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THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE PERSONS IN ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA'S WORKS

by

Lucian Turcescu

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology of the University of St. Michael's College and the Department of Theology of the Toronto School of Theology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology awarded by the University of St. Michael's College

Toronto 1999

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Abstract of the Dissertation

"The Concept of Divine Persons in St. Gregory of Nyssa's Works"

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology, 1999
Faculty of Theology of the University of St. Michael's College
and the Department of Theology of the Toronto School of Theology

Lucian Turcescu

Chapter One deals with the status quaestionis and the methodology, as well as the fact a notion of person did not exist in antiquity prior to the Cappadocian Fathers. Chapter Two considers some philosophical concepts which contributed to a pre-history of the concept of person: individuals and relations in Aristotle, individuals in Stoicism, the individual as a collection of properties in Platonism, and the Plotinian will of the One. I contend that Gregory probably used these concepts to shape his own concept of person. Besides philosophical sources, however, he used extensively the Bible and the writings of his Christian predecessors.

In Chapters Three to Five I analyze the most relevant works in which Gregory deals with divine persons. Here is a summary of the concept of divine persons emerging from these writings. First, to refer to a person in general, Gregory uses Greek terms such as: hypostasis, prosōpon, perigraphous (or perigraphē), merikē ousia, idikē ousia and even atomon. Second, to distinguish a divine person from the nature which that person owns in common with two other persons, he uses the analogy of the
individual and the universal. Also, to distinguish between
nature and persons, Gregory believes that, unlike nature, persons
are enumerable entities. Third, to establish the identity of
each divine person and why each is unique, Gregory adapts for
Christian usage the Platonic view of an individual as a unique
collection of properties. Fourth, to express the particularizing
notes of each divine person, Gregory also speaks of causal
relations: the Father is the cause, the Son is from the cause or
directly from the first, and the Spirit is from the cause (i.e.
from the Father) through that which is directly from the first
(i.e. through the Son). Under the influence of Aristotle's
category of relation, Gregory underscores that the three divine
persons are relational entities. Fifth, relations in Gregory's
theology mean more than mere ontological causality. They are
manifested in the perfect communion existing among the three
divine persons. This communion allows for both the distinction
of each person and the perfect unity among them. It is communion
that makes the three collections of properties persons. Last but
not least Gregory conceives of God as a willing subject who
always chooses the good and wishes to be what he is. The
ontological view of the will of God betrays a Plotinian
influence.
Acknowledgements

My special thanks go to my two co-directors, Professors Paul Fedwick and John Rist, for their help, encouragement, promptness and patience as I researched and wrote this dissertation. I also wish to acknowledge the work done by the committee readers as well as that of others who showed interest in my chapters and offered suggestions, or supported me in any other ways. This dissertation could not have been initiated and completed without the constant support of my wife, Lavinia Stan, to whom I owe very special thanks.
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### ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>GCS</td>
<td>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNO</td>
<td>Gregorii Nysseni Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loeb</td>
<td>Loeb Classical Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
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<td>NPNF</td>
<td>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The Necessity of Studying the Concept of Divine Persons in Gregory of Nyssa and the Scope of the Present Study

The concept and definition of personhood have become central in ethical debate, not only because of issues such as cloning humans but also the need to answer questions such as: Should "personhood" determine the allocation of scarce medical resources, and should its perceived absence allow the termination of life? The answers to these questions depend on one's concept of person. There are two dominant views in the contemporary debate.

Many scholars, including philosophers, anthropologists, social theorists, and theologians, define a person as a center of consciousness. This view, known as the Psychological Approach to person, can be traced back to Descartes' famous but unprovable dictum Cogito, ergo sum. Nonetheless, it was the seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke who defined a human person in the psychological sense when he wrote:

"[W]e must consider what Person stands for; which, I think, is a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider it self as it self, the same thinking thing in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness, which is inseparable from
Based on this concept, some twentieth-century philosophers of mind argue that a human person ceases to exist when her memories, reason, and consciousness are irretrievably lost. The


proponents of this view hold that the life of such a human being can be terminated, without any moral reservations, because the person is no longer there. The following example best explains how a person can irretrievably lose her memories, reason and consciousness:

Imagine that you fall into what physiologists call a persistent vegetative state. As a result of temporary heart failure, your brain is deprived of oxygen for ten minutes before circulation is restored, by which time the neurons of your cerebral cortex have died of anoxia. Because thought and consciousness are impossible unless the cortex is intact, and because brain cells do not regenerate, your higher mental functions are irretrievably lost. You will never again be able to remember the past, or plan for the future, or hear a loved one's voice, or be consciously aware of anything at all, for the equipment you needed to do those things is destroyed and cannot be replaced. You have become, as the clinical idiom has it, "irreversibly noncognitive."

The subcortical parts of the brain, however, such as the thalamus, basal ganglia, brainstem, and cerebellum, are more resistant to damage from lack of blood than the cerebrum is, and they sometimes hold out and continue functioning even when the cerebrum has been destroyed. Those are the organs that sustain your "vegetative" functions such as respiration, circulation, digestion, and metabolism... The result is a human animal that is as much like you as anything could be without having a mind.¹

When moving from philosophy and psychology to theology and when attempting to apply the psychological definition of person

to the Christian God, theologians are confronted with the following dilemma: How can there be one volition, one cognition, and one action in a tri-personal God? In other words, because the opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa, it appears to these theologians that there is in the Trinity only one center of consciousness which they are inclined to call "person." Consequently, they ask: "Why admit three persons?" This was the case for example with Karl Barth. He considered that the term person "was never adequately clarified." Instead he preferred to speak of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three "modes of existence" (Seinsweisen) of the one God. Yet Barth was not the only one to experience difficulties because the concept of person came to be understood psychