149–78; and Swiggers, *Histoire de la pensée linguistique*, 42.

[181] *Soph*. 255c: ᾽Αλλ᾽ οἶμαί σε συγχωρεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ καθ᾽ αὑτά, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλα ἀεὶ λέγεσθαι. Other Platonic passages include *Rep*. 438ab and *Parm*. 133d.

[182] On Xenocrates, see John Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347-274 BC)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 89–155.

thereby affirming the two Platonic "categories" in reaction to Aristotle's ten categories.[183]

Hermodorus of Syracuse, who was a student and biographer of Plato, also adopts the Platonic division but further subdivides relatives.[184] According to Simplicius (who was reporting on Porphyry, who in turn was reporting on the Middle Platonist Dercyllides, who had quoted Hermodorus),[185] Hermodorus attributed the following division to his teacher, Plato:

> [Plato] says that some things are in respect of themselves, such as man and horse, and others are relative to others. Some of the latter are opposites, such as good and bad, and others are relatives. Some of the latter are definite and others are indefinite.[186]

A similar division recorded by Sextus Empiricus is attributed by him to the Pythagoreans, but it likely reflects a position from the Old Academy.[187] Sextus divides things into those

---

[183] Simplicius, *in Cat.* (CAG 8: 63, 22-24 Kalbfleisch): οἱ γὰρ περὶ Ξενοκράτη καὶ ᾿Ανδρόνικον πάντα τῷ καθ᾽ αὑτὸ καὶ τῷ πρός τι περιλαμβάνειν δοκοῦσιν, ὥστε περιττὸν εἶναι κατ᾽ αὐτοὺς τὸ τοσοῦτον τῶν γενῶν πλῆθος [= Fr. 12 Heinze; = Fr. 95 Isnardi-Parente]. On this passage, see Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 151. Dillon notes that the condemnation of Aristotle's ten-category system may only apply to Andronicus.

[184] On Hermodorus, see Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 198–204.

[185] Simplicius, *in Phys.* (CAG 9: 247, 30 – 248, 1 Diels).

[186] Simplicius, *in Phys.* (CAG 9: 248, 2-5 Diels): τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν καθ᾽ αὑτὰ εἶναι λέγει ὡς ἄνθρωπον καὶ ἵππον, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἕτερα, καὶ τούτων τὰ μὲν ὡς πρὸς ἐναντία ὡς ἀγαθὸν κακῷ, τὰ δὲ ὡς πρός τι, καὶ τούτων τὰ μὲν ὡς ὡρισμένα, τὰ δὲ ὡς ἀόριστα [=Fr. 7 Isnardi-Parente]. On this passage, see Margherita Isnardi-Parente, *Frammenti: Senocrate, Ermodoro* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1982), 439–44; Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," 198; Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 203–4; Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 155–6.

[187] On the Old Academic rather than Pythagorean provenance of this testimony, see Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 156; Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," 193 n. 58; Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 203 n. 69. Sextus's discussion the Pythagorean division is embedded in a longer section of other doctrine

conceived by way of differentiation (κατὰ διαφορὰν), by way of opposition (κατ' ἐναντίωσιν), and relatively (πρὸς τι).[188] Things conceived κατὰ διαφορὰν—as we shall see below, Sextus uses a Stoic term here—are "those things subsisting in respect of themselves and a distinct self-containment" and they are "considered absolutely and not in respect of the relation to another."[189] Sextus's examples are man, horse, plant, and so forth. Opposites are "those things considered on the basis of the opposition of one thing to another," whereas relatives are "those things conceived in respect of the relation to another."[190] Examples of the former are good and bad, pious and impious, and so forth; examples of the latter are right and left, half and double, and so forth. According to Sextus, opposites and relatives differ in two ways. The destruction (φθορά) of one opposite is the generation (γένεσις) of the other (e.g. health and disease) and there is no middle state (μέσον) between them. In contrast, relatives display co-existence and the co-elimination of each other (συνύπαρξιν τε καὶ συνανααίρεσιν ἀλλήλων), and admit a middle state (e.g. between the greater and smaller there is the equal).[191]

---

known to be Platonic; see C. J. de Vogel, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism: An Interpretation of Neglected Evidence on the Philosopher Pythagoras* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1966), 196, 204, 208–9.

[188] *M.* 10.263.

[189] *M.* 10.263 (LCL 291: 338 Bury): κατὰ διαφορὰν μὲν οὖν εἶναι τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὰ καὶ ἰδίαν περιγραφὴν ὑποκείμενα, οἷον ἄνθρωπος ἵππος φυτὸν γῆ ὕδωρ ἀὴρ πῦρ. τούτων γὰρ ἕκαστον ἀπολύτως θεωρεῖται καὶ οὐχ ὡς κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσιν.

[190] *M.* 10.264-265 (LCL 291: 338–40 Bury): κατ' ἐναντίωσιν δὲ ὑπάρχειν ὅσωα ἐξ ἐναντιώσεως ἑτέρου πρὸς ἕτερον θεωρεῖται, οἷον ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακόν … πρός τι δὲ τυγχάνειν τὰ κατὰ τὴν ὡς πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσιν νοούμενα, οἷον δεξιὸν ἀριστερὸν…

[191] *M.* 10.266-268.

The Old Academic division as reported by Sextus diverges from the divisions of Plato, Xenocrates, and Hermodorus. Sextus omits the general class paired with absolutes as in Plato, Xenocrates, and Hermodorus, resulting in "a trichotomy, not a proper diaeresis."[192] In addition, Sextus omits the division of relatives into definite and indefinite relatives. John Dillon attributes Sextus's divergences from Hermodorus to some confusion in his sources, yet affirms that it is evidence for "an Old Academic diaeretic division of reality which constituted a formalization of suggestions put out by Plato himself."[193] But Dillon has not noted that Sextus uses the Stoic κατὰ διαφορὰν for absolutes and consistently speaks of absolutes and relatives as things *considered* or *conceived* in respect of themselves or in relation with another, whereas the Platonists speak of them as *being* in respect of themselves or in relation with another. Regarding the latter point, Sextus represents a shift from a Platonic concern with the ontological sphere to a concern with the cognitive sphere. As will be seen, this move is characteristic of the Stoic and grammatical understanding of absolutes and relatives. Accordingly, if Sextus's account is evidence for an Old Academic division of reality, it is colored by Stoic and grammatical theorizing.

The best evidence for the Stoic understanding of absolutes and relatives is a testimony recorded by Simplicius. Unfortunately, this passage is rife with interpretive difficulties.[194] Stoics distinguished between two kinds of relatives: (1) 'relatives' (πρός

---

[192] Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 203.

[193] Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 203.

[194] Simplicius, *in Cat.* 7 (CAG 8: 165, 32 – 167, 36, esp. 166, 15-29 Kalbfleisch). The differences found in the various English translations attest to the interpretive difficulties; see Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," 133 (translation of 165, 32 – 166, 15); Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 157–8, 161, and 163 (translation of 165, 32 – 166, 15; 166, 15-27 [with omissions]; and 166, 17-19 and 21-

τι) and (2) 'relatively disposed' (πρός τί πως ἔχον). These were contrasted with two kinds of absolutes, respectively: (1) 'in respect of themselves' (καθ' αὐτά) and (2) 'by way of differentiation" (κατὰ διαφορὰν)—the term used by Sextus in his presentation of the Old Academic division. Some have claimed that these were a rival set of the four so-called Stoic 'categories'.[195] But despite the fact that the kind of relative contrasted with πρός τι relatives shares a name with the fourth Stoic genus, they are conceptually unrelated: the former deals with general terms, whereas the latter with individuals.[196] In other words, the two kinds of absolutes and two kinds of relatives elucidate and subdivide the second Stoic genus, the qualified (ποιόν).[197]

Both kinds of absolutes do not depend on a relation to something else (ἐκ γὰρ τῆς πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσεως). Things by way of differentiation "are characterized by some form" (τὰ κατὰ τι εἶδος χαρακτηριζόμενα) and "are considered with some characteristic" (μετὰ γὰρ τινος χαρακτῆρος θεωρεῖται). In other words, they possess a specific intrinsic property ("form" or "character") that accounts for their difference from other things. Things in respect of themselves are simply said to be "absolute" (ἀπόλυτα). It turns out that things in respect of themselves are a subdivision of things by way of

---

26); LS 29C (translation of 166, 16-29); Barrie Fleet, *Simplicius: On Aristotle's Categories 7-8* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 19–21 (full translation). For commentary, see Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," 132–62; Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 157–63; see also A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1.177–9 and 2.179.

[195] A. Graeser, "The Stoic Categories," in J. Brunschwig, ed., *Les Stoïcens et leur logique* (Paris: Vrin, 1978), 199–221.

[196] Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," 180; Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 158–9.

[197] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1.179.

differentiation. 'White' and 'black' are things in respect of themselves, whereas 'sweet' and 'bitter' are things by way of differentiation. In other words, 'white' is intrinsically white without relation to another, whereas 'sweet', while being an intrinsic property of a thing, is only sweet relatively, that is, when the sweetness has an effect upon a perceiver (for what is intrinsically sweet can be bitter if I am ill).[198]

The difference between relatives and relatively disposed is based on whether the relational property was intrinsic or external. Hence relatives are also things by way of differentiation.[199] The sweet and the bitter are relatives *tout court* because they are intrinsically differentiated, but 'being on the right' is a relative disposition because it is external. The criteria for judging whether something was relative or relatively disposed is to see if it could begin or cease to have the relational property without any intrinsic change.[200] A man on my right ceases being on my right when he moves to my left, but I undergo no internal change. Since a father ceases to be a father upon the death of his son without any internal change, according to the Stoics 'father' is a relative disposition not a relative in the strict sense.

Swiggers and Wouters argue that the grammatical understanding of relatives represents "the partial co-existence (or unachieved synthesis) of two traditions, an Academic one and a Stoic one."[201] The focus on the relations between terms, as well as the objects and concepts they are assigned to, is rooted in Platonic and Aristotelian

---

[198] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1.178.

[199] Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 160.

[200] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1.177–8.

[201] Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 168.

approaches.[202] This tradition is concerned mainly with the ontological entailment of relatives. In contrast, in discussing the two kinds of relatives, as well as things by way of differentiation and in respect of themselves, the Stoics are dealing with absolute and relative *terms*, not individual things.[203] Hence their concern is with the logic of the terminological and cognitive realms, not the ontological order. Theirs is "an approach focusing on the semantics of relative terms, viewed on their own, and not in their (possible) interrelationships."[204] The grammatical tradition combines both approaches. "The result is that semantic relativity is discussed with reference to existential relationships holding between terms (or better, words) when these are used with some ontological commitment: hence the reference to the establishing or annulation of the correlative notion."[205]

Ancient grammarians distinguished between relatives (τὸ πρός τι) and quasi-relatives (τὸ ὡς πρός τι).[206] Unfortunately the *Technê* attributed to Dionysius Thrax does not provide a definition but only gives examples: "A relative is for example 'father', 'son', 'friend', and 'right'. A quasi-relative is for example 'night' and 'day', 'death' and 'life'."[207] Commenting on the lack of a definition of relatives in the *Technê*, a scholiast notes:

---

[202] Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 164. Note that they do not discuss the Aristotelian tradition in any detail apart from the *Cat*. 7 passage.

[203] Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," 140–2; Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 157–63.

[204] Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 165.

[205] Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 165.

[206] The term 'quasi-relative' appears to be a grammatical coinage, not appearing in philosophical discussions.

[207] Dionysius Thrax, *Technê* 12.4-5 (GG 1.1: 35, 3-4 Uhlig).

> One must realize that the grammarian [i.e. Dionysius] does not define relatives, but he does make it plain what they are through examples. One must define them as follows: "A relative is that which is has a relation to another." An alternative definition would be: that which is said allows another to be conceived, comes in with it and goes away with it, as when I say, 'father', I also conceive the son. For when the son does not exist, there will be no father.[208]

This scholiast cites a definition of relatives that must have been well-known since it is employed by other scholiasts.[209] It is an expression of two kinds of entailment: pure terminological and terminological-relational entailment since one relative terms implies a relation to the related term. In the alternative definition, the scholiast highlights several more features of relatives: terminological-cognitive entailment and ontological entailment.

Another scholion on this same text speaks of the same kinds of entailment and illuminates the difference between a relative and a quasi-relative:

> A relative is that which is in every case conceived of (νοούμενον) in relation to another, but does not exist in respect of itself. For example, 'father', 'son', and 'friend'. For these are conceived of (νοεῖται) together with others. For example, a father is a father of someone, a son is a son of someone. But there is a difference between relatives and quasi-relatives.

---

[208] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 553, 25-30 Hilgard): Ἰστέον ὅτι ὁ μὲν τεχνικὸς τὰ πρός τι οὐχ ὁρίζεται, ἀλλὰ διὰ παραδειγμάτων σαφηνίζει· ὁριστέον δὲ οὕτως· «πρός τι ἔχον ἐστὶ τὸ πρὸς ἕτερον ἔχον τὴν σχέσιν», ἀντὶ τοῦ ὃ λεγόμενον δίδωσι νοεῖσθαι καὶ ἕτερον σύνεστί τε αὐτῷ καὶ συναπολήγει, ὡς ὅταν εἴπω «πατήρ», ἐνόησα καὶ τὸν υἱόν, οὐ γὰρ μὴ ὄντος υἱοῦ ἔσται τις πατήρ·

[209] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 387, 8 Hilgard); see also (388, 13).

When a relative is introduced, it introduces another; when it is removed, it eliminates another. For when the father is introduced, it also introduces the son. Then again, when the father is removed, it also eliminates the son. For when there is no father, it necessarily follows that there is no son. The same goes for the other cases as well. But when a quasi-relative is introduced, it removes the contrary, but when it is removed, it introduces the contrary, as night removes and introduces the day.

The quasi-relative has the relation to another, but it does not remove the other. For there is a difference between the relative and the quasi-relative, though they seem alike. The relative is both found and destroyed with another, whereas one quasi-relative removes the other. For example, in the case of the relative, when you have used the name 'father' (ὠνόμασας πατέρα), you are also using the name 'son' along with it (συνονομάζεις καὶ υἱόν); when you remove the son, you remove along with it the father as well. For when there is no son, how can there be a father?[210]

---

[210] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 235, 9-26 Hilgard): Πρός τι ἔχον ἐστὶ τὸ κατὰ πᾶν πρὸς ἑτέραν σχέσιν νοούμενον, καθ᾽ αὑτὸ δ᾽ ἀνυπόστατον, οἷον πατήρ υἱός ἑταῖρος· ταῦτα <γὰρ> σὺν ἑτέροις νοεῖται, οἷον πατήρ τινος, υἱός τινος. Διαφέρει <δὲ> τὸ πρός τι τοῦ ὡς πρός τι ἔχοντος, ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρός τι ἔχον συνιστάμενον συνίστησι <καὶ ἀναιρούμενον συναναιρεῖ τὸ ἕτερον· συνιστάμενος γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ συνίστησι> καὶ παρεισάγει <καὶ> τὸν υἱόν, καὶ πάλιν ἀναιρούμενος ὁ πατὴρ συναναιρεῖ καὶ τὸν υἱόν· μὴ γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ πατρὸς ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸν υἱὸν μὴ εἶναι· ὁμοίως καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων. Τὸ δὲ ὡς πρός τι τὸ ἐναντίον συνιστάμενον ἀναιρεῖ, ἀναιρούμενον δὲ συνίστησιν, ὡς νὺξ τὴν ἡμέραν. Καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ὡς πρός τι ἔχον <πρὸς ἕτερον> τὴν σχέσιν ἔχει, ἀλλ᾽ ἀναιρετικὸν γίνεται τοῦ ἑτέρου· τούτῳ γὰρ καὶ διαφέρει τοῦ πρός τι ἔχοντος τὸ ὡς πρός τι ἔχον, καίπερ δοκοῦν ὅμοιον εἶναι. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρός τι ἔχον καὶ συνευρίσκεται καὶ συναπόλλυται, τὸ δὲ ὡς πρός τι ἔχον ἓν τοῦ ἑτέρου ἀναιρετικόν ἐστιν· οἷον ἐπὶ τοῦ πρός τι ἔχοντος, ὠνόμασας πατέρα, συνονομάζεις καὶ υἱόν, ἀνεῖλες τὸν υἱόν, συναναιρεῖς καὶ τὸν πατέρα· υἱοῦ γὰρ μὴ ὄντος πατέρα εἶναι πῶς ἐγχωρεῖ; see also (193, 19-37; 387, 4 – 388, 40; 554, 5-11) for a similar discussion of the differences between relatives and quasi-relatives.

The scholiast here speaks of three kinds of entailment that grammatical relatives display. First, because a relative term "is conceived of" in relation to another term, it has cognitive entailment. Second, because the use of one relative term (ὠνόμασας πατέρα) implies the use of the other related term (συνονομάζεις καὶ υἱόν), there is terminological entailment. The difference between relatives and quasi-relatives lies in the fact that true relatives imply a related term, whereas quasi-relatives do not. Relatives are those words "that imply a *relatum* as constitutive of their relational status," whereas quasi-relatives are those words that evoke "another word related to them as their contrary."[211] In other words, a quasi-relative simply involves only cognitive entailment, whereas a relative has both cognitive and terminological entailment.[212]

Third, while cognitive and terminological entailment are the key features of grammatical relatives, the grammarians also recognized ontological entailment. Relatives are co-introduced and co-eliminated, whereas quasi-relatives are not: the removal of a quasi-relative does not necessitate the co-removal of its related term. The existence of one relative implies the existence of the other. Though the grammarians never speak of Aristotelian simultaneity by nature, as seen above the Aristotelian term 'eliminates' is used and they have a similar idea. While the grammarians were interested primarily in how relative terms functioned, they did not neglect to affirm the existence of the corresponding relative if an entity named by the relative exists.[213]

---

[211] Swiggers and Wouters, "The Treatment of Relational Nouns," 165–6.

[212] Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," 194 n. 60; Robertson, "Relatives in Basil," 283.

[213] Mignucci, "The Stoic Notion of Relatives," 190; Robertson, "Relatives in Basil," 284.

Another scholion explains the difference between relatives and quasi-relatives in this way: for a true relative, the 'of whom' must be supplied in thought, whereas for quasi-relatives, there is no need to supply a similar phrase:

> For as right seems to be said relative to left, and father relative to son, so night is said relative to day. But there is a difference. The relative is understood to be of someone. For if I were to say, 'son', someone would surely ask, 'of whom?'. But the quasi-relative does not exhibit this feature. For if I were to say, 'night', someone would not ask, 'of what?' So I add 'of the day' since the night is its own proper interval and is not considered relative to the day.[214]

The one who hears a relative term realizes that it is connected to another term (cognitive entailment) and thus asks "of whom?" in order to learn the relative term (terminological entailment). The grammarians emphasize that the related term is construed in the genitive.[215] Hence, according to the grammarians, true relatives possess "a meaning which seeks completion with something else in order to make sense."[216]

Four aspects of the grammatical understanding of relatives are particularly relevant for our purposes. First, while the Aristotelian tradition places the emphasis on the ontological entailment of relative *things*, the grammatical tradition recognizes the

---

[214] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 388, 20-26 Hilgard): ὡς γὰρ δεξιὸς πρὸς ἀριστερόν, καὶ πατὴρ πρὸς υἱόν, οὕτω καὶ ἡ νὺξ πρὸς ἡμέραν δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι· ταύτῃ δὲ διαφέρει, ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρός τι ἔχει προσυπακουόμενον τὸ τινός· ἐὰν γὰρ εἴπω «υἱός», λέξει τις πάντως «τίνος;» τὸ δὲ ὡς πρός τι οὐ τοῦτο φαίνεται ἔχον· οὐ γὰρ ἐὰν εἴπω «νύξ», λέξει τις τὸ «τίνος;» ἵνα ἐπαγάγω «τῆς ἡμέρας», ἐπειδὴ ἡ νὺξ ἴδιόν ἐστι διάστημα, οὐ πρὸς ἡμέραν θεωρούμενον·

[215] *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 387, 14-15 and 553, 31-32 Hilgard).

[216] Robertson, "Relatives in Basil," 283.

terminological, cognitive, and ontological entailment (and variations thereof) of relative *names*. Second, the grammarians used the names 'father' and 'son' as their primary example of relatives. Third, the grammatical tradition stresses that the related term is construed in the genitive. Fourth, while the grammarians recognized pure forms of terminological, cognitive, and ontological entailment, they also frequently spoke of variations of these. It is such usage that we find in the theologians of the third and fourth century.

As we saw in the last section, the Alexandrian theologians Dionysius and Athanasius used arguments from correlatives to emphasize ontological entailment. But they also recognized cognitive and terminological entailment, or variations thereof. In the following fragment preserved by Athanasius, Dionysius writes:

> Each of the names that I have said is inseparable and indivisible from its associated name. I said 'Father'. Even before I added the Son, I signified him too in the Father. I added 'Son'. Even if I do not first say 'Father', he would by all means be presupposed in the Son.[217]

First, Dionysius speaks of terminological entailment: each name is "inseparable and indivisible" from its related name. Second, he uses terminological-cognitive entailment. When someone speaks the names 'Father' or 'Son', each includes the notion of the other because they are relative terms. Dionysius also uses terminological-relational entailment, as is seen in the following fragment:

---

[217] Apud Athanasius, *Sent*. 17.1 (AW II/1: 58, 15-17 Opitz): τῶν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ λεχθέντων ὀνομάτων ἕκαστον ἀχώριστόν ἐστι καὶ ἀδιαίρετον τοῦ πλησίον. πατέρα εἶπον, καὶ πρὶν ἐπαγάγω τὸν υἱόν, ἐσήμανα καὶ τοῦτον ἐν τῷ πατρί• υἱὸν ἐπήγαγον, εἰ καὶ μὴ προειρήκειν τὸν πατέρα, πάντως ἂν ἐν τῷ υἱῷ προείληπτο.

> The Father *qua* Father is not estranged from the Son. For his name is antecedent[218] to their connection. Nor is the Son banished from the Father. For the designation 'Father' indicates their communion.[219]

Here, instead of saying that the name 'Father' also "signifies" the idea of Son and the name 'Son' "presupposes" the idea of Father as in the previous citation (terminological-cognitive entailment), Dionysius affirms that the very name 'Father' indicates his relation with the Son (terminological-relational entailment). Here he does not explicitly say that the name 'Father' implies the name 'Son', but only their relation (called here their "connection" and "communion").

Similar arguments based on the variations of the cognitive and terminological entailment of relative terms are found in Athanasius when he seeks to demonstrate the eternal generation of the Son. Athanasius affirms that the name 'Father' indicates the existence of the Son. Two examples suffice to demonstrate this. He writes that the Son

> is signified along with 'Father'. For one cannot say 'father' when there is no son. … Whoever says 'Father' immediately signifies along with the

---

[218] Gk. προκαταρκτικόν. This Stoic term was originally applied to the type of cause that precedes its effect and can be removed without removing the effect. It is distinguished from the 'containing' (συνεκτικόν) cause, which is contemporary with its effect and cannot be removed without removing the effect. For ancient testimonies, see Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 3.15-16, and Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 8.9 [=LS 55I; SVF 2.351]. See also R. J. Hankinson, "Explanation and Causation," in Keimpe Algra, et al., *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 479–512 at 483–91. Dionysius appears to use the term in a non-technical sense to assert that the name 'Father' presupposes a relation to the Son.

[219] Apud Athanasius, *Sent*. 17.1 (AW II/1: 58, 19-21 Opitz): μήτε ἀπηλλοτρίωται πατὴρ υἱοῦ ἢ πατήρ, προκαταρκτιὸν γὰρ ἐστι τῆς συναφείας τὸ ὄνομα, οὔτε ὁ υἱὸς ἀπῴκισται τοῦ πατρός. ἡ γὰρ προσηγορία δηλοῖ τὴν κοινωνίας.

> Father the existence of the Son as well. Therefore, whoever believes in the Son believes in the Father.[220]
>
> When we say the name 'Father', on the basis of this name we recognize also the Word who is in the Father.[221]

Athanasius does not explicitly state that the name 'Father' implies the name 'Son' (terminological entailment), but rather that the name 'Father' brings to mind the notion of the Son and therefore the existence of the Son. This is a combination of terminological-cognitive and terminological-ontological entailment. In a similar manner, Athanasius also correlates the names 'Only-Begotten', 'Son', 'Word', and 'Wisdom' to God the Father: these names, he says, "have reference to the Father" (εἰς τὸν Πατέρα τὴν ἀναφορὰν ἔχει).[222] This is kind of terminological-relational entailment: the Son's names reveal a relation with the Father, though Athanasius does not use the technical term σχέσις. The name 'first-born', however, correlates the Word to creation. Athanasius thus makes a distinction between terms that indicate God's internal relationships and those which indicate his external relationships.[223] Those which indicate his internal relationships, like 'Son', function as true relatives in the grammatical sense, in that they imply the co-eval existence of the relative terms.

In his *Ecclesiastical Theology*, Eusebius of Caesarea argued that 'Son' revealed the Son's relation with the Father, but more explicitly and differently than Athanasius. He says that 'Son' and other names for the Son "somehow indicate the paternal divinity's

---

[220] Athanasius, *Or*. 3.6.4-5 (AW I/1: 312, 16-20 Metzler / Savvidis).

[221] Athanasius, *Or.* 1.34.5 (AW I/1: 144, 20-21 Metzler / Savvidis).

[222] Athanasius, *Or*. 2.62.1 (AW I/1, 239, 5-8 Metzler / Savvidis).

[223] Morales, *La théologie trinitaire*, 208–9.

distinctive relation with him alone (τὴν πρὸς μόνον αὐτὸν … ἰδιάζουσαν σχέσιν) as to an only-begotten Son."[224] Hence the name gives rise to the idea of the relation—this is another good example of terminological-relational entailment. Eusebius expresses the same idea elsewhere:

> From his very designation, the Son communicates his natural relation with the Father (τὴν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα φυσικὴν σχέσιν), as also the name 'Only-Begotten' lays hold of his descent and generation and the fact that he is alone and no one else has communion in sonship with him.[225]

Furthermore, commenting on Psalm 29:10 (*The Lord became* [ἐγενήθη] *my helper*), Eusebius remarks that ἐγενήθη does not signify bringing into being (οὐσίωσις) but sometimes (as in the present case) "relation to someone" (πρὸς τινα σχέσιν). He adds even when ἐγενήθη is used of the Savior, "it signifies relation to something (σχέσιν πρός τι) not bringing into being."[226] Eusebius focuses almost exclusively upon that fact that the names for the Son indicate his relation with the Father—terminological-relational entailment. The names 'Father' and 'Son', and the language of the Father begetting the Son (ἐγενήθη) are revelatory of a distinctive and natural relationship between the pair. Eusebius differs from the Alexandrians in not stressing ontological entailment at all.

Other theologians in the late 340s and 350s used similar arguments based on the variations of cognitive and terminological entailment of relative terms. Eusebius of Emesa, an Eusebian protégé and close companion of George of Laodicea is one example.

---

[224] Eusebius, *Eccl. theo.* 1.9.3 (GCS 14: 67, 23-25 Klostermann / Hansen).

[225] Eusebius, *Eccl. theo.* 1.10.3 (GCS 14: 68, 31 – 69, 3 Klostermann / Hansen).

[226] Eusebius, *Ps.* 29 (PG 23: 264). Eusebius also employs the technical term πρός τι in *Eccl. theo.* 2.14.2.

In an anti-Marcellan context, where Eusebius is arguing for the real co-existence of the Father and Son in the beginning, he writes:

> As soon as 'Father' is said, the term (*vox*) requires the Son. 'Son' is said, and in the very saying of it the Father is confessed. For the term 'Father' is not an inconsequential term (*vacua vox*), but reveals the nature of the Son. Nor is the term that says 'Son' inconsequential, but once it is expressed it confesses the Father.[227]

Since 'Father' and 'Son' are relatives; saying one discloses the other. Eusebius seems to be using terminological-ontological entailment because the saying of a relative name automatically introduces the existence of the other related thing.

A similar idea is found in Cyril of Jerusalem, another Eusebian ally, who employs it in an anti-Jewish context. After citing scriptural testimonies to prove that God is the Father of Christ, he adopts another tactic and adds:

> The name 'Father', simultaneously with the very expression of the name, also suggests (νοεῖν παρέχει) the Son, just as in a similar way when anyone use the names 'Son', he will immediately think of (ἐνόησε) the Father. For if the one is Father, it is obviously because he is the Father of the Son. And if the other is Son, it is obviously because he is the Son of the Father.[228]

---

[227] Eusebius of Emesa, *Serm.* 3.28 (95, 10-14 Buytaert II): *statim ut dictus fuerit Pater, requirit ista vox Filium. Dicitur Filius et in eo ipso dum dicitur, Pater confitetur. Non enim vacua vox est Pater, sed exhibens naturam Filii. Non vacua est vox, quae dicit Filium, sed praecedens confitetur Patrem.* Eusebius often asserts that neither 'Father' nor 'Son' is a *vacua vox*; see *Serm.* 3.20; 4.9.

[228] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat*. 7.4 (PG 33: 608c).

The very fact of calling God 'Father' reveals that he has a Son: the relative status of the divine name 'Father' reveals the Christian understanding of God. Cyril displays terminological-cognitive entailment in contrast to Eusebius of Emesa's terminological-ontological entailment because while Cyril maintains that the name 'Father' gives rise to the idea of the Son, and vice versa, Eusebius held that the name of one introduced the existence of the other. Unlike Eusebius, Cyril also endorses ontological entailment as the basis for why the names 'Father' and 'Son' have cognitive and terminological entailment.

The Homoiousians are another example of theologians who employ a grammatical rather than a philosophical understanding of relatives. In the Ancyran synodal of 358, Basil of Ancyra demonstrated his awareness of terminological entailment when he noted that the 'Father-Son' pair differs in notion from the 'Creator-creation' pair, in that while 'Creature' implies 'Creator', 'Son' implies 'Father'.[229] George of Laodicea expands upon Basil's brief remark and emphasizes other kinds of entailment as well:

> The names 'Father' and 'Son' each signify a relation to something (τὴν πρός τι σχέσιν). Hence even if we use the name 'Father' alone, we have the notion of the Son understood[230] in the name 'Father' (for 'father' is said of a father of a son). Even if we use the name 'Son' alone, we have the notion of the Father because 'son' is said of a son of a father. For each

[229] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.3.4-5.

[230] Gk. συνυπακουομένην. Apollonius Dyscolus, *Constr*. 4.70 uses this term to describe the noun that is not explicitly stated but 'understood' (i.e. present in the deep structure of the expression) when adverbs are used with definite articles, as in ἐν τῇ αὔριον [ἡμέρᾳ], "during tomorrow." A related term with the same meaning, προσυπακουόμενον, was used by the scholiast when he explained that the question "Of whom?" is understood any time a relative is used; see n. 214 above.

> pertains to the other and the relation is not sundered. Instead, when even when the one is mentioned alone, it introduces the notion of the other, and not only the name, but the affinity of nature along with the name.[231]

George of Laodicea acknowledges terminological-relational entailment when he says that both 'Father' and 'Son' signify a relation. But he also uses terminological-cognitive entailment when he says that the names 'Father' and 'Son' respectively give us the notions of the Son and the Father. The final line of the citation functions as a succinct summary: when either 'Father' or 'Son' is said by itself, it introduces the notion of the other (terminological-cognitive entailment), as well as the name (terminological entailment) and the relation—here called "affinity" (terminological-relational entailment).

The Alexandrians Dionysius and Athanasius, as well as Eusebius of Emesa and Cyril of Jerusalem, represent a use of the grammatical understanding of relatives that has a place for ontological entailment. Indeed, we have noted the affinities that these two Alexandrians have with both the Aristotelian and grammatical traditions concerning relatives. Cyril also endorses ontological entailment and Eusebius of Emesa recognizes terminological-ontological entailment.

The Homoiousians Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea are the only two fourth-century theologians discussed above who recognize pure terminological entailment in the manner of the grammarians. George of Laodicea even uses technical grammatical terminology—"understood" (συνυπακουομένην). In addition to this, the Homoiousians used terminological-cognitive entailment much like Cyril of Jerusalem

---

[231] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.19.3-4 (GCS 37: 292 Holl / Dummer).

and terminological-relational entailment much like Eusebius of Caesarea. All these theologians did not place any emphasis on the ontological entailment of relative terms. They always speak of what a relative *term* entails, and never of what a relative *thing* entails, as did those Alexandrian theologians inspired by the Aristotelian-Neoplatonist tradition. In their understanding and use of relative terms, the Homoiousians represent the clearest indebtedness to the grammarians and the most sophistication before Basil of Caesarea. According the Homoiousians, as relative names 'Father' and 'Son' each give rise to the mental notion and the name of the one to which they are related and thus of their relation with each another.

Basil of Caesarea on relative names

Basil of Caesarea is the first theologian to define relative terms in addition to using them in theological arguments. After describing absolute names, he outlines what relative names are and then gives examples:

> But other names are said relative to others, expressing only the relation to the other names relative to which they are said (τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἕτερα λεγόμενα τὴν σχέσιν μόνην ἐμφαίνει τὴν πρὸς ἃ λέγεται). … But 'son' and 'slave' and 'friend' reveal only the connection with the associated name (μόνης τῆς πρὸς τὸ συνεζευγμένον ὄνομα συναφείας ἐστὶ δηλωτικά).[232]

Like the Homoiousians and the grammarians, Basil recognizes that relative terms have a pure form of terminological entailment. Relative names are those names said relative to

[232] *Eun*. 2.9, 13-18 (SChr 305: 36 Sesboüé).

other names (τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἕτερα λεγόμενα). In addition, like Eusebius of Caesarea and George of Laodicea, Basil views relative terms as having terminological-relational entailment when he says that relative names express a relation. But Basil is clear that the relation expressed is between two *terms* (τὴν σχέσιν … τὴν πρὸς ἅ λέγεται). Hence it is a purely grammatical relation that relative terms entail. Basil is clear that he is not talking about relatives as *things*, probably to preclude ceding any ground in Eunomius that a relative somehow implies substance.[233] He further stresses this point by reporting that relative names express "*only* the relation" between the relative names and reveal "*only* the connection with the associated name." Basil is very careful not to give even a hint that he endorses the ontological entailment of relatives, or even terminological-ontological entailment.

The anti-Eunomian context of Basil's formulation of his theory of relative names is further seen by a statement he makes when he denies that the names 'Father' and 'Son' necessarily have overtones corporeal passion: "On the contrary, when they are said in respect of themselves they [i.e. 'Father' and 'Son'] indicate only their relation to one another."[234] This sentence is slightly confusing because Basil describes the two names as being said "in respect of themselves" (καθ' ἑαυτὰ), which is one of the phrases he used to define absolute names. But Basil is not conflating absolute and relative names here. Rather, he must be saying that when either 'father' or 'son' is used *by itself*—that is, not with a specific name for its related term as in 'the father of Basil' or 'the son of Constantine', which would necessarily imply corporeal passions—the name signifies

---

[233] Robertson, "Relatives in Basil of Caesarea," 280.

[234] *Eun*. 2.22, 47-48 (SChr 305: 92 Sesboüé): ἀλλὰ καθ' ἑαυτὰ μὲν λεγόμενα, τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν ἐνδείκυται μόνην.

only the relation between the two names. Basil's point here is consistent with his appeal to customary usage. In every case in which the names 'father' and 'son' are used, they principally disclose the relation between the two. Only in the case of human fathers and son do these names additional signify corporeality.

As a result, Basil does not say or imply whether terminological and relational entailment also implies ontological entailment, as the grammarians and theologians like Eusebius of Emesa and Cyril of Jerusalem did. Nonetheless, as we have seen, the grammarians with whom Basil has much in common on the issue of relative names posit the existence of the corresponding relative if individual named by the relative exists. If there is a father, there must be a son. In the opinion of David Robertson, "it seems reasonable to suppose that Basil's neglect of the coexistence of relative things in this text … does little to preclude the possibility of both types of entailment [i.e. cognitive and ontological] working together in his thought elsewhere."[235] And so it may be the case that relatives for Basil have ontological entailment in addition to terminological and terminological-relational entailment; but his emphasis is clearly on the latter two.

Even Basil's examples of relatives indicate his influences. We mentioned earlier that Aristotle did not view 'son' as an example of a relative, though some Neoplatonists did. But as we have seen it is used as an example in the grammarian Dionysius Thrax and the scholiasts. Indeed, as mentioned above, 'father' and 'son' is perhaps the favorite example of relative terms in the grammarians as well as in the scholiasts. Both Aristotle and the Neoplatonists of course used 'slave'. But 'friend' appears as an example of a

[235] Robertson, "Relatives in Basil of Caesarea," 284. Robertson's category of "cognitive entailment" also includes what I have been calling terminological and relational entailment.

relative only in Dionysius Thrax and the scholiasts. Therefore, Basil appears to draw his examples of relative names mostly from grammatical sources but also uses the commonplace example of 'slave' found in Aristotle and the Neoplatonists.

When Basil applies his theory of relative names, he reveals that he also views them as having terminological-cognitive entailment. He writes: "The term 'Father' means the same as 'unbegotten,' yet it has the additional advantage of implying a relation, thereby introducing the notion of the Son."[236] The name 'Father' implies both the relation (presumably to the related name 'Son', as before) as well as the "notion of the Son"—hence, terminological-cognitive entailment. In addition, there are strong echoes of the Homoiousians in this passage, who as we have seen maintained: (1) the relative term discloses a relation (terminological-relational entailment), and (2) introduces the notion of the connected term (terminological-cognitive entailment). Basil's theory of relatives appears to be particularly influenced by the Homoiousians.

Therefore, Basil subscribes to pure terminological entailment like the Homoiousians, as well as to terminological-cognitive entailment like George of Laodicea and terminological-relational entailment like Eusebius of Caesarea and George of Laodicea. Basil is thus a part of the Eusebian-Homoiousian trajectory of a grammatical understanding of how relative names operate. But Basil is clearer than his predecessors in signaling that it is the linguistic terms which are related, not the objects of which they are used. A relative name communicates a relational property by virtue of which the relative name is inherently associated with some other name that constitutes the relation.

---

[236] *Eun*. 1.5, 67-69 (SChr 299: 176 Sesboüé).

In Basil's general theory of names, name give rise primarily to notions and secondarily to properties of the substance or individual that bears the name. The same holds true for relative names. This can be seen in two of his explanations of what 'something begotten' signifies:

> So when anyone hears 'something begotten' he is not brought in his mind to a certain substance, but rather he understands (ἐννοεῖ) that it is connected with another. For that which is something begotten is said to be 'something begotten' *of* someone else. So, how it is not the peak of insanity to decree that that which does not introduce a notion of any subsistence, but rather only signifies the relation to another, is the substance?[237]
>
> The truth of our account finds its greatest proof in how each of those who hear the word understands it. Let each one ask himself what notion is impressed upon him when he hears that "such-and-such is 'something begotten' *of* such-and-such." Is it that the one who was begotten is the substance of the begetter? That's ridiculous! Is it that the one has been brought into being by the other through begetting? That's the truth of the matter.[238]

In the first citation, Basil denies against Eunomius that 'something begotten' reveals substance; instead, the hearer of the name "understands that it is connected with another" (ὅτι ἑτέρῳ ἐστι συναπτόμενον ἐννοεῖ). By "another" (ἑτέρῳ) Basil must mean "another name" and the participle he uses for the relation between the names

[237] *Eun*. 2.9, 18-23 (SChr 305: 36 Sesboüé).

[238] *Eun*. 2.10, 16-21 (SChr 305: 38 Sesboüé).

(συναπτόμενον) has the same root as the word used in the passage cited above to signify the relation (συναφεία). Furthermore, as both citations make clear, the name gives rise first and primarily to a notion: the hearer "understands" (ἐννοεῖ) and "has a notion impressed upon him" (ἔννοιαν ἐντυποῦται). In both citations Basil also notes that a relative term is construed with a genitive: "that which is something begotten is said to be 'something begotten' *of* someone else" and "such-and-such is 'something begotten' *of* such-and-such." The grammarians also emphasized that a relative is always construed with its connected term in the genitive, though this point was mentioned by Porphyry too.[239] The notion of 'something begotten' that is impressed upon the mind of the one who hears the term is that the 'something begotten' is related to someone else, which is to say its begetter, or as in the second citation, that the one begotten "has been brought into being by the other through begetting." Basil claims that this notion "established by common usage" and insists that it is "denied by no one."[240] Thus the relational property of the name 'something begotten' is 'having a begetter'. Therefore, 'something begotten' communicates only its relation to its begetter.

But the relation that Basil posits between relative terms does not solely belong to the grammatical order. While he stresses that one relative names implies a relation with its related name, the objects so named also have a real relation between them. Directly after the second citation above, Basil writes:

> So then, it is appropriate that this term [i.e. 'something begotten'] be said similarly of the Only-Begotten and of any of those who have been

[239] See *Schol.* (GG 1.3: 387, 13-15 and 553, 31-35 Hilgard). On Porphyry's observation, see *in Cat.* (CAG 4.1: 112, 1f. Busse).

[240] *Eun.* 2.10, 29-30 (SChr 305: 40 Sesboüé).

> begotten. Let no one suppose that being in relation, which is common in both cases, diminishes the glory of the Only-Begotten in any way. For the difference between the Son and other things does not reside in being related to something. Rather, the superiority of God with respect to mortals is seen in the distinctiveness of his substance.[241]

In this passage Basil does not seem to be talking about the relations that obtain between names, but rather the relations that exist between the beings so named. The Son stands in relation to the Father just as human beings stand in relation to their human fathers. In line with Basil's appeal to customary usage, in all cases what it means for one to be called a 'something begotten' means that they have a relation with a begetter. Though he tried not to do so, Basil slips into a kind of ontological entailment.

Basil never explicitly says that the relational property that a relative name reveals is a distinguishing mark. He does say, however, that a relative name does not reveal substance but a relation, which as we have seen is for Basil primarily linguistic, but also ontological. Hence a relative name does communicate some property of the substance or individual which bears the relative name similarly to the distinguishing marks that proper and absolute names communicate. As we shall see in the discussion of derived notions, Basil linked the distinguishing marks and conceptualizations of Christ with his activities and relations.[242] So there is at least some hint in Basil that a relation can be a distinguishing mark. But there is a difference: the conceptualizations of Christ describe relations between Christ and human beings, whereas the relation of the Father to the Son relation is internal to them.

---

[241] *Eun.* 2.10, 21-27 (SChr 305: 38–40 Sesboüé).

[242] *Eun.* 1.7.

Concluding remarks on Basil's theory of relative names

I agree with David Robertson that Basil is heavily influenced by grammatical discussions of relatives in the formulation of his own theory. He undoubtedly knew this tradition from his own education. Yet at the same time I would like to nuance Robertson's observation. Basil's employment of his grammatical understanding of relatives in theology has been decisively influenced by proximate Christian appropriations of the same tradition. Basil is most similar to the Homoiousians, who themselves are indebted to earlier theological and grammatical traditions. Therefore, Basil stands within the Eusebian-Homoiousian trajectory of a grammatical understanding of relatives that thought of them primarily as *terms*. Because of his de-emphasis of ontological entailment, his deployment of arguments based on relatives has little in common with the Alexandrian tradition in general and Athanasius in particular.

In addition, Basil's theory of relatives in its broad outlines is parallel to his theories of the proper and absolute names. Like those names, a relative name signifies primarily a notion and secondarily a property (not the substance) of the bearer of the name. His understanding of names is remarkably consistent despite their variety in kind.

IV. Derived names

For lack of a better term, I call those names that designate conceptualizations as 'derived' names because they refer to derived notions. Basil does not give these a particular label. In Chapter Five I discussed at length how Basil derives notions from basic notions and attaches names to them. We saw how in general conceptualizations

describe divine activities and relations from a human perspective. In this part I want to specify precisely what Basil thought derived names signified about God. Given the discussion of conceptualization in Chapter Five, it does not need to be demonstrated how derived names signify primarily notions. So here I argue that, as is the case for the three other kinds of names that Basil discusses, derived names signify secondarily distinguishing marks, not substance.

We begin by returning to a passage cited in Chapter Five when discussing the third stage of Basil's argument in favor of conceptualization against Eunomius—the conceptualizations of Christ. He explained that

> when our Lord Jesus Christ spoke about himself … he did so by means of certain distinguishing marks considered in connection with him (ἰδιώμασί τισι τοῖς θεωρουμένοις περὶ αὐτον). He called himself 'door', 'way', 'bread'… He calls himself by different names at different times, using designations that differ from one another for different conceptualizations. On the basis of how his activities differ and how he relates to the objects of his divine benefaction, he employs different names for himself.[243]

It is actually in this passage that the term 'distinguishing mark' first appears in *Contra Eunomium*. Basil clearly connects distinguishing marks and conceptualizations, noting that Jesus "spoke about himself … by means of certain distinguishing marks considered in connection with him … [and] calls himself by different names at different times, using designations that differ from one another for different conceptualizations." Hence the names that Basil gives here for the distinguishing marks are the same as those for the

[243] *Eun*. 1.7, 4-9 (SChr 299: 188 Sesboüé).

conceptualizations of Christ. A similar connection between conceptualizations and distinguishing marks is made elsewhere when he discusses those conceptualizations that indicate what is not present in God: 'incorruptible', 'invisible', 'immortal', and 'unbegotten'.[244] When taken together, these conceptualizations, says Basil, reveal "the particular distinguishing mark (τὸ ἐξαίρετον ἰδίωμα) of God."[245] The difference here is that several conceptualizations correspond to a single distinguishing mark. Nonetheless, the connection in Basil's mind between distinguishing marks and conceptualizations is clear.

But what sort of distinguishing marks do derived names reveal? The connection which Basil made between distinguishing marks and conceptualizations in the citation above comes from the third stage of his argument in favor of conceptualization, where he draws on Origen. But it seems unlikely that Basil adopts this connection from Origen. First of all, Origen never spoke of the 'distinguishing marks' (ἰδιώματα) of God.[246] But he does speak of the 'distinctive features' (ἰδιότητες) of God. Even though Basil uses ἰδίωμα and ἰδιότης as synonyms, he still does not seem to be drawing upon Origen. Origen seems to have equated ποιότητες and ἰδιότητες, and understood them to mean something like 'defining qualities' in a Stoic sense.[247] In refuting Celsus's claim that God is not nameable (ὀνομαστός), Origen agreed that God was *not* nameable if 'being nameable' was understood to mean that a word could communicate the ἰδιότητες of God

---

[244] *Eun*. 1.10, 11-27.

[245] *Eun*. 1.10, 19-20 (SChr 299: 204 Sesboüé).

[246] Cf. *Or*. 31.2, 18 where he speaks of the 'distinguishing mark' of the soul. Basil spoke of 'bread' as that which preserves the distinguishing mark of the soul (*Eun*. 1.7, 24-25).

[247] E.g. *Cels*. 1.25 and 6.65.

and that the many ποιότητες of God could be named. But against Celsus he asserted that God *was* nameable if 'being nameable' was understood to mean that τὰ περὶ θεοῦ could be named.[248] Here Origen makes a distinction between the essential properties of God which are ineffable and the non-essential properties of God which are comprehensible to human beings and therefore expressible. Basil's understanding of distinguishing marks and distinctive features therefore appears to be in line with Origen's understanding of τὰ περὶ θεοῦ, not his view of ἰδιότητες. Like Origen's τὰ περὶ θεοῦ, Basil's ἰδιότητες and ἰδιώματα are knowable and nameable.

Unfortunately, Basil never makes an explicit connection between τὰ περὶ θεοῦ and God's ἰδιότητες or ἰδιώματα. In fact, Basil rarely uses the phrase τὰ περὶ θεοῦ by itself. It is most frequently construed with participles or nouns such as "the things said about God" (τῶν περὶ θεοῦ λεγομένων)[249] or "worthy concepts about God" (τῶν ἀξίων περὶ θεοῦ νοημάτων).[250] When the phrase is used absolutely, it sometimes means something like "divine topics of conversation."[251] Nonetheless, in one case Basil includes the conceptualization 'unbegotten' among τὰ περὶ θεοῦ when he says:

> If anyone wants to understand the truth of what we are saying, let him examine what he does when he wants to get some notion of (τι νοῆσαι) the things concerning God (τῶν περὶ θεοῦ) and see if he arrives at whatever is signified by 'unbegotten'.[252]

---

[248] *Cels*. 6.65.

[249] *Eun*. 1.8, 18 (SChr 299: 194 Sesboüé).

[250] *Eun*. 1.14, 26 (SChr 299: 222 Sesboüé).

[251] *Ep*. 223.5, 12 (2.14 Courtonne); *Hom*. 15.1 (PG 31: 464).

[252] *Eun*. 1.16, 1-4 (SChr 299: 228 Sesboüé).

If, as Basil holds, any knowledge of God cannot be about his substance, then here he is using τὰ περὶ θεοῦ in a technical sense to mean the non-essential properties of God, one of which is 'unbegotten'. Even though Basil does not connect τὰ περὶ θεοῦ and ἰδιότητες or ἰδιώματα, he does make a connection between τὰ περὶ θεοῦ and conceptualizations. Note that Basil considered 'unbegotten' a distinctive feature.[253]

A similar connection between distinctive features, distinguishing marks, and conceptualizations is seen in how Basil speaks of them as the things which are observed in connection with God (περὶ θεόν), in the case of God (ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ), or in the substance of God (ἐπὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ). All three can be objects of 'observation' (θεωρία).[254] A number of expressions demonstrate his usage.

(1) We saw above how Basil said that certain distinguishing marks of Christ "are observed in connection with him" (τοῖς θεωρουμένοις περὶ αὐτον).[255] Basil uses the same construction of θεωρεῖσθαι περὶ + the accusative when talking about both distinguishing marks and conceptualizations.[256]

---

[253] *Eun.* 2.28.

[254] See Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité*, 76.

[255] *Eun*. 1.7, 7.

[256] *Eun*. 1.10, 33 (conceptualizations); 1.16, 15 (conceptualizations); 2.4, 6 (distinguishing marks); 2.4, 13 (distinguishing marks). For similar expressions, see also *Hex*. 1.8, 22; 1.8, 28; *Ps.* 15.1 (PG 29: 252, 2); *Ps.* 33.10 (PG 29: 349, 4); cf. *Ep*. 38 (of disputed authenticity).

(2) Basil uses ἐπιθεωρέω + the dative with a similar meaning. He speaks of 'unbegotten' being observed in the case of God and distinctive features being observed in the substance of God.[257]

(3) On one occasion Basil uses θεωρεῖσθαι ἐπὶ + the genitive when he says that the same formula of being is observed in both Father and Son.[258]

(4) When describing conceptualization as a process, Basil repeatedly says that a feature of an object which a derived notion (i.e. a conceptualization) describes—which must be a distinguishing mark or distinctive feature—"is considered by way of/though conceptualization" (ἐπινοίᾳ θεωρητόν; κατ᾽ ἐπίνοιαν θεωρητόν; κατ᾽ ἐπίνοιαν θεωρεῖσθαι).[259]

Hence Basil uses consistent expressions when he says that distinctive features, distinguishing marks, and conceptualizations are observed in connection with God, or in the case of God, or in the substance of God. Like τὰ περὶ θεοῦ, distinctive features, distinguishing marks, and conceptualizations do not refer to the substance itself, even though closely associated with the substance. The expressions that Basil uses to link distinctive features, distinguishing marks, and conceptualizations to God or the substance of God struggle to indicate that even though they are characteristics of the substance, they are not that substance itself, but a step removed from it, observed in connection with it, or even in it, without being it. How Basil speaks of 'unbegotten' clarifies the point. Basil says that "our notion of the unbegotten does not fall under the examination of 'what it is'

---

[257] *Eun*. 1.14, 48 (how the conceptualization 'unbegotten' is observed in the case of God); 2.28, 27 (distinctive features); 2.28, 33 (distinctive features); 2.28, 41 (the distinctive features 'unbegotten' and 'begotten'); cf. *Ep*. 38 (of disputed authenticity).

[258] *Eun*. 1.19, 34.

[259] *Eun*. 1.5, 130; 1.5, 138; 1.6, 33; 1.6, 52; 1.6, 57; 1.7, 44; 1.8, 20; 1.11, 41.

(τὸ τί ἐστιν), but rather—and here I am forced to speak this way—under the examination of 'what it is like' (τὸ ὅπως ἐστιν)."[260] The phrase τὸ τί ἐστιν is of course a typically Aristotelian expression for designating the essence of a thing.[261] Hence distinctive features, distinguishing marks, and conceptualizations describe what God is like, not what God is.

Unfortunately Basil never spells put in precise terms how distinctive features, distinguishing marks, and conceptualizations are related. It is clear enough that conceptualizations are not merely equivalent to distinctive features and distinguishing marks, though they refer to the same thing. It seems that distinctive features and distinguishing marks are the non-substantial features of a thing like τὰ περὶ θεοῦ, whereas conceptualizations are the human concepts about them derived from basic notions. The example of 'unbegotten' helps clarify this. Unbegottenness is a distinctive feature of God; it is also an conceptualization of God because human beings come to know God's unbegottenness by the process of conceptualization. While every conceptualization corresponds to a distinctive feature or distinguishing mark, not every distinctive feature or distinguishing mark has a corresponding conceptualization. In other words, some distinctive features and distinguishing marks of God can be comprehended by other intellectual processes besides conceptualization. The prime example of these that Basil uses are, as we have seen, proper, absolute, and relative names.

Conclusion

---

[260] *Eun.* 1.15, 1-4 (SChr 299: 224 Sesboüé).

[261] See, for example, *Meta.* Z, 4.

In this chapter I have examined four kinds of names in order to demonstrate that, in Basil's notionalist theory of names, generally speaking, names reveal primarily notions and secondarily distinguishing marks. This theory was meant to contrast starkly with the Heteroousian theory of names wherein names give immediate access to substance. My presentation of Basil's notionalism attempts to configure his disconnected discussions of names into a system. This configuration is admittedly not always successful since Basil was not being systematic. Nonetheless, that Basil had a notionalist theory of names seems undeniable, even if in certain cases evidence is lacking. Another difficulty is seen in Basil's imprecise terminology. Though he appears to use distinguishing marks and distinctive features interchangeably, there is also a hint a some difference between them. At the same time, he uses these two terms for quite different characteristics: some refer to what distinguishes individuals of a common substance, others to what distinguishes one substance from another.

In formulating his notionalist theory of names Basil drew upon eclectic sources: philosophical, grammatical, and Christian. Basil is beholden to none. Though he is deeply indebted to the grammarians' understanding of names, he rejects their view that names signify substance, whether individual or common. Instead, he seems to have borrowed from philosophy to explain what names signified. Regarding proper names, Basil adopted the view that individuals are bundles of characteristics and innovatively saw names as signifying these rather than substance. In the case of absolute names, Basil appears to have made use of the idea of *propria* to identify what they signified. In this theories of proper and absolute names, Basil betrays no influence of earlier Christian writers simply because (with the exception of Origen who advanced a Stoic-inspired theory of proper

names) there was little to draw on. The case is different for relatives. By Basil's time, Christians had been using arguments from correlatives for two centuries. Basing myself on the work of David Robertson, I have argued that two traditions of correlative-arguments developed in Christianity, and that Basil can be set squarely in the grammatical tradition seen in several early fourth-century theologians, primarily the Homoiousians.

General Conclusion

In this dissertation I have argued that Basil of Caesarea develops a notionalist theory of names in response to Eunomius. Basil's theory of names is fundamental to his refutation of Eunomius, establishing a theological methodology and epistemology radically different from that of his opponent. This is the signal achievement of Basil, to have identified these fundamental points of difference and articulated alternatives. In so doing, Basil subtly changed the terms of the Trinitarian debates that were raging in the late 350s and early 360s.

In the first part of the dissertation (Chapters One through Three), I discussed the Heteroousian theory of names. I contended that most previous accounts of this theory have been marred by interpreting it ahistorically and as a theory of language as such. The theory has been viewed as static and as recoverable from both early (*Syntagmation*, *Apologia*) and late (*Apologia apologiae*) Heteroousian documents. In contrast, I maintain that the Heteroousian theory of names developed in three main stages: (1) Aetius's initial formulation in the *Syntagmation* (and pertinent fragments), (2) Eunomius's improvements upon Aetius's expression of the theory that Eunomius specified in the *Apologia*, and (3) Eunomius's re-expression of the theory in the *Apologia apologiae* in the light of Basil's *Contra Eunomium.*

The early Heteroousian theory of names was limited to what one might call a theology of divine predication, which is to say how names operated when they were applied to God. It was only later, in response to Basil, that Eunomius formulated a theory of the origin of names, which transformed the earlier Heteroousian theology of names

into a general theory of names. This developmental model of the Heteroousian theory also enables us to appreciate how Aetius and Eunomius were responding and reacting to contemporary theological contexts when they formulated their theory of names. In Chapter Three I argued that in their formulation of a theory of names the Heteroousians were attempting to answer the most pressing theological questions of their era by drawing upon the resources available to them from earlier fourth-century debates over the name 'unbegotten' and what it meant to apply such names to a God who is simple. In the same vein, Eunomius's late theory of the origin of names shows him responding to the critiques of his opponent, Basil.

Therefore, Aetius and Eunomius were not trying to foist a fundamentally non-Christian understanding of names upon their fellow Christians. I devoted Chapter Two to arguing that the various Platonist source claims advanced for the Heteroousian theory of names, particularly those made by Jean Daniélou in his frequently cited article, fail to convince upon further analysis, despite superficial resemblances. Nonetheless, I argued that Eunomius's late theory of the origin of names represents a selective use of Philo. While Christian theologians of all stripes skillfully employed the resources of their culture in their theological endeavors (despite protests to the contrary), I believe that in this case the Platonist source claims are not only unconvincing but also obscure the truly Christian motivations of the Heteroousians. In his use of Philo, Eunomius reveals himself as one of several fourth-century theologians who benefited from the works of Philo Judaeus, who even in their day was being transformed into Philo Christianus.

In the second part of the dissertation (Chapters Four through Seven), I turned to Basil's theory of names. Various aspects of his theory have received some attention in the

scholarship, such as his theory of conceptualization and his understanding of proper and relative names. But in these chapters I have argued that these are but pieces of a larger, general theory of names. Though I doubt that Basil would have claimed to have had a systematic theory of names, I believe that there is one implicit in his writings and operative in his thought, even if at times there are gaps I wish could have been filled and inconsistencies I wish were not there.

I began my discussion of Basil by summarizing his critiques of Eunomius's theory of names, arguing that they reveal what Basil thought a good theory of names should be. In them we see the parameters of his own notionalist theory. He rejected the idea that any name—not just the names for God—can reveal substance, understood as essence. He disagreed with Eunomius's claim that divine simplicity implied that all names applied to God were synonymous, affirming that each name used for God retains a distinct meaning. He denied that any name, especially 'unbegotten', enabled privileged knowledge of God, arguing instead that each name applied to God contributes to our always-imperfect notion of God according to its distinct meaning. Finally, he repudiated Eunomius's belief that names mean fundamentally different things when applied in divine and mundane contexts, which is to say that names are applied to God and creatures equivocally. In contrast, Basil endorsed univocal predication.

The next three chapters explored how Basil formulated his notionalist theory of names within these parameters. In Chapter Five I argued that Basil maintained against Eunomius that names do not reveal substance, but primarily give rise to notions in the mind. This is why I have chosen to label his theory of names "notionalist." But while all names signify notions, not all notions are the same. I argued that Basil envisions a

hierarchy of notions: some are more-or-less immediately available to the human mind and more fundamental, others are derived, formulated by reflecting upon the more basic notions. Notions differ in kind not by their content but by the way in which the mind comes to acquire them.

As for basic notions, Basil's primary source for them is common usage. This does not refer to how ordinary speakers understand a term, but to what a term means when it is purified of its corporeal and temporal connotations. The importance of common usage for Basil's theological method has only recently been recognized by scholars, and here I attempted to show its significance for his theory of names. Basil's appeal to common usage enables to affirm against Eunomius that names (excepting metaphorical names) are applied to God univocally. Because the notions that names give rise to according to common usage are stripped of inappropriate connotations, they have the same meaning when used in both divine and mundane contexts.

Furthermore, I have situated Basil's well-known theory of conceptualization (*epinoia*) within his theory of names, construing conceptualizations as derived notions. There is a tradition in scholarship that interprets Basil as holding that all names used for God correspond to conceptualizations. This is simply not the case. I have outlined how Basil envisions conceptualizations being derived from basic notions, showing that his theory of conceptualization can only be fully understood when it is connected with his more comprehensive notionalism. In addition, I explored Basil's use of Origen in the formulation of his theory of conceptualization, arguing that he heavily adapts him, that his own theory is not entirely consistent with that of the Alexandrian theologian, and that

his appeal to Origen probably implies an argument from authority against Eunomian innovation.

In Chapter Five I also suggested two possible contexts in which Basil could have developed his notionalist theory of names, which has no clear precedent in any Christian author. I suggested the tradition of Neoplatonist commentary upon Aristotle as a remote context, which viewed names are signifying primary thoughts and secondarily things. Another possible context was the Homoiousian emphasis upon the notions 'Father' and 'Son' in their documents from the late 350s. In Chapter Six I continued this inquiry into the sources of Basil's theory by examining another way in which Basil decentralized 'unbegotten'. Basil did not only argue that this name was but one of many conceptualizations, but also that it was not a particularly helpful name for understanding God. As an alterative, Basil argued for the primacy of the name 'Father' since it affords us far greater knowledge of God. I demonstrated why he thought this was so and how in this case Basil's arguments drew upon those of both Athanasius and the Homoiousian George of Laodicea. In this case Athanasius's influence is mostly mediated to Basil through the Homoiousians, though there is also evidence for an immediate debt.

In the final chapter I argued that, as an alternative to Eunomius's theory that names disclose substance, Basil maintained that names, while primarily signifying notions, secondarily signify the properties of the objects to which they are applied. I demonstrated how this theory is consistently invoked in Basil's explanations of how the basic kinds of names operate: proper names, absolute names, and relative names. For each kind of name, I explored possible sources for Basil's understanding in both philosophical and grammatical texts. I demonstrated that Basil is eclectic here and draws

piecemeal upon a variety of philosophical and grammatical theories. His theory of the proper name seems most influenced by Neoplatonist accounts, whereas his theories of the absolute and relatives are more indebted to grammatical discussions. In addition, Basil is an heir to a long Christian tradition of using arguments based on relative terms in theological contexts. Finally, I argued that Basil believes that derived names (the names for conceptualizations) operate similarly to these basic names, though he is not as explicit in stating it as one would hope.

My argument about the Heteroousian theory of names raises a number of questions for further debate. Since the Heteroousian theory of names is fundamental to their theology, how does this new interpretation of it affect our understanding of their theology as a whole? How does it alter our understanding of the interpretations of Heteroousian theology offered by other opponents besides Basil, like his brother Gregory of Nyssa? In what way does it change our understanding of the issues of controversy in the late 350s and early 360s? Does it contribute to a revised account of the course of the Trinitarian debates?

Basil's notionalist theory of names raises a similar set of questions. Though I also drew upon other parts of his corpus, I derived the main evidence for his theory from his *Contra Eunomium*. I have not considered here to what extent this theory is operative in his other works. If Basil's notionalist theory is as fundamental to his theological method as I have claimed, what new insights into Basil's theology does this theory allow? One area of research only partially touched upon in this dissertation is Basil's exploitation of his theory of names in his interpretation of the names 'Father' and 'Son'.

Though the theology of the so-called Cappadocians is no longer considered a monolith, it is undeniable that Gregory of Nyssa was heavily influenced by the theology of his older brother. Indeed, after Eunomius issued his *Apologia apologiae* shortly after Basil died, Gregory considered himself the defender of his dead brother's legacy and the heir to his controversy with Eunomius.[1] Accordingly, Gregory's own theory of names needs to be re-examined in the light of Basil's. Not only do we need to determine to what extent Gregory adopted Basil, but also why Gregory might have departed from the theory of the one whose ideas he claimed to be defending. The re-assessment of Basil's theology as a whole that his theory of names prompts in turn prompts a re-assessment of the theology of his greatest defender, Gregory.

Finally, Basil's theory of names may be of interest to those not specifically concerned with historical theology. First, Basil's discussion of the basic kinds of names deserves consideration by historians of ancient grammar. Since he was trained as a rhetor, Basil must have had an education in grammar itself that exceeded most of his contemporaries. It is true that Basil was not interested in technical grammar, but one might call his approach "applied grammar." His account of names is both descriptive and prescriptive. He corrects his opponent's erroneous understanding of what names signify. Hence Basil's grammatical discussions provide clues not only to what grammatical teaching may have been like in fourth-century Cappadocia, but also to how grammatical knowledge was used in the interpretation of texts and other contexts.

Secondly, historians of late-antique philosophy cannot ignore the contributions of Basil. Some of Basil's ideas have already attracted such attention. But there are other

---

[1] Gregory, *Ep*. 29.

points of interest. I have suggested that he offered an innovative, albeit rudimentary, account of what accounts for the persistence of individuals. More generally his theory of distinguishing marks and distinctive features indicates a non-specialist's appropriation of themes heavily debated among the "professional" philosophers of his day. In particular, I have suggested that Basil is the first Greek theologian to incorporate a version of the Aristotelian/Neoplatonist understanding of what names signify—that is, primarily thoughts, secondarily things. It remains to be seen if other Greek theologians similarly abandoned the various expressions of the naturalness of names current in the early Christian centuries for the kind of notionalism that Basil developed, and further if later Greek theologians were influenced by Basil or came to the theory by other means.

Basil's notionalism is reminiscent of the theory of names prevalent in the Latin Middle Ages, which entered that world through the philosophical writings of Boethius. A name (*vox*) was thought to express a concept and the concept (*intellectus*) was thought to be a likeness of the thing named (*res*).[2] Basil never speaks of the notions that names give rise to as likenesses of things, but as encapsulating the relevant features of the object named. Nonetheless, the resemblance between Basil's threefold division into name-notion-feature and the Aristotelian/Neoplatonist/Latin Medieval division into word-concept-thing is striking. Hence Basil's theory of names should be of interest not only to historians of philosophy, but also to those who study the history of linguistics.

Basil's theological achievements have for a long time been overshadowed by those of his fellow Cappadocians Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. I hope that the detailed study undertaken in this dissertation will contribute to the growing

[2] See Thomas Aquinas, ST I.13.1.

appreciation for his originality. However different his theology may have been from his fellow Cappadocians, in many ways Basil's ideas were often the seeds that the two Gregories nurtured into viable pro-Nicene saplings. And if this is the case, Basil's contribution to the Trinitarian faith that the Church still professes today is immense.

Appendix

The Fragments and Testimonia of Aetius

We possess from Aetius only one treatise, the *Syntagmation*. The critical edition established by Lionel Wickham in 1968 remains the standard text.[1] The aim of the *Syntagmation* is to prove that God, as unbegotten, cannot beget according to substance, resulting in a difference in substance between the unbegotten God and begotten God. The text consists of thirty-six deductive proofs, preceded by an introductory paragraph which explains the genesis of treatise and followed by a closing paragraph (numbered the thirty-seventh paragraph in Wickham's edition). From the introductory paragraph, we learn that the extant version of the *Syntagmation* is a revision, or rather a restoration, of an earlier edition. Aetius needed to restore the work to its original state because his enemies had circulated it in a form with interpolations and omissions.[2] Wickham estimated that the original version was composed "prior to 360," whereas Kopecek dates the original text more precisely to late 359, between early October and late December.[3] Both agree that the treatise was based on earlier materials that could perhaps be dated to the early 350s.[4]

---

[1] CPG 3445. L. R. Wickham, "The *Syntagmation* of Aetius the Anomean," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 19 (1968): 532–69. There are two older editions: Gustave Bardy, "L'héritage littéraire d'Aetius," *Revue histoire d'ecclésiastique* 24 (1928): 809–27, at 813–22, and that found in GCS 37.

[2] Aetius, *Synt*. proem. (540 Wickham). See also Richard Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 142 n. 396.

[3] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 550; Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979), 225–7; see also Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 223 n. 140.

[4] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 550; Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 127–8.

Wickham suggests that Aetius produced the revised, extant version ca. 363.[5] As far as we can tell, the extant text appears to be intact.[6]

In addition to the *Syntagmation* we also possess numerous fragments of Aetian writings and testimonia about him. I employ here a distinction that is widespread in the presentation of the remnants of Presocratic and Hellenistic philosophy.[7] A fragment is a verbatim text of one author preserved by another. In contrast, a testimonium, in the strict sense, is a report about, or paraphrase of, or summary of, an author's teaching written by someone else. Testimonia may or may not use the original author's own words. But there are also testimonia in a looser sense: passages that relate pertinent information about a particular author, which does not necessarily concern the author's views. In our sources it is often difficult to determine whether a passage should be interpreted as a fragment or testimonium. The ancients of course did not observe the distinctions made here.

We possess thirty-two fragments and testimonia of Aetius. It is the purpose of this appendix to present these with a standardized system of numbering, to discuss their authenticity, and to provide English translations of them. One point needs to be made at the outset. The radical language of the *Syntagmation* should not blind us to the fact that

---

[5] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 550.

[6] Wickham writes that "it seems more likely than not that we possess the series [of syllogisms] complete" ("The *Syntagmation*," 536). Kopecek calls the *Synt.* Aetius's "only completely extant writing" (*A History of Neo-Arianism*, 225). R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 607, concurs.

[7] Standard collections include: Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th ed. by Walther Kranz, 3 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951-1954); G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Hans Friedrich Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1924); A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Of course, there are also many collections of the fragments and testimonia of individual philosophers.

Aetius could present his teaching in more traditional terms. Aetius states in the preface to the *Syntagmation* that its subject was the unbegotten God and the begotten—these are his preferred terms because they accurately communicate the substance of each. He is not altogether opposed to the names 'Father' and 'Son', but de-emphasizes these as they do not accurately reflect the substance of each. As will be seen in the Texts below, Aetius could present his Heteroousian doctrine using the names 'Father' and 'Son' without compromising it in any way.

Texts 1-5: From Aetius, *Letter to Mazon*

The first five texts come from Aetius's *Letter to Mazon*, an otherwise unknown tribune.[8] These are preserved in a Christological florilegium edited by Franz Diekamp and his successors.[9] Compiled in late seventh or early eighth century, the florilegium is directed against Monothelites. The fragments from the *Letter to Mazon* can be found in the forty-first chapter, which is entitled: "The sayings of the God-hating heretics, who agree with those who confess one activity and will in the case of the Christ of God." This chapter presents a series of fragments from notorious heretics such as Ebion, Paul of Samosata, Nestorius, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Montanus, Mani, Apollinarius of Laodicea and his disciples, Eunomius of Beroea, Severus of Antioch, Eunomius of Cyzicus, Irenaeus of Harpasus, Cyril of Tyana, Julian of Halicarnassus and several others. The fragments are not are listed chronological order; those of Aetius are placed between Severus of Antioch and Eunomius of Cyzicus. The purpose of these fragments is

[8] CPG 3450.

[9] Franz Diekamp, Basileios Phanougakis, and Evangelos Chrysos, *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione verbi*, 2nd ed. (Münster, Aschendorff, 1981), 311–12.

discredit Monothelite theology by linking it with previous heresies. The scribes of some mss. of the florilegium displayed their orthodoxy when copying the fragments of Aetius by adding in the margin: "Curse him!" and "Curse you, atheist!"

Gustave Bardy accepted these five texts as authentic.[10] He noted that Text 1, which reports Athanasius's teaching, reflects Athanasius's language and that the form of the arguments in all five fragments corresponds to Aetius's usual syllogistic approach. But Bardy found the "insistence" on will and activity, which he believed constituted the "principal motif" of the fragments, "strange," given their lack of appearance in the *Syntagmation.*[11] Hence, he would have been willing to countenance the thesis that the Aetius fragments are genuine but interpolated in accordance with the anti-Monothelite interest of the compiler of the florilegium.[12]

Venance Grumel attempted to prove that there were in fact interpolations in these fragments.[13] He employed the following criteria: once the interpolated passages were removed, the remaining text not only had to make sense, but also had either to provide a better sense than with the interpolated passages or to be more coherent with the thought and intention of Aetius.[14] He made a compelling case that these five fragments contain interpolations and that the integral fragments reflect genuine Aetian theology.[15] The basic goal of Aetius in each fragment is to demonstrate the difference in nature between the

---

[10] Bardy, "L'héritage," 823–26.

[11] Bardy, "L'héritage," 825.

[12] Bardy, "L'héritage," 826.

[13] Venance Grumel, "Les texts monothélites d'Aétius," *Echos d'Orient* 28 (1929): 159–66.

[14] Grumel, "Les texts monothélites," 161.

[15] Grumel, "Les texts monothélites," 161–4. Note that his claim that Athanasius used the phrase δύο θελήματα is mistaken, having used the defective PG text of *De incarnatione*.

Father and Son—an argument that becomes clear when the interpolated passages are excised. The Son's nature is dual; the Father's is not (Texts 1 and 5). The Son is Creator by decree; the Father by nature (Text 2). The Son is generated and begotten; the Father is not (Text 3). The Son's nature admits composition; the Father's does not (Text 4). In the translations below, the passages considered to be interpolations by Grumel are surrounded by curved brackets, that is {}.

Thomas Kopecek accepted the letter to Mazon from which the fragments have been extracted as authentic and dated it, tentatively, to the period 350-356.[16] His verdict and dating appear to have been based on the fact that Text 1 explicitly shows Aetius engaged in a theological debate with Athanasius of Alexandria. This squares well with Kopecek's thesis that in the early 350s Aetius began to promote the term "different in substance" in reaction to Athanasius's *De decretis*.[17] Ayres, however, regards this argument as "unproven."[18]

In contrast to Kopecek, R. P. Vaggione called the letter "suspect."[19] The only fragment he discussed is Text 2, which he viewed as a "fabrication" rather than a citation of Aetius.[20] He objected to the idea that Aetius would say that the Son is Creator "by decree" (θέσει), seeing the expression as a typical Nicene interpretation, or rather distortion, of names actually claimed to be applied κατὰ ἐπίνοιαν, "by way of

---

[16] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 128–29 n. 1.

[17] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 114–32.

[18] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 144.

[19] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 250 n. 313.

[20] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 243 n. 281.

conceptualization." Hence, he doubted that Text 2 contains Aetius's own words.[21] Nowhere else does Aetius discuss the title "Creator." But in *Syntagmation* 8 he says the name "Son" is a mere mode of address.[22] Hence, while Vaggione was surely correct to note that Nicenes distorted what their opponents meant by names applied κατὰ ἐπίνοιαν, it is also true that Aetius could speak of names (besides "something begotten" and its equivalents) as mere conventions that had no correspondence to the nature of the one named.

Except for the hesitancy of Vaggione, the scholarly consensus is that these fragments are genuine. When the interpolated passages are omitted, it appears that we possess five integral texts from Aetius's otherwise unknown *Letter to Mazon*. It is to be noted, however, that in these fragments Aetius speaks of 'Father' and 'Son', not 'unbegotten God' and 'something begotten' (or their equivalents). Such usage admits of two explanations. The fragments could represent a Nicene restatement of Aetian thought (à la Vaggione). Or the fragments could be a less radical presentation of Heteroousian theology than that found in the *Syntagmation* (which for the most part avoids 'Father' and 'Son'). The latter explanation seems more likely than the former. The fragments give no hint of being Nicene reports; on the contrary, they state Aetian theology clearly and frankly and without compromise.

From the internal evidence, there is no clue to the date of their composition. As a presentation of Aetian theology using the traditional names 'Father' and 'Son', they can

---

[21] Note that Vaggione (*Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 243 n. 281) misquotes Text 2. He cites the objectionable passage as θέσει μόνον ("The Son is Creator by decree alone") whereas it actually reads θέσει μόνος ("The Son is the only Creator by decree").

[22] Cf. *Synt*. 17 and Text 23.

probably be placed in the years before the publication of the *Syntagmation* when Aetius was honing his thought. Based on this, we can date the letter to the early to mid 350—a timeframe that agrees with Kopecek's dating.

Text 1

Source: *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione Verbi* 41.28

Edition: 311, 1-7 Diekamp, et. al.

Introductory formula: "Of Aetius the Arian, from the letter to Mazon the tribune."

Athanasius the Egyptian, struggling to show that the Son was identical to the Father in substance, ascribed two natures to him {as well as two wills and two activities}, not realizing in his clumsy way that he had impiously showed that he[23] is liable to contrary movements. For every duality is something that can be split into two. This same illness of his has also been contracted by all who assent to the "same in substance."

Text 2

Source: *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione Verbi* 41.29

Edition: 311, 8-16 Diekamp, et. al.

Introductory formula: "Of the same, from the same speculations."

The Father is the only Creator by nature. For he possesses this gift without receiving it from another. The Son is the only Creator by decree. For he possesses this

[23] I.e. the Son.

gift by receiving it from the Father. Indeed, *all things have been given to me by my Father* [Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22] and *all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me* [Matt 28:18]. Now if he is Creator by decree, then he is passible by nature. For all that cannot create by nature is passible. {And if he is passible by nature, then he possesses a will and activity that suffer.} Nor indeed does that which is passible by nature possess impassibility.[24]

Text 3

Source: *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione Verbi* 41.30

Edition: 311, 17-24 Diekamp, et al.

Introductory formula: "Of the same, from the same."

The Son would not have existed if he had not been generated. And if he had not been generated, he would not have been begotten. For begetting is not ingenerate. Now if the Son came to be begotten when he had already been generated, he is not identical with the Father, who is neither of these[25] naturally. And if they are not identical, their nature is different. {And if their nature is different, then it is clear that both their will and activity are different. For: *not what I will, Father, but anything you will* [Mark 14:36]. And: *whatsoever I see the Father doing, I do likewise* [John 5:19]. Accordingly, it is a question of imitation but not of nature.}

[24] Grumel deems this final sentence as well to be an interpolation. But it seems to follow logically from the antepenultimate sentence.

[25] I.e. generated or begotten.

Text 4

Source: *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione Verbi* 41.31

Edition: 311, 25 – 312, 3 Diekamp, et al.

Introductory formula: “Of the same, from the same.”

If the Word became flesh, he became composite in nature. He would not have become this, if he were not receptive of composition by nature. {And if he became composite in nature, it is clear both his will and activity are composite.} How, then, can the one who is obviously receptive of this be identical with the Father who, according to any account, does not admit of composition?

Text 5

Source: *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione Verbi* 41.32

Edition: 312, 4-8 Diekamp, et al.

Introductory formula: “Of the same, from the same.”

If the Son is unique because he is one in nature but not in number, his nature {as well as his will and activity} is one. But it would never happen that there were two natures in one, even if he became flesh. For if that were the case he would have clearly ceased being the unique Son in nature.

Texts 6-7: From Anastasius of Sinai, *Florilegium*

The next two texts are preserved in Anastasius of Sinai's florilegium against Monothelites.[26] They are explicitly attributed to Aetius, purportedly excerpted from the treatise *On the Son* (ἐκ τοῦ περὶ υἱοῦ λόγου). Since this treatise is otherwise unattested, Gustave Bardy attributed the title to Anastasius himself, but accepted the fragments as genuine.[27] In their favor, Bardy cited three features of theirs that reflect fourth-century "Arianism": (1) an anti-Manichaean argument, (2) a teaching on the mutable nature of the Son, and (3) use of scriptural verses that speak of the Father's will. But Bardy noted two theological problems: (1) the use of the term "of two wills" (διθελής) in Text 6, and (2) the implied attribution of verses spoken by Jesus in the gospels to the Son rather than Christ in Text 7. Nonetheless, noting their similarity with Texts 1-5, he did not think that these difficulties warranted a denial of attribution of these texts to Aetius. Venance Grumel concurred with Bardy's assessment.[28] He detected an interpolation only in Text 7. He argued for the authenticity of the fragments based on vague connections to "Arian" theology. The arguments of both Bardy and Grumel fail to convince. Neither Bardy nor Grumel allowed for doctrinal distinctions between Aetius and Arius (or "Arian" thought). Simply because an "Arian" held a view does mean that Aetius subscribed to it. Grumel's argument for Texts 1-5 was convincing because he demonstrated that their arguments were clearly Aetian, not merely "Arian."

Thomas Kopecek noticed this problem as well. He denied that Text 7 was genuine because it contradicted the Aetian teaching found elsewhere that the Son's nature is

---

[26] CPG 3451. Karl-Heinz Uthemann, *Anastasii Sinaitae Opera*, CCSG 12 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985).

[27] Bardy, "L'héritage," 826–7.

[28] Grumel, "Les texts monothélites," 164–5.

unchangeable. But he accepted the authenticity of Text 6, which he dated ca. 350-356.[29] While I agree with Kopecek that Text 7 is not Aetian, the difficulties adduced by Bardy for Text 6 outweigh any argument in favor of attributing the fragment to Aetius. It is highly unlikely that Aetius used the rare term "of two wills" (διθελής), a term which seems to reflect the polemics of the Monothelite controversy rather than the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century. Accordingly, I place Texts 6-7 among the *spuria* of Aetius. Thus there is no evidence for a treatise by Aetius entitled *On the Son*.

Text 6

Source: Anastasius of Sinai, *Florilegium adversus Monotheletas* 1, lines 24-27

Edition: CCSG 12: 88 Uthemann

Introductory formula: "Of Aetius, the cause of the entire Arian heresy that fights against God, from his treatise *On the Son*."

So, then, the son of Mary is not of two wills lest in accordance with the laws of the Manichees he make war against the will of God by the fleshly will.

Text 7

Source: Anastasius of Sinai, *Florilegium adversus Monotheletas* 1, lines 27-35

Edition: CCSG 12: 88 Uthemann

Introductory formula: "Of the same, from the same treatise."

[29] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 129–30.

For the Son himself gave his own explanation of the subsistence of his own nature and unlikeness, when he refused to exercise his own will.[30] If, then, his will could be refused, his nature is also entirely mutable. Accordingly, not even the Son deems it unworthy to confess the Father as his own God and maker.[31] After all, the Father's will alone is good.[32] At any rate, the natures of Son and Father differ {and their two wills are unlike}.

Texts 8-13: From George of Laodicea

At the end of the defense of Homoiousian theology that George of Laodicea composed together with Basil of Ancyra in the summer of 359, he cited the very words of six Heteroousian statements. He did not attribute them to anyone. Thomas Kopecek maintained that they were "presumably from Aetius."[33] R. P. C. Hanson equivocated on their authorship, first calling them anonymous, then saying that "there can be little doubt that these are the words of Aetius himself."[34] In a recent article, Xavier Morales has affirmed the verdict of Kopecek and the latter opinion of Hanson.[35] I agree that all six fragments reflect Aetian theology.

The fragments appear to be excerpted from one or more letters. Aetius twice speaks in the first person, once to a plural "you" (Text 8), once to a singular "you" (Text

---

[30] Cf. Matt 26:39; 26:42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; cf. John 5:19.

[31] Cf. Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34; John 20:17.

[32] Cf. Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19.

[33] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 184.

[34] Hanson, *The Search*, 370 and 604–5. The citation is on p. 605.

[35] Xavier Morales, "Identification de l'auteur des citations néo-ariennes dans le *Traité* de Basile d'Ancyre," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 11 (2008): 492–99.

10). In addition, the first line of the first fragment sounds like it comes from the beginning of a letter: “For I was especially eager to share with you briefly the sayings which in God are best” (Text 8). As the six Aetian fragments were included in a text written in the summer of 359, they must be from the first half of 359 or earlier. Therefore, they represent genuine Aetian material earlier than the *Syntagmation*.

Note that Texts 12-13 have much in common with Texts 31-32.

Text 8

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.21.2

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 293, 23-27

Introductory formula: “They write thus in these very words.”

For I was especially eager to share with you briefly the sayings which in God are best. Those who suppose that the Son preserves the likeness in substance to the Father have put themselves outside the truth, since by the designation “unbegotten”[36] they condemn the phrase “like in substance.”

Text 9

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.21.3

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 293, 29 – 294, 2

Introductory formula: “And again they say.”

[36] I follow the reading of ms. J.

The Son is and has been confessed to be inferior to <the unbegotten because of his>[37] generation. Therefore, while he does not preserve the likeness in substance to the unbegotten,[38] he does preserve God's will in its purity, bearing it in his own subsistence. So, then, he does preserve a likeness, not in substance but according to the formula of the will, <in that> he caused him to subsist as he willed.

Text 10

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.21.3

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 294, 4-5

Introductory formula: "And again."

Why don't you agree with me that in substance the Son is not like the Father?

Text 11

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.21.4

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 294, 7-11

Introductory formula: "And again."

Seeing that the Son is confessed to be everlasting, not having life from his own nature but from the power of the unbegotten,[39] and that the unbegotten nature is

---

[37] Morales ("Identification de l'auteur," 494) rejects Holl's emendation here, but the claim that the Son is "inferior to generation" makes no sense. Clearly something is missing.

[38] I follow the reading of ms. J.

[39] I follow the reading of ms. J.

everlastingly superior to every power, why are the impious <not> exposed when they exchange the pious doctrine – different in substance – for likeness of substance?

Text 12

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.21.5

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 294, 13-16

Introductory formula: “And again.”

Therefore, the name ‘Father’ is not revelatory of a substance, but of a power which brought the Son into subsistence before the ages, God the Word, who everlastingly <possesses> the substance and power granted to him, which he continues to possess.

Text 13

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.21.6

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 294, 18-20

Introductory formula: “And again.”

<If> they want the term ‘Father’ to be revelatory of substance, but not of power, let them also designate the subsistence of the Only-Begotten with the name ‘Father’.

Text 14: From an Aetian document

Philostorgius recorded that at the Council of Seleucia in September 359 Aetius and Eunomius drew up and circulated document that promoted their Heteroousian

theology.[40] A fragment of this document has come down to us in two versions. The first is preserved in Theodoret. The ecclesiastical historian narrates an audience that Constantius had in the aftermath of the Council of Seleucia with Basil of Ancyra, Eustathius of Sebasteia, and Eudoxius of Antioch at Constantinople in December 359.[41] In stating their case against Eudoxius, Basil and Eustathius had an exposition of the faith read to the emperor which they believed Eudoxius had written. But Eudoxius denied authorship and attributed it to Aetius. Aetius was then summoned, and he confessed that he was the author.[42] It is likely that this exposition of faith was the same one Aetius and Eunomius had drawn up and circulated at Seleucia.[43] See Texts 15 and 20 for what happened after Aetius admitted authorship.

The same fragment is preserved in Basil's treatise *On the Holy Spirit*.[44] While Gustave Bardy believed it to be an authentic Aetian fragment without being aware of Theodoret's version,[45] the fragment preserved in the ecclesiastical historian enables us to identify Basil's text as an excerpt from the same document. Note that Basil claimed to be citing from one of Aetius's letters. Basil certainly cited some words of Aetius, but his version is more a testimony than a fragment. The words "saying" (λέγων) and " he says" (φησί) indicate the places where Basil cited his source. But the phrases "and vice versa" and "as a testimony of this rationale he drew upon the apostle" show that Basil also

---

[40] Philostorgius, *h.e.* 4.11. Kopecek (*A History of Neo-Arianism*, 202) suggests that the document was issued in September 28, the day following the first session.

[41] Theodoret, *h.e.* 2.27.

[42] See Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 202–4.

[43] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 203.

[44] CPG 3446.

[45] Bardy, "L'héritage," 810–11.

summarized his source. Therefore, Basil's version is a testimonium that contains genuine fragments of Aetius. Basil's version is also fuller than Theodoret's.

Text 14 is significant because it is one of the few texts of Aetius that employs scripture in a syllogistic argument—1 Cor 8:6.[46] Thomas Kopecek was probably correct when he noted that the Heteroousian document's use of this verse was based on its usage in the Second Dedication Creed of 341, which the Homoiousians had ratified at the first session of the Council of Seleucia.[47] Therefore, Aetius and Eunomius may have been arguing that the Second Dedication Creed supported their Heteroousian theology, not the Homoiousian position.[48] 1 Cor 8:6 was also central to the creed that Eunomius quoted in *Apologia* 5, which Basil of Caesarea tells us was used by some of the fathers as well as Arius.[49]

Other fragments of the document from which Text 14 is excerpted are probably found in Text 16.

Text 14a

Source: Basil, *De spiritu sancto* 2.4

Edition: SChr 17 bis: ### Pruche

They have a sophism, now somewhat old, that was invented by Aetius, the patron of this heresy. Somewhere in his letters he wrote, saying: "Things unlike in nature are

---

[46] See also Text 2; Epiphanius reports an Aetian usage of scripture in Text 21.

[47] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 204.

[48] Epiphanius (*Pan*. 76.8.11-9.2 and 76.9.5-6) interprets 1 Cor 8:6 in his chapter on Aetius, though he does not counter the interpretation of the verse as found in Text 27.

[49] Basil, *Eun*. 1.4.

expressed in unlike ways." And vice versa: "Things expressed in unlike ways are unlike in nature." Furthermore, for testimony of this rationale he drew upon the apostle, who said: "*One God and Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things* [1 Cor 8:6]. So, then," he says, "as the terms are related to each other, so too will the natures signified by them be related to each other. Now the *through whom* is unlike the *from whom*. Therefore, the Son is also unlike the Father."

Text 14b

Source: Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.27.6

Edition: GCS 19: 160, 1-4 Parmentier [n.b. there is a new edition, GCS n.f. 5]

Things unlike in substance are expressed in unlike ways. *One God the Father from whom are all things and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things* [1 Cor 8:6]. Now the *through whom* is unlike the *from whom*. Therefore, the Son is unlike the God and Father.

Text 15: From Philostorgius, *Church History*

Philostorgius recorded that soon after Constantius learned that Aetius had defeated Basil of Ancyra in debate in Constantinople in late 359, he summoned both of them to his presence. Constantius asked Basil what charge he had against Aetius. Upon hearing Basil's reply, Aetius protested. Constantius was so displeased with Aetius's

response that he banished him from the palace.[50] See Text 20 for a report on the same incident. Text 16 is likely the document that contained the offending phrase.

Text 15

Source: Philostorgius, *h.e.* 4.12

Edition: GCS 21: 66, 10-18 Winkelmann

Therefore, the emperor had both of them[51] brought into his presence and asked Basil what accusations he was making against Aetius. He replied: "He teaches that the Son is unlike the Father." In response to these accusations, Aetius asserted that he was so far from saying or thinking that the Son was unlike the Father that he even proclaimed that he was indistinguishably like. Constantius seized upon the term 'indistinguishable'. Refusing outright to learn in what sense he had uttered 'indistinguishable', he ordered Aetius to be thrown out of the palace.

Text 16: *The Exposition of Patricius and Aetius*

The next fragment, the longest, is actually a document called the *Expositio Patricii et Aetii* that is preserved in the *Historia acephala*, edited most recently by Annik Martin.[52] It is a Heteroousian profession of faith composed by Aetius and the otherwise

---

[50] See Philip R. Amidon, *Philostorgius: Church History* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 73 n. 27 and Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 224–5 for a discussion of this incident.

[51] I.e. Aetius and Basil of Ancyra.

[52] Annik Martin, *Histoire «acéphale» et index syriaque des lettres festales d'Athanase d'Alexandria*, SChr 317 (Paris: Cerf, 1985).

unknown Patricius of Nicaea.[53] Dating it is difficult because of its muddled historical contextualization within the *Historia acephala* itself. The document is introduced thus:

> [4.5] Eudoxius of Germanicia was in possession of the church at Constantinople. He and Macedonius divided heresy between themselves. But through Eudoxius another heresy that was even worse sprang up from the impure teaching of the Arians Aetius and Patricius of Nicaea who were in communion with Eunomius, Heliodorus, and Stephen. When Eudoxius accepted this, he entered into communion with Euzoius, the bishop of Antioch who belonged to the Arian heresy. When there was a favorable opportunity, he deposed Eleusius, Macedonius, Hypatius, and fifteen other bishops who were like them. For they would neither accept "unlike" nor "something made by he who is not made." And so they were exiled.[54]

The narrative here is very confused.[55] When Eudoxius became bishop of Antioch in late 357 or early 358 he convened a council that endorsed the radically subordinationist Sirmian Creed of 357, welcomed Aetius to Antioch, and allowed the propagation of Aetius's Heteroousian theology. Eudoxius's actions led to a series of events and councils that culminated in the Councils of Seleucia in September 359 and of Constantinople in January 360. At the latter, Acacius of Caesarea orchestrated the deposition and banishment of the leading Homoiousians, who included Macedonius of Constantinople and Eleusius of Cyzicus (there is no other evidence for Hypatius of Heraclea's

---

[53] Martin raises the possibility that Eugenius of Nicaea was deposed at the Council of Constantinople in 360 and replaced by Patricius, but admits that there is no evidence for this.

[54] *Historia acephala* 4.5 (SChr 317: 154 Martin).

[55] See Martin, *Histoire «acéphale»*, 49–55, for a disentanglement.

deposition). Eudoxius himself was installed as bishop of Constantinople and Eunomius as bishop of Cyzicus. Aetius was also deposed and banished at this council; the previous month (December 359) at his trial before Constantius, the emperor had thrown him out of the palace (see Texts 15 and 20). Heliodorus of Sozusa and Stephen of Ptolemais in Libya were two of the several bishops who refused to subscribe to the condemnation of Aetius.[56] Heliodorus was also one of the consecrators of Aetius a bishop in 362. Some time after the council, probably in 361, Euzoius was made bishop of Antioch after the initial replacement, Meletius, was found unsuitable. The heresy of Macedonius was purportedly the denial that the Holy Spirit was divine, but there is no evidence that he held such a view.

The jumbled history that precedes the Exposition hints at its connection with Eudoxius, but its dating is otherwise difficult to determine. Martin dates it to the reign of Julian (361-363), that being the most favorable time for an attempt at diffusing Heteroousian teaching in Constantinople (in that period Eudoxius's see), but admits that it might belong to the years 358-359 when Aetius was promoting his teaching from his base in Antioch (then the see of Eudoxius).[57] At any rate, she demonstrates the document's consistency with the Heteroousian doctrine of Aetius and Eunomius.[58]

Thomas Kopecek identified the Exposition as a series of citations from the Heteroousian document circulated by Aetius and Eunomius at the Council of Seleucia in

---

[56] See Theodoret, *h.e.* 2.27.

[57] Martin, *Histoire «acéphale»*, 55–6.

[58] Martin, *Histoire «acéphale»*, 56–62.

September 359 (see Text 14 for a fragment).[59] He sees the Exposition as an anti-Homoiousian restatement of the theology of the Second Dedication Creed, particularly in its affirmation of the Son's undistinguishable likeness to the Father—a characterization that would well fit into a timeframe of late 359. But Kopecek also noted that the Exposition contains two theological inconsistencies with Heteroousian theology: (1) an unclear distinction between the referents of the names 'God' and 'Father', and (2) the incomprehensibility of the nature of higher beings to lower beings in the hierarchy of being. I think the first does not seriously injure his case, as the Heteroousians were capable of using traditional nomenclature when necessary or desirable. But the second inconsistency is more problematic, and Kopecek was correct to note that it appears to be an instance of Aetius attempting to mollify Eudoxius.

R. P. Vaggione placed the Exposition early in the reign of Jovian, around late 363 or early 364, when Eudoxius was trying to reconcile with Aetius for political purposes.[60] He describes it as an *eirenikon* in which Aetius tried to accommodate his views to Eudoxius's ideas without sacrificing his theological principles. Vaggione noted that Aetius, when pressed, was willing to affirm the Son's undistinguishable likeness to the Father (see Text 15). In Aetius's affirmation of the Son's immutable goodness, Vaggione detects a swipe at his fellow Heteroousian, Theodosius of Philadelphia, who apparently had retrieved the old Arian notion that the Word was capable of moral advancement and achieved immutability through perfection in virtue.[61] Vaggione called Aetius's

---

[59] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 204–5. He bases himself on the position adopted by Vaggione in his 1976 dissertation, a position which he later repudiated.

[60] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 283–4.

[61] Philostorgius, *h.e.* 8.3. See Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 282–3.

discussion of how God is known "perhaps the most delicately balanced section" and saw it as compatible with Heteroousian theology.[62] Incidentally, his careful analysis how the Exposition's treatment of knowledge of God is compatible with Heteroousian theology removes the second objection to Kopecek's thesis.

Yet I argue that Kopecek's dating is correct. Philostorgius recorded that Constantius threw Aetius out of the palace because he claimed that Son was indistinguishably like the Father (see Text 15). In his testimonium I suggest that we may have an echo of an event recorded more fully in Theodoret (see Text 14 and its introduction for more details). For both the testimonium and the Exposition affirm the same about the Son. Philostorgius merely has a snippet of the story; Aetius's denial of "unlike" may reflect his agreement with the Acacian compromise. For as Kopecek noted, Text 14 and the Exposition employ the term "unlike"—a term prohibited by the Acacian compromise at Seleucia, subscribed to by Heteroousian-leaning bishops without difficulty, and not used by either Aetius or Eunomius in subsequent writings (given the ascendancy of Homoianism at the time).[63] Accordingly, the Exposition's use of "unlike" appears to place it before the event of late 359. Finally, Theodosius of Philadelphia attended the Council of Seleucia and signed the Acacian compromise,[64] a context that makes Aetius's swipe at his ideas understandable.

Text 16

Source: *Historia acephala* 4.6

---

[62] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 284.

[63] Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 207–10; Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 220–4.

[64] Amidon, *Philostorgius*, 112 n. 8.

Edition: SChr 317: 154–58 Martin

Introductory formula: “Here is their exposition.”

The Exposition of Patricius and Aetius, who were in communion with Eunomius, Heliodorus, and Stephen.

Whatever traits are found in God—unbegotten, beginningless, everlasting, not subordinated to another, immutable, all-seeing, infinite, incomparable, all-powerful, knowing the future immediately, without a master—they are not the traits of the Son. For he is subordinated to another. He is under authority. He is from nothing. He has an end. He cannot be compared [to the Father]. As the principle of Christ,[65] the Father surpasses him. He is originated[66] insofar as he is dependent upon the Father. He does not know the future. He was not God but Son of God, the God of those who come after him. Finally, he possesses an indistinguishable likeness to the Father[67] in the following respects: he sees all that the Father sees and his goodness does not change. But he possesses neither a divinity nor a nature that is like the Father’s.

Now if we were to say that he is begotten of the divinity, we would be speaking as though he is a viper’s brood.[68] Saying such a thing is impious. Just as a statute produces a

---

[65] There is a textual problem here. I read *initio Christi.* The ms. reads *igo xpi*. Following others such Maffei and Fromen, Martin is surely correct to read *Christi* for *xpi.* Owing to a suggestion of Verheijen, she reads *origo* for *igo.* This is certainly better than Turner’s *imago* which required him to read *Christus* for *Christi* as well in order to make sense of it. But Battifol read *ico* for *igo,* which was a common abbreviation for *inicio,* that is, *initio*. And so, rather than viewing *igo* as defective it may simply be an abbreviation.

[66] Lat. *repperitur*. The usage here is unclear; Martin translates “il existe.”

[67] Lat. *invariabilem aput Patrem similitudinem,* which must translate something like ἀπαραλλάκτως πατρί ὅμοιον.

[68] See Matt 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Luke 3:7. Cf. Basil, *Eun*. 2.8.

patina from itself and is destroyed by the patina, so too, if the Son is produced from the nature of the Father, he will destroy the Father. But it is because of the activity and first instance of the Father's activity[69] that the Son is naturally God. He is not from the Father's nature but from another nature. He is like the Father, but not from him. For the image of God is not made from God but by God. If all things are made by God,[70] the Son is also made by God though from another operation.[71] As iron that has rusted breaks, as a body that produces worms is consumed, as the one who has self-inflicted wounds is destroyed by them, so too should he be cast out of the church and anathematized who says the Son is from the nature of the Father but does not say that Son is like the Father.

If we were to say the Son of God is God, we would be introducing two beings without a beginning. We say the image of God. He who says that the Son is from God is a Sabellian, and he who says that he does not know the begetting of God is a Manichaean. And if anyone were to say that the substance of the Son was like the substance of the unbegotten Father, he would be uttering blasphemy. For as snow and ceruse[72] are alike insofar as they are white but unlike in form, so too the substance of the Son is other than the substance of the Father, just as snow has another kind of whiteness. But separating yourself from external things by shutting your eye, you want to hear that the Son is like the Father in his activities. As angels are not able to comprehend or understand the nature of the archangels, nor the archangels the nature of the cherubim,

---

[69] Lat. *novitate operis*. This is an odd expression. The idea seems to be that the Father's production of the Son is not merely due to the divine activity, but to the very first activity of God.

[70] Cf. 1 Cor 8:6.

[71] Aetius carefully distinguishes between the divine activity that produced the Son and the divine activity that created all else.

[72] Lat. *simithium*, also known as *cerussa*, a white lead-based pigment.

nor the cherubim the nature of the Holy Spirit, nor the Holy Spirit the nature of the Only-Begotten, so too the Only-Begotten is not able to comprehend or understand the nature of the unbegotten God.

Texts 17-28: From Epiphanius, *Panarion*

Eleven testimonia can be gleaned from Epiphanius's chapter on Aetius in *Panarion* 76. In six cases, the testimonium contains what are purported to be a verbatim report of an oral statement by Aetius (Texts 20, 21, 23, 24, 27 and 28). Holl printed Text 24 as if it were a fragment of Aetius, but this is incorrect. The verbatim report of his words is preceded by the statement: "Aetius claimed right at the beginning [of his treatise] that..."[73] Epiphanius clearly thought that the statement of Aetius that he has quoted is derived from the beginning of his *Syntagmation*. But as this statement does not correspond to anything in the *Syntagmation*, it appears that Epiphanius was summarizing the main thesis of the treatise. Accordingly, it is a testimonium, not a fragment.

Five of the testimonia merely report Aetius's well-known teaching that the Son is unlike the Father in substance, sometimes not accurately (Texts 17, 18, 19, 24 and 26). There is no need to doubt the authenticity of the Aetian teaching in these testimonia. Text 25 reports that Aetius really thought that the Son was a creature who was only called "Son" by grace. This report appears to be Epiphanius's interpretation of *Syntagmation* 8. Two testimonia report Aetius's claim that he knew God perfectly (Texts 21 and 27). Since this is a teaching not found in the *Syntagmation*, Epiphanius's report is significant. R. P. Vaggione suspected that Epiphanius was reporting what he understood Aetius to be

[73] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.6.1 (GCS 37: 346, 7 Holl).

saying rather than his own words.[74] In addition, there are two testimonia in which Epiphanius reports scandalous words of Aetius: Text 23 reveals Aetius's relaxed moral standards and Text 28 recounts his crude depiction of his opponents' faith.

The final two testimonia report teachings, or at least Epiphanius's understanding of teachings, not found in the *Syntagmation*. In Text 20, Epiphanius preserves a statement Aetius made before Constantius in late 359. Epiphanius actually viewed Aetius's honesty about his belief in the Son's status as a creature in a positive light because it exposed the duplicity of the "Arians." See Text 15 for Philostorgius's report on the same. Note that Aetius never used the term "creature" of the Son. Aetius's belief in the Son's status as a creature has been deduced by Epiphanius; see Text 25 as well. Text 22 is significant because Epiphanius purports to record Aetius's appeal to John 17:2-3 to support his claim that God requires only knowledge of himself. While one suspects that Epiphanius has parodied the Christian lifestyle of Aetius and his followers, in this testimonia we gain a hint of Aetian soteriology.

Text 17

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.2.5

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 342, 13-14

For he dared to say that the Son is unlike the Father and is not identical with the Father in divinity.

---

[74] R. P. Vaggione, *The Extant Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 168.

Text 18

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.2.9

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 342, 27-28

Our noble Aetius did not even think that the Son was worthy of likeness to the Father.

Text 19

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.3.4

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 343, 20-21

Wishing to offer further opposition to the confession of truth, Aetius does not even try to confess the Son's likeness to the Father.

Text 20

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.3.7-10

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 343, 28 – 344, 15

But our man unmasked the whole of their[75] dissimulation as well as his own impiety, pointing out in clear terms the harshness and shamelessness of their doctrine of the Lord. Furthermore, it is really true that the precise language of the statement of Aetius, who is also called Anomoius, presents a challenge of the most just sort to those

[75] Here Epiphanius refers to the Arians who claimed the Son was a creature.

who surreptitiously introduce the term "creature." For all that is created is unlike its creator, even if it can be made like him by grace, and the creator is unlike that which has been created, even if someone tries to decorate it with various colors, unless the representation is some sort of copy and replica that merely imitates his appearance. Our man's statement would have prevailed against Arians who think that the Son of God and the Holy Spirit are created. Later, when he was excommunicated by the Arians themselves—I mean the adherents of Eudoxius, Menophilus, and others—he rebuked them in the presence of the emperor: "Whatever they believe, I believe, just as they all believe! But as for what is true in my case, this they conceal; what I utter in the clear light of day and openly confess, all these men say the same but conceal what they really think."[76] At that time the emperor was not opposed to the Arian machinations; on the contrary, for some reason he thought that they were pious. But since he refused to confess that the Son of God was a creature, he became vexed [at Aetius's statement] and, as I indicated earlier, banished him.

Text 21

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.4.2

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 344, 18-21

For our Aetius is so self-deluded – he as well as his disciples – that he later said: "Thus I know God in the clearest possible way, and know and understand him so well that I do not know myself any better than I understand God."

[76] See also Epiphanius, *Pan*. 73.23.6.

Text 22

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan.* 76.4.4 and 76.4.6-7

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 344, 23-27 and 345, 4-12

Indeed, they have no concern for holiness of life, the practice of fasting, the commandments of God, or any other thing that God has enjoined upon humanity so that they may live. They flippantly say only this: a single saying is all that matters. … Thus both Aetius and the Anomoians that derive from him adduce the saying spoken by the Lord in the gospel and interpret the text, but he and they are mistaken because they lack a correct understanding of its meaning. For whenever someone falls in with them and reminds them of the commandments, they claim that, according to the words of the saying, God seeks nothing else from us but that we know him alone, as Christ said, they claim, when he said: *Grant them, Father, to have life in themselves. And this is life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent* [John 17:2-3].

Text 23

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan.* 76.4.8-9

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 345, 12-21

Indeed, certain people told us what they clearly heard him saying when they accused some men of committing a crime with a woman and condemned them. He had no

difficulty at all with the act. He even made a frivolous joke, claiming that such a thing amounts to nothing. After all, it is a bodily need and its fulfillment. “For when our ear itches,” he said – I am really ashamed to report what that dirty man said – “we take a feather or a piece of straw,” he said, “and scratch our ear and thus get rid of the ear’s itching. This act is similarly natural,” he said, “and if anyone does it, he does not sin.”

Text 24

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.6.1

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 346, 7-9

The unbegotten cannot be like the begotten. For they differ in name: the one is unbegotten and the other begotten.

Text 25

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.8.2

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 348, 20-22

It is clear that in his account Aetius calls him “something begotten,” but clearly considers and believes him to be a creature who is called “Son” by grace.

Text 26

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan*. 76.10.2

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 348, 10-12

Taking the Son of God in relation to his Father as your pretext and saying that he is unlike the Father, you yourself have become unlike and inherited this name, seeing that you are no longer like those being saved by God.

Text 27

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan.* 76.54.17

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 411, 22-28

For Aetius and those derived from him are the most self-deluded of all people for thinking that they know God not by faith but by natural knowledge. Somewhere above I mentioned[77] that they claim that they do not simply know God with the knowledge of faith, but as someone knows everything that is visible and touched by his hands, as if someone were to use his hands to pick up a rock or piece of wood or tool made of some other material. Our noble Aetius spoke thus: "I know God as well as myself, and I do not know myself to the extent that I know God."

Text 28

Source: Epiphanius, *Pan.* 76.54.24

Edition: GCS 37 (Epiphanius III): 411, 27-31

[77] Cf. Text 19.

What are you and your faith like? You and your faith are like a blind, deaf and mute virgin who has been violated. It is clear to all who know her that she has been violated. But when she is asked who violated her, she does not hear the question, nor did she see who violated her because of her blindness, nor can she reveal who he is because of her muteness.

Texts 29-30: From Didymus, *On the Trinity*

The next two texts are preserved in Didymus's *On the Trinity.* In chapter 10 of the first book, Didymus provided two unattributed citations in order to refute them. These two citations must be distinguished from the abbreviated form of the citations given in the chapter heading.[78] As Wickham noted, these two citations constitute a partial quotation of *Syntagmation* 8,[79] which is cited here for purposes of comparison:

> (a) If the unbegotten God is as a whole given to begetting, that which has been begotten has not been begotten with respect to substance, since his substance can beget but not be begotten. (b) If the substance of God, once refashioned, is called "something begotten," his substance is not unchangeable, since the change has effected the formation of the Son. (c) If the substance of God were both unchangeable and superior to generation, that which is according to the Son is confessed to be a mere designation.[80]

---

[78] PG 39: 292a10-13.

[79] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 533.

[80] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 541.

Text 29 corresponds to *Syntagmation* 8a and Text 30 to *Syntagmation* 8b. The only difference is found between *Syntagmation* 8a and Text 29. The former reads the neuter τὸ γεννηθέν, whereas the latter has the masculine ὁ γεννηθείς. The text of the *Syntagmation* 8 in the pseudo-Athanasian *Dialogus* agrees with Wickham's edition. Hence, the Didymus citation does not seem to preserve an earlier or alternate reading. Therefore, this variant is probably due to Didymus himself, whether deliberate or not.

Text 29

Source: Didymus, *De trinitate* 1.10

Edition: PG 39: 292b2-5

Introductory formula: "Here is their pointless and outrageous [sophism], which they expressed in such words as follow."

If the unbegotten God is as a whole given to begetting, he who has been begotten has not been begotten with respect to substance, since his substance as a whole can beget but not be begotten.

Text 30

Source: Didymus, *De trinitate* 1.10

Edition: PG 39: 292c1-4

Introductory formula: "Once again they make a proposition, pursuing a line of argument that is in every way contrary to scripture."

If the substance of God, once refashioned, is called "something begotten," his substance is not unchangeable, since the change has effected the formation of the Son.

Texts 31-32: From Cyril of Alexandria, *Treasury on the Trinity*

Cyril of Alexandria preserved two citations in Assertio X of his *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate*. He explicitly attributed them to Aetius. Lionel Wickham noted that Text 32 bore "a close" resemblance to *Syntagmation* 5, while Text 31 bore "a very loose" resemblance to *Syntagmation* 34f.[81] Yet he never conclusively stated that they are citations, presumably given their patent differences from the *Syntagmation* text. But regarding Text 31, Wickham opined: "I doubt that there is anything more here than a general reminiscence of the kind of argument used by Aetius throughout the *Syntagmation* (and elsewhere, no doubt)."[82] He believed that the Father-Son language of Text 31 was unoriginal to Aetius's argument, which "has been altered to suit the terms of the opponents."[83] But other genuine Aetian fragments show that Aetius was not opposed to using Father-Son language (see Texts 1-3, 5, and 8-16). Nonetheless, Text 31-32 are not simple citations as was the case with the texts preserved in Didymus. Furthermore, R. P. Vaggione said the following about the citations of Eunomius and Aetius in the *Thesaurus*: "What is certain is that they have been reworked by Cyril prior to their insertion in his own treatise."[84] Therefore, Cyril's citations are testimonia.

---

[81] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 533.

[82] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 568.

[83] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 568.

[84] Vaggione, *The Extant Writings*, 180.

Texts 31-32 have much in common with Text 12-13, which are fragments. Text 31 takes up the ideas found in *Syntagmation* 34f. But Text 32 differs only slightly from *Syntagmation* 5, which I cite *Syntagmation* 5 for purposes of comparison:

> (a) If God is unbegotten in substance, that which has been begotten has not been begotten by a division of substance, but he has brought it into subsistence by power. (b) For there is no pious account that would permit the same substance to be both begotten and unbegotten.[85]

Syntagmation 5a corresponds almost exactly with Text 32a, with one significant exception. The latter reads "partless" where the former reads "unbegotten." Logically, the form of the argument in the fragment is simpler than *Syntagmation* 5a. In both cases, though, the syllogism only proves that God does not beget by dividing his substance. The conclusion that God must beget by power does not follow from the premises laid out in either case. In addition, *Syntagmation* 5b and Text 32b make the same point, namely, the essential incompatibility of the begotten and unbegotten, yet the point is expressed quite differently in each case. Hence, Cyril's version represents a faithful expression of the teaching (and logical flaws) of the argument enunciated in *Syntagmation* 5.

Text 31

Source: Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus,* Assertio x

Edition: PG 75: 132b7-c1

Introductory formula: "That the Son is same in substance with the Father. The objection of Aetius. He says."

---

[85] Wickham, "The *Syntagmation*," 541.

Now how could an identity of substance be preserved in the case of the Father and the Son if the Father is unbegotten and the Son is begotten? For one would be compelled in every way to say that the unbegotten varies from the Son in nothing. If this is the case, nothing would prevent someone from saying that the Father is begotten and the Son unbegotten, thereby confusing everything.

Text 32

Source: Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus*, Assertio x

Edition: PG 75: 133b5-9

Introductory formula: “From an objection of Aetius. He says.”

(a) If God is partless in substance, that which has been begotten has not been begotten by a division of substance, but he has brought it into subsistence by power. (b) Now how could the nature brought into subsistence be of the same substance as the one which brought it into subsistence?

Conclusion

Besides the *Syntagmation*, then, we possess thirteen verbatim fragments of Aetius (Texts 1-5, 8-13, 14 and 16). There are also fourteen testimonia of varying value (Texts 15, 17-28, and 31-32). Two of the fragments are actually citations from the *Syntagmation* (Texts 29-30). These fragments and testimonia allow the researcher to gain a more accurate understanding of Aetius’s theology. Of their many virtues, they demonstrate that

Aetius could use the traditional language of ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ without compromising his Heteroousian theology.

Bibliography

I. Primary Sources

For each text I have provided reference to the edition and translation used, if any. Translations which provide substantial commentary are also listed among the secondary sources.

COLLECTIONS OF MULTIPLE AUTHORS

SVF — Arnim, Hans Friedrich August von. *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*. 4 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1905.

Dok. — Brennecke, Hanns Christof, Uta Heil, Annette von Stockhausen, and Angelika Wintjes. *Athanasius Werke III/1. Dokumente zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites. 3. Lieferung*. Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.

LS — Long, A. A., and D. N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Urk. — Opitz, Hans-Georg. *Athanasius Werke III/1. Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites 318 – 328. 1-2. Lieferung.* Berlin / Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1934-1935.

PC — Sorabji, Richard. *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD: A Sourcebook*. 3 vols. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

AETIUS

Synt. — *Syntagmation.*

Wickham, Lionel R. "The *Syntagmation* of Aetius the Anomean," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 19 (1968): 532–69.

ALCINOUS

Did. — *Didaskalikos* (*The Handbook of Platonism*).

Dillon, John. *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Whittaker, J. *Alcinoos: Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990.

AMMONIUS

in Cat. *In Aristotelis categorias* (*On Aristotle's Categories*).

Busse, Adolf. *Ammonius in Aristotelis categorias commentarius*. CAG 4.4. Berlin: Reimer, 1895.

Cohen, S. Marc, and Gareth B. Matthews. *Ammonius: On Aristotle Categories*. ACA. London: Duckworth, 1991.

in Intr. *In Aristotelis de interpretatione* (*On Aristotle's On Interpretation*).

Blank, David. *Ammonius: On Aristotle On Intepretation 1-8.* ACA. London: Duckworth, 1996.

Busse, Adolf. *Ammonius in Aristotelis de interpretatione commentarius*. CAG 4.5. Berlin: Reimer, 1897.

APOLLONIS DYSCOLUS

Constr. *De constructione* (*On Syntax*).

Householder, Fred W. *The Syntax of Apollonius Dyscolus.* Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Series III, Studies in the History of the Language Series 23. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1981.

Lallot, Jean. *Apollonius Dyscole: De la construction (Περὶ συντάξεως). Volume I: Introduction, texte et traduction.* Histoire des doctrines de l'antiquité classique 19. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1997.

Uhlig, Gustav. *Apollonii Dyscoli quae supersunt: Apolloni Dyscoli De constructione libri quattor.* GG 2.2. Leipzig: Teubner, 1910.

Pron. *De pronominibus* (*On Pronouns*).

Schneider, R. *Apollonii Dyscoli quae supersunt: Apollonii scripta minora*. GG 2.1. Leipzig: Teubner, 1878.

ARISTIDES OF ATHENS

Apol. *Apologia* (*Apology*).

Pouderon, Bernard, and Marie-Joseph Pierre. *Aristides: Apologie*. SChr 470. Paris: Cerf, 2003.

ARISTOTLE

Barnes, Jonathan, ed. *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*. 2 vols. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

ASTERIUS THE SOPHIST

Fr. *Fragments.*

Vinzent, Markus. *Asterius von Kappadokien: Die theologischen Fragmente.* Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 20. Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1993.

Bardy, Gustave. *Recherches sur Saint Lucien d'Antioche et son École* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1936), 341–53.

ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

Decr. *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* (*On the Decrees of Nicaea*).

Opitz, Hans-Georg. *Athanasius Werke II/1. Die Apologien* (Berlin / Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1940), 1–45.

Or. *Orationes contra Arianos* (*Orations against the Arians*).

Metzler, Karin, and Kyriakos Savvidis. *Athanasius Werke I/1. Die dogmatischen Schriften. 1-2. Lieferung* (Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998-2000), 109–381.

Sent. *De sententia Dionysii* (*On the Opinion of Dionysius*).

Heil, Uta. *Athanasius von Alexandrien: De sententia Dionysii*. Patristische Texte und Studien 52. Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.

Opitz, Hans-Georg. *Athanasius Werke II/1. Die Apologien* (Berlin / Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1940), 46–67.

Syn. *De synodis* (*On the Councils of Ariminium and Seleucia*)

Opitz, Hans-Georg. *Athanasius Werke II/1. Die Apologien* (Berlin / Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1940), 231–78.

ATHENAGORAS

Leg. *Legatio* (*Plea*).

Schoedel, William R. *Athenagoras: Legatio and De Resurrectione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 2–87.

BASIL OF CAESAREA

Ep. *Epistulae* (*Letters*).

Courtonne, Yves. *Saint Basile: Lettres*. 3 vols. Paris: Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', 1957-1966.

Deferrari, Roy Joseph, and Martin R. P. McGuire. *Basil: Letters.* LCL 190, 215, 243, and 270. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926-1934.

Eun. *Contra Eunomium* (*Against Eunomius*)

DelCogliano, Mark, and Andrew Radde-Gallwitz. *Basil of Caesarea: Against Eunomius*. FoC. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, forthcoming.

Sesboüé, Bernard, Georges-Matthieu de Durand, and Louis Doutreleau. *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome suivi de Eunome Apologie*. SChr 299 and 305. Paris: Cerf, 1982-1983.

Fid. *De fide* (*On Faith*).

Garnier, Julien. *S. P. N. Basili Caesareae Cappadociae archiepiscopi opera omnia: De fide*. PG 31: 464-472.

Hex. *Homiliae in hexaemeron* (*Homilies on the Six Days of Creation*)

Giet, Stanislas. *Basile de Césarée: Homélies sur l'hexaéméron*. 2nd ed. SChr 26. Paris: Cerf, 1968.

Mendieta, Emmanuel Amand de, and Stig Y. Rudberg. *Basilius von Caesarea: Homilien zum Hexaemeron*. GCS n.f. 2. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1997.

Hom. *Homiliae et Sermones* (*Homilies and Sermons*).

Garnier, Julien. *S. P. N. Basili Caesareae Cappadociae archiepiscopi opera omnia: Homiliae et Sermones*. PG 31: 163-483, 490-563, 590-617, 1438-1475, 1487-1498.

Ps. *Homiliae in Psalmos* (*Homilies on the Psalms*).

Garnier, Julien. *S. P. N. Basili Caesareae Cappadociae archiepiscopi opera omnia: Homiliae in Psalmos.* PG 29: 209-494; 31: 103-115.

Spir. *Liber de Spiritu sancto* (*On the Holy Spirit*)

Pruche, Benoît. *Basile de Césarée: Sur le Saint-Esprit*. Reímp. de la deuxiéme éd. rev. et aug. SChr 17 bis. Paris: Cerf, 2002.

CHALDAEAN ORACLES

Des Places, Édouard. *Oracles chaldaïques*. Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles lettres," 1971.

CICERO

Acad. post. *Academica posteriora* (*On Academic Scepticism*).

H. Rackham. *Cicero XIX: De natura deorum. Academica.* LCL 268. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Str. *Stromata* (*Miscellanies*)

Stählin, Otto, and Ludwig Früchtel. *Clemens Alexandrinus III: Stromata Buch VII und VIII. Excerpta ex Theodoto – Eclogae Propheticae – Quis dives salvetur – Fragmente*. 2 Aufl. GCS 17. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

Thes. *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* (*Treasury on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity*)

Aubertus, Joannes. *S. P. N. Cyrili Alexandriae Archepiscopi opera quae reperiri poterunt omnia: Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate*. PG 75: 9-656.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

Cat. *Catecheses ad illuminandos* (*Catechetical Lectures to the Baptismal Candidates*)

Reischl, W. C., and J. Rupp. *Cyrilli Hierosolymorum archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia*. 2 vols. Munich: Lentner, 1848-1860.

Touttée, A. A., and P. Maran. *S. P. N. Cyrili Hierosolymitani archiepiscopi Catechesis Prima*. PG 33: 367–1060.

DEXIPPUS

in Cat. *In Aristotelis categorias* (*On Aristotle's Categories*).

Busse, Adolf. *Dexippi in Aristotelis categorias commentarium*. CAG 4.2. Berlin: Reimer, 1888.

Dillon, John. *Dexippus: On Aristotle Categories.* ACA. London: Duckworth, 1990.

DIOGENES LAERTIUS

VP *De clarorum philosophorum vitis* (*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*).

Hicks, R. D. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. LCL 184-185. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925.

DIONYSIUS THRAX

Technê *Technê grammatikê* (*Handbook on Grammar*).

Uhlig, Gustave. *Dionysii Thracis Ars grammatica*. GG 1.1. Leipzig: Teubner, 1883.

Lallot, Jean. *La grammaire de Denys le Thrace*. 2^{e} édition revue et augmentée. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1998.

Schol. *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem grammaticam* (*Scholia on Dionysius Thrax's Technê grammatikê*)

Hilgard, Alfred. *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem grammaticam*. GG 1.3. Leipzig: Teubner, 1901.

EPIPHANIUS OF SALAMIS

Pan. *Panarion.*

Holl, Karl, and Jürgen Dummer. *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65-80. De fide.* 2. Aufl. GCS 37. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985.

Williams, Frank. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis.* 2 vols. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 36. Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1994.

EUNAPIUS OF SARDIS

VPS *Vitae philosophorum et sophistarum* (*Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*).

Wright, Wilmer Cave. *Philostratus and Eunapius: The Lives of the Sophists*, LCL 134 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), 317–565.

EUNOMIUS OF CYZICUS

AA. *Apologia apologiae* (*Apology for the Apology*).

Not extant, but fragments are preserved in Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun*.

Apol. *Apologia* (*Apology*).

Vaggione, Richard Paul. *The Extant Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 34–75.

Conf. *Expostio fidei* (*Confession of Faith*).

Vaggione, Richard Paul. *The Extant Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 150–59.

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

Dem. ev. *Demonstratio evangelica* (*Demonstration of the Gospel*).

Ferrar, W. J. *Eusebius: The Proof of the Gospel.* London: S. P. C. K., 1920. Repr. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001.

Heikel, Ivar A. *Eusebius Werke VI: Die Demonstratio evangelica*. GCS 23. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1913.

Eccl. theo. *De ecclesiastica theologia* (*Ecclesiastical Theology*).

Klostermann, Erich, and Günther Christian Hansen. *Eusebius Werke IV: Gegen Marcell. Über die kirchliche Theologie. Die Fragmente Marcells*. 3. Aufl. GCS 14 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1991), 59–182.

Ecl. proph. *Eclogae propheticae* (*Selections from the Prophets*)

Gaisford, Thomas. *Eusebii Pamphili episcopi Caesariensis eclogae propheticae*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1842. Repr. PG 22: 1018-1274.

h.e. *Historia ecclesiastica* (*Ecclesiastical History*)

Schwartz, Eduard. *Eusebius Werke II. Die Kirchengeschichte*. GCS 9/1-3. Berlin: J. C. Hinrichs, 1903-1909.

Is. *Commentarius in Isaiam* (*Commentary on Isaiah*).

Ziegler, Joseph. *Eusebius Werke IX: Der Jesajakommentar*. GCS o.Nr. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975.

Laud. *De laudibus Constantini* (*In Praise of Constantine*).

Heikel, Ivar A. *Eusebius Werke I: Über das Leben Constantins, Constantins Rede an die helige Versammlung, Tricennatsrede an Constantin.* GCS 7 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1902), 195–295.

Marc. *Contra Marcellum* (*Against Marcellus*).

Klostermann, Erich, and Günther Christian Hansen. *Eusebius Werke IV: Gegen Marcell. Über die kirchliche Theologie. Die Fragmente Marcells*. 3. Aufl. GCS 14 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1991), 1–58.

Praep. ev. *Praeparatio evangelica* (*Preparation for the Gospel*).

Gifford, Edwin Hamilton. *Eusebius: Preparation for the Gospel.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903. Repr. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002.

Mras, Karl, and Édouard des Places. *Eusebius Werk VIII/1-2: Die Praeparatio evangelica*. 2. Aufl. GCS 43/1 & 43/2. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982-1983.

Ps. *Commentaria in Psalmos* (*Commentary on the Psalms*).

Montfaucon, Bernard. *Eusebii Pamphili Caesareae Palestinae episcopi opera omnia quae exstant: Commentaria in Psalmos.* PG 23: 9-1396; 24: 9-76.

EUSEBIUS OF EMESA

Serm. *Sermones* (*Sermons*).

Buytaert, É. M. *Eusèbe d'Émèse. Discours conservés en latin. Tome premier: La collection de Troyes (Discours I à XVII)*. Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense études et documents, 26. Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Administration, 1953.

------. *Eusèbe d'Émèse. Discours conservés en latin. Tome second: La collection de Sirmond (Discours XVIII à XXIX)*. Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense études et documents, 27. Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Administration, 1957.

GREGORY OF NYSSA

Eun. *Contra Eunomium* (*Against Eunomius*)**.**

Jaeger, Wernerus. GNO I: 22–409; GNO II: 3–311.

Hall, Stuart George. "Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa. The Second Book Against Eunomius." Pages 59–201 in Lenka Karfíková, Scot Douglass, and Johannes Zachhuber. *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Olomouc, September 15-18, 2004)*. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 82. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2007.

HILARY OF POITIERS

Syn. *De synodis* (*On the Synods*).

PL 10: 479-546.

IAMBLICHUS OF CHALCIS

Myst. *De mysteriis* (*On the Mysteries*).

Clarke, Emma C., John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell. *Iamblicus: On the Mysteries.* Society of Biblical Literature, Writings from the

Greco-Roman World 4. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

Vit. Pyth. *De vita Pythagorica* (*On the Pythagorean Way of Life*).

Dillon, John, and Jackson Hershbell. *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life.* Society of Biblical, Literature Texts and Translations 29, Graeco-Roman Religion Series 11. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

Eph. *Epistula ad Ephesios* (*Letter to the Ephesians*).

Ehrman, Bart D. *The Apostolic Fathers I.* LCL 24 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 218–40.

JULIAN

Ep. *Epistulae* (*Letters*).

Bidez, Joseph. *L'empereur Julien: Oeuvres complètes,* t. 1.2, *Lettres et fragments*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1932. [=B.]

Wright, Wilmer Cave. *The Works of the Emperor Julian III*. LCL 157. London: Heinemann, 1923. [=W.]

JUSTIN MARTYR

Apol. *Apologia* (*Apology*).

Goodspeed, E. J. *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914), 24–89

Dial. *Dialogus cum Tryphone* (*Dialogue with Trypho*).

Goodspeed, E. J. *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914), 90–265.

MARCELLUS OF ANCYRA

Fr. *Fragments.*

Klostermann, Erich, and Günther Christian Hansen. *Eusebius Werke IV: Gegen Marcell. Über die kirchliche Theologie. Die Fragmente Marcells*. 3. Aufl. GCS 14 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1991), 183–215.

Vinzent, Markus. *Markell von Ankyra: Die Fragmente [und] Der Brief an Julius von Rom.* Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 39. Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1997.

MARINUS

Vit. Proc. *Vita Proculi sive de felicitate* (*The Life of Proclus, or On Happiness*).

Masullo, Rita. *Marino di Neapoli. Vita di Proclo*. Naples: D'Auria, 1985.

ORIGEN

Cels. *Contra Celsum* (*Against Celsus*).

Borret, Marcel. *Origène: Contre Celse*. SChr 132, 136, 147, and 150. Paris: Cerf, 1967-1969.

Comm. Jo. *Commentarii in evangelium Johannis* (*Commentary on the Gospel of John*).

Blanc, Cécile. *Origène: Commentaire sur saint Jean.* SChr 120, 157, 222, 290, and 385. Paris: Cerf, 1966-1992.

Heine, Ronald E. *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel according to John, Books 1-10*. FoC 80. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989.

------. *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel according to John, Books 13-32*. FoC 89. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993.

Comm. Matt. *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei* (*Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*).

Benz, Ernst, and Erich Klostermann. *Origenes Werke X: Origenes Matthäuserklärung I: Die griechisch erhaltenen Tomoi*. GCS 40. Leipzig: Teubner, 1935.

Hom. Jer. *Homiliae in Jeremiam* (*Homilies on Jeremiah*).

Nautin, Pierre. *Origène: Homélies sur Jérémie*. SChr 232 and 238. Paris: Cerf, 1976.

Or. *De oratione* (*On Prayer*).

Koetschau, Paul. *Origenes Werke II: Buch V-VIII gegen Celsus. Die Schrift vom Gebet*. GCS 3 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899), 297–403.

Princ. *De principiis* (*On First Principles*).

Butterworth, G. W. *Origen: On First Principles.* Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1973.

Görgemanns, Herwig, and Heinrich Karpp. *Origenes vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*. Texte zur Forschung 24. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976.

Koetschau, Paul. *Origenes Werk V: De principiis*. GCS 22. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1913.

PAMPHILUS OF CAESAREA (AND EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA)

Apol. *Apologia pro Origene* (*Apology for Origen*).

Amacker, René, and Éric Junod. *Pamphile et Eusèbe de Césarée: Apologie pour Origène suivi de Rufin d'Aquilée Sur la Falsification des livres d'Origène*. SChr 464-465. Paris: Cerf, 2002.

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Cohn, Leopold, and Paul Wendland. *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*. 6 vols. Berlin: Georgii Reimeri, 1896-1915.

PHILOSTORGIUS

h.e. *Historia ecclesiastica* (*Ecclesiastical History*).

Amidon, Philip R. *Philostorgius: Church History*. Writings from the Greco-Roman World 23. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

Bidez, Joseph, and Friedhelm Winkelmann. *Philostorgius: Kirchengeschichte*. 3. Aufl. GCS 21. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981.

PORPHYRY

in Cat. *Aristotelis categorias commentarium* (*On Aristotle's Categories*).

Busse, Adolf. *Porphyrii isagoge et in Aristotelis categorias commentarium*. CAG 4.1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1887), 55–142.

Strange, Steven K. *Porphyry: On Aristotle Categories*. ACA. London: Duckworth, 1992.

Isa. *Isagoge* (*Introduction*).

Barnes, Jonathan. *Porphyry: Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 3–19.

Busse, Adolf. *Porphyrii isagoge et in Aristotelis categorias commentarium*, CAG 4.1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1887), 1–22.

PROCLUS

in Crat. *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria* (*On Plato's Cratylus*).

Duvick, Brian. *Proclus. On Plato's "Cratylus."* ACA. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Pasquali, Giorgio. *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Cratylum commentaria.* Leipzig: Teubner, 1908.

TP *Theologia platonica* (*Platonic Theology*).

Saffrey, H. D., and L. G. Westerink. *Proclus. Théologie platonicienne*. 6 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968-1997.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS

M. *Adversus Mathematicos* (*Against the Mathematicians*).

Bury, R. G. *Sextus Empiricus II-IV.* LCL 291, 311, and 382. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934-1949.

PH *Pyrrhōneioi hypotypōseis* (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*).

Annas, Julia, and Jonathan Barnes. *Sextus Empiricus: Outlines of Scepticism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Mutschmann, Hermannus. *Sexti Empirici Opera I.* Rev. ed. Leipzig: Teubner, 1958.

SIMPLICIUS (OF CILICIA)

in Cat. *In Aristotelis categorias commentarium* (*On Aristotle's Categories*).

Fleet, Barrie. *Simplicius: On Aristotle's Categories 7-8*. ACA. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Kalbfleisch, K. *Simplicii in Aristotelis categorias commentarium*. CAG 8 (Berlin: Reimer, 1907), 1–438.

SOCRATES "SCHOLASTICUS"

h.e *Historia ecclesiastica* (*Ecclesiastical History*).

Günther Christian Hansen. With contributions by Manja Širinjan. *Sokrates: Kirchengeschichte*. GCS n.f. 1. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995.

SOZOMEN (SALAMINIUS HERMIAS SOZOMENUS)

h.e *Historia ecclesiastica* (*Ecclesiastical History*).

Günther Christian Hansen. *Sozomenus: Kirchengeschichte*. GCS n.f. 4. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995.

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH

Auto. *Ad Autolycum* (*To Autolycus*).

Grant, Robert M. *Theophilus of Antioch: Ad Autolycum*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

II. Secondary Sources

Algra, Keimpe, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Manseld, and Malcolm Schofield, eds. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Anastos, Milton V. "Basil's *Κατὰ Εὐνομίου,* A Critical Analysis." Pages 67–136 in Paul Jonathan Fedwick, ed. *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteenth-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium.* 2 vols. Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981.

Arnou, P. "Arius et la doctrine des relations trinitaires." *Gregorianum* 14 (1933): 269–72.

Athanassiadi, Polymnia. *Damascius: The Philosophical History*. Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999.

Athanassiadi-Fowden, Polymnia. *Julian and Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

Auroux, Sylvain, E. F. K. Koerner, Hans-Josef Niederehe, and Kees Versteegh, eds., *History of the Language Sciences: An International Handbook on the Evolution of the Study of Language from the Beginnings to the Present, Volume 1.* Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikations-wissenschaft 18.1 Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000.

Ayres, Lewis. "Athanasius' Initial Defense of the Term ὁμοούσιος: Rereading the *De Decretis*." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12.3 (2004): 337–359.

------. *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Bardy, Gustave. "L'héritage littéraire d'Aetius." *Revue histoire d'ecclésiastique* 24 (1928): 809–27.

Barmann, Bernard Charles. "The Cappadocian Triumph over Arianism." Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1966.

Barnard, L. W. "What was Arius' Philosophy?" *Theologische Zeitschrift* 28 (1972): 110–17.

Barnes, Jonathan. *Porphyry: Introduction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.

Barnes, Michel R. *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001.

Barnes, Timothy D. *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Behr, John. *The Nicene Faith.* Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004.

Benedetto, Vincenzo di. "Dionysius Thrax and the *Tekhnē Grammatikē*." Pages 394–400 in Sylvain Auroux, E. F. K. Koerner, Hans-Josef Niederehe, and Kees Versteegh, eds. *History of the Language Sciences: An International Handbook on the Evolution of the Study of Language from the Beginnings to the Present, Volume 1.* Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikations-wissenschaft 18.1 Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000.

Bidez, Joseph. *Le vie de l'empereur Julien*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930.

Bowerstock, G. W. *Julian the Apostate*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Boys-Stones, G. R.. *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy. A Study of its Development from the Stoics to Origen*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Broek, Roelof van den. "Eugnostus and Aristides on the Ineffable God." Pages 202–18 in idem, T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld, eds. *Knowledge of God in the Greco-Roman World*. Leiden: Brill, 1988.

Browning, Robert. *The Emperor Julian*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975.

Brunschwig, Jacques. "Remarks on the Stoic theory of the proper noun." Pages 39–56 in idem. *Papers in Hellenistic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Burnyeat, Miles. *The Theaetetus of Plato*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1990.

Cavalcanti, Elena. *Studi Eunomiani*. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 202. Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1976.

Crouzel, Henri. "Le contenu spirituel des dénominations du Christ selon le Livre I du *Commentaire sur Jean* d'Origène." Pages 131–150 in idem and Antonio Quacquarelli, eds. *Origeniana Secunda: Second colloque international des études origéniennes*. Quaderni di «Vetera Christianorum» 15. Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1980.

------. "Le Christ Sauveur selon Origène." *Studia Missionalia* 30 (1981): 63–87.

Cumming, Sam. "Names." In Edward N. Zalta, ed. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2009 Edition)*. URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/names/>.

Dams, Th. "La Controverse Eunonéenne." Ph.D. diss., Institut Catholique de Paris, 1951.

Daniélou, Jean. "Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle." *Revue des Études grecques* 69 (1959): 412–32.

DelCogliano, Mark. "Eusebian Theologies of the Son as Image of God before 341." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14.4 (2006): 459–484.

------. Review of *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth* by Stephen M. Hildebrand (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007) in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16.1 (2008): 108–9.

------. “The Eusebian Alliance: the Case of Theodotus of Laodicea.” *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 12 (2008): 250–66.

Dickey, Eleanor. *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises, from Their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Diekamp, Franz, Basileios Phanougakis, and Evangelos Chrysos. *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione verbi*. 2nd ed. Münster, Aschendorff, 1981.

Diels, Hermann. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. 6th ed. by Walther Kranz. 3 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1951-1954.

Dillon, John. “Philo Judaeus and the *Cratylus*.” *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 3 (1978): 37–42.

------. “The Magical Power of Names in Origen and later Platonism.” Pages 203–16 in Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel, eds. *Origiana Tertia*. Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1985.

------. “Iamblichus of Chalcis.” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 36.2 (Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), 862–909.

------. *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

------. *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*. Rev. ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.

------. *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347-274 BC).* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.

------ and Lloyd P. Gerson. *Neoplatonic Philosophy*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004.

Drecoll, Volker Henning. *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea: Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner.* Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 66. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.

Fedwick, Paul Jonathan, ed. *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*. *A Sixteenth-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium.* 2 vols. Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981.

------. “A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea.” Pages 3–19 in idem, ed. *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*. *A Sixteenth-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium.* 2 vols. Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981.

Frede, Michael. “Principles of Stoic Grammar.” Pages 301–37 in idem. *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987.

------. “The Origins of Traditional Grammar.” Pages 338–59 in idem. *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987.

------. “Stoic epistemology.” Pages 295–322 in Keimpe Algra, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Manseld, and Malcolm Schofield, eds. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Frege, Gottlob. “On Sense and Reference.” Pages 23–442 in A. W. Moore, ed. *Meaning and Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Ghattas, Michael. “Die ἐπίνοια-Lehre bei Origenes und Didymos dem Blinden von Alexandria.” Pages 525–530 in W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg, eds. *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 137. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

Ghellink, Joseph de. “Qui sont les ΩΣ ΤΙΝΕΣ ΛΕΓΟΥΣΙ de la lettre d’Arius?” Pages 127–44 in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati: Volume 1*. *Bibbia – Letteratura chrisiana antica*, Studi e Testi 121 (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946).

Grabbe, Lester L. *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation: The Hebrew Names in Philo.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.

Graeser, A. “The Stoic Categories.” Pages 199–221 in Jacques Brunschwig, ed. *Les Stoïcens et leur logique*. Paris: Vrin, 1978.

Gribomont, Jean. “Notes biographiques sur s. Basile le Grand.” Pages 21–48 in Paul Jonathan Fedwick, ed. *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*. *A Sixteenth-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium.* 2 vols. Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981.

Grumel, Venance. “Les texts monothélites d’Aétius.” *Echos d’Orient* 28 (1929): 159–66.

Gummerus, Jaakko. *Die homöusianische Partei bis zum Tode des Konstantius: ein Beitrag zue Geschichte des arianischen Streites in den Jahrens 356-361.* Leipzig: Georg Böhme, 1900.

Gwynn, David M. *The Eusebians. The Polemic of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Construction of the Arian Controversy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hankinson, R. J. “Explanation and Causation.” Pages 479–512 in Kempe Algra, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Manseld, and Malcolm Schofield, eds. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Hanson, R. P. C. “Interpretations of Hebrew Names in Origen.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 10 (1956): 103–23.

------. *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 AD*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988.

Harl, Marguerite. *Origène et la Fonction révélatrice du Verbe Incarné*. Patristica Sorbonensia 2. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958.

Hildebrand, Stephen M. *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.

Hollerich, Michael J. *Eusebius of Caesarea’s Commentary on Isaiah*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

Isnardi-Parente, Margherita. *Frammenti: Senocrate, Ermodoro*. Naples: Bibliopolis, 1982.

Jackson-McCabe, Matt. “The Stoic Theory of Implanted Preconceptions.” *Phronesis* 49/4 (2004): 323–47.

Johnson, Aaron P. *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius’ Praeparatio Evangelica*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Kalligas, Paul. “Basil of Caesarea on the Semantics of Proper Names.” Pages 31–48 in Katerina Ierodiakonou, ed. *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002.

Karfíková, Lenka, Scot Douglass, and Johannes Zachhuber. *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Olomouc, September 15-18, 2004)*. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 82. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2007.

Kemp, Alan. “The *Tekhnê grammatikê* of Dionysius Thrax. Translated into English.” Pages 169–89 in Daniel J. Taylor, ed. *The History of Linguistics in the Classical Period*. Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Series III, Studies in the History of the Language Series 46. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1987.

Kirk, G. S., J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield. *The Presocratic Philosophers*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Kölling, Wilhelm. *Geschichte der arianischen Häresie*. 2 vols. Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1874-1883.

Kopecek, Thomas A. *A History of Neo-Arianism.* 2 vols. Patristic Monograph Series, No. 8. Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979.

------. "Neo-Arian Religion: The Evidence of the *Apostolic Constitutions*." Pages 153–79 in Robert C. Gregg, ed. *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments. Papers from the Ninth International Conference on Patristics Studies*. Patristic Monograph Series 11. Cambridge: The Philadelphia Patristic Society, 1985; repr. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006.

Kretzmann, Norman. "Plato on the Correctness of Names." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1971): 126–38.

Lallot, Jean. *Apollonius Dyscole: De la construction (Περὶ συντάξεως). Volume II: Notes et index*. Histoire des doctrines de l'antiquité classique 19. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1997.

Law, Vivien, and Ineke Sluiter, eds. *Dionysius Thrax and the Technē grammatikē*. Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 1995.

Lienhard, Joseph T. *Contra Marcellum. Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology.* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999.

------. "Ousia and Hypostasis: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of 'One Hypostasis'." Pages 99–121 in Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins, eds. *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Doctrine of the Trinity.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Lim, Richard. *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Long, A. A. *Problems in Stoicism*. London: The Athlone Press, 1971.

------. *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*. 2nd ed. Berkeley / Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.

------. "Stoic Reactions to Plato's *Cratylus*." Pages 395–411 in Monique Canto-Sperber and Pierre Pellegrin, eds. *Le style de la pensée. Recueil de textes en hommage à Jacques Brunschwig*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002.

------ and D. N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers.* 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Lorenz, Rudolf. *Arius judaizans? Untersuchungen zur dogmengeschichtlichen Einordung des Arius.* Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 31. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980.

Luhtala, Anneli. "On Definitions in Ancient Grammar." Pages 257–85 in Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters, eds. *Grammatical Theory and Philosophy of Language in Antiquity.* Orbis Supplementa 19. Leuven / Paris: Peeters, 2002.

Lyman, J. Rebecca. *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Martin, Annik. *Histoire «acéphale» et index syriaque des lettres festales d'Athanase d'Alexandria*. SChr 317. Paris: Cerf, 1985.

Matthaios, Stephanos. "Κύριον ὄνομα. Zur Geschichte eines grammatischen Terminus." Pages 55–77 in Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters, eds. *Ancient Grammar: Content and Context.* Orbis Supplementa 7. Leuven / Paris: Peeters, 1996.

Matthews, Peter. "Greek and Latin Linguistics." Pages 1–133 in Giulio Lepschy, ed. *History of Linguistics. Volume II: Classical and Medieval Linguistics*. London / New York: Longman, 1994.

Mignucci, Mario. "The Stoic Notion of Relatives." Pages in 129–222 Jonathan Barnes and Mario Mignucci, eds. *Matter and Metaphysics*. Naples: Bibliopolis, 1988).

------. "Aristotle's definitions of relatives in *Cat*. 7." *Phronesis* 31 (1986): 101–27.

Moore, A. W. "Introduction." Pages 1–22 in idem, ed. *Meaning and Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Morales, Xavier. *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie.* Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 180. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006.

------. "Identification de l'auteur des citations néo-ariennes dans le *Traité* de Basile d'Ancyre." *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 11 (2008): 492–99.

Mortley, Raoul. *From Word to Silence*. 2 vols. Theophaneia. Beiträge zur Religions- und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums 30-31. Bonn: Hanstein, 1986.

Orbe, Antonio. *La Epinoia: Algunos preliminaires históricos de la distinción κατ' ἐπίνοιαν (En torno a la Filosofia de Leoncio Bizantino)*. Rome: Pontificia universitas gregoriana, 1955.

Palmer, D. W. "Atheism, Apologetic and Negative Theology in the Greek Apologists of the Second Century." *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983): 234–59.

Parvis, Sara. *Marcellus of Ancyra and the lost years of the Arian controversy, 325-345.* Oxford / New York : Oxford University Press, 2006.

Penella, Robert J. *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis.* ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 28. Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990.

Pinborg, Jan. "Classical Antiquity: Greece." Pages 69–126 in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed. *Current Trends in Linguistics. Volume 13: Historiography of Linguistics*. The Hague / Paris: Mouton, 1975.

Pottier, Bernard. *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse: Étude systématique de «Contre Eunome» avec traduction des extraits d'Eunome.* Turnhout: Brepols, 1994.

Prestige, Leonard. "ἀγέν[ν]τος and γεν́[ν]ετός, and Kindred Words, in Eusebius and the Early Arians." *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1923): 486–96.

------. "ἀγέν[ν]τος and Cognate Words in Athanasius." *Journal of Theological Studies* 34 (1933): 258–65.

Radde-Gallwitz, Andrew. "'Seek and You Shall Find': Divine Simplicity and the Knowledge of God in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa." Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007.

------. "*Ad Eustathium de sancta trinitate*." In *Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*. Leiden: Brill, forthcoming.

------. *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Reeve, C. D. C. *Plato: Cratylus*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998.

Rist, John. "Basil's Neoplatonism." Pages 137–220 in Paul J. Fedwick, ed. *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*. *A Sixteenth-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium.* 2 vols. Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981.

Robertson, David G. "Stoic and Aristotelian Notions of Substance in Basil of Caesarea." *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998): 393–417.

------. "Relatives in Basil of Caesarea." *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 277–87.

------. "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 84 (2002): 1–19.

Robins, R. H. *The Byzantine Grammarians: Their Place in History*. Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs 70. Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993.

Rousseau, Philip. *Basil of Caesarea.* Berkeley / Los Angeles / London: University of California Press, 1994.

Runia, David T. "Naming and Knowing: Themes in Philonic Theology with Special Reference to the *De mutatione nominum.*" Pages 69–91 in R. van den Broek, T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld, eds. *Knowledge of God in the Greco-Roman World* Leiden: Brill, 1988.

------. *Philo in Early Christian Literature*. Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

Sandbach, F. H. "Ennoia and prolepsis." Pages 22–37 in A. A. Long, *Problems in Stoicism*. London: The Athlone Press, 1971.

Schenkeveld, Dirk A., and Jonathan Barnes. "Language." Pages 177–225 in Keimpe Algra, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Manseld, and Malcolm Schofield, eds. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Schmitter, Peter. "Sprachbezogene Reflexionen im frühen Griechenland." Pages 345–366 in Sylvain Auroux et al., eds. *History of the Language Sciences*. Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000.

Schoedel, William R. *Ignatius of Antioch*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

Sedley, David. "The Stoic Criterion of Identity." *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 255–75.

------. *Plato's Cratylus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Sesboüé, Bernard. "L'*Apologie* d'Eunome de Cyzique et le *Contra Eunome* (L. I-III) de Basile de Césarée. Présentation, analyse théologique et traduction française." Ph.D. diss., Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana, 1980.

------. *Saint Basile et la Trinité: Un acte théologique au IV^e^ siècle*. Paris: Descleé, 1998.

Silvas, Anna M. *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Silverman, Allan. "Plato's *Cratylus*: the Naming of Nature and the Nature of Naming." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1992): 25–71.

Simonetti, Manlio. *La Crisi Ariana nel IV secolo*. Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 11. Rome: Institutum Patristicum «Augustinianum», 1975.

Smith, Jonathan Z. *Map is Not Territory*. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

Smith, Rowland. *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Sorabji, Richard. *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD*. 3 vols. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Stead, G. C. "The Platonism of Arius." *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 15 (1964): 16–31.

------. "'Eusebius' and the Council of Nicaea," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 24 (1973): 85–100.

------. "Logic and the Application of Names to God." Pages 303–20 in Lucas F. Mateo-Seco and Juan L. Bastero, eds. *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la Produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa: VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa.* Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1988.

Steenson, Jeffery N. "Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy." D.Phil. diss. Oxford, 1983.

Strutwolf, Holger. *Die Trinitätstheologie und Christologie des Euseb von Caesarea: Eine dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung seiner Platonismusrezeption und Wirkungsgeschichte*. Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 72. Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999.

Swiggers, Pierre. *Histoire de la pensée linguistique: Analyse du language et réflexion linguistique dans la culture occidentale, de l'Antiquité au XIX^e^ siècle.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997.

------, and Alfons Wouters. "The Treatment of Relational Nouns in Ancient Grammar." *Orbis* 38 (1995): 149–78.

------ ------, eds. *Ancient Grammar: Content and Context.* Orbis Supplementa 7. Leuven / Paris: Peeters, 1996.

------ ------. "Content and Context in (Translating) Ancient Grammar." Pages 123–61 in idem, eds. *Ancient Grammar: Content and Context.* Orbis Supplementa 7. Leuven / Paris: Peeters, 1996.

------ ------, eds. *Grammatical Theory and Philosophy of Language in Antiquity.* Orbis Supplementa 19. Leuven / Paris: Peeters, 2002.

Troiano, Marina Silvia. 'Il *Contra Eunomium* III di Basilio di Cesarea e le *Epistolae ad Serapionem* I-IV di Atanasio di Alessandria: nota comparativa.' *Augustinianum* 41.1 (2001): 59–91.

Uthemann, Karl-Heinz. *Anastasii Sinaitae Opera*, CCSG 12. Turnhout: Brepols, 1985.

Vaggione, Richard Paul. *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Van Dam, Raymond. *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.

Vandenbussche, E. "La part de la dialéctique dans la théologie d'Eunomius 'le technologue'," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 40 (1944-45): 47–52.

Vinzent, Markus. *Asterius von Kappadokien: Die theologischen Fragmente.* Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 20. Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1993.

------. *Markell von Ankyra : Die Fragmente [und] Der Brief an Julius von Rom.* Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 39. Leiden / New York / Köln: Brill, 1997.

Vogel, C. J. de. *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism: An Interpretation of Neglected Evidence on the Philosopher Pythagoras*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1966.

Wallis, R. T. *Neoplatonism*. 2nd ed. with a Foreword and Bibliography by Lloyd P. Gerson. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995.

Wickham, Lionel R. "The *Syntagmation* of Aetius the Anomean," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 19 (1968): 532–69.

------. "The Date of Eunomius' Apology: a Reconsideration." *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 20 (1969): 231–40.

Widdicombe, Peter. *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Wiles, Maurice. "Eunomius: Hair-Splitting Dialectician or Defender of the Accessibility of Salvation." Pages 157–72 in Rowan Williams, ed. *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Williams, Rowan. *Arius: Heresy and Tradition.* Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Winston, David. "Aspects of Philo's Linguistic Theory." Pages 109–25 in David T. Runia, ed. *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism. Volume III*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991.

Wouters, Alfons. “The Grammatical Term ἀπολελυμένον in the School Book Brit.Mus.Add.MS.37533 (=Pack^2 2712).” *Chronique d’Égypte* 68 (1993): 168–77.

Wutz, F. *Onomastica sacra*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1914.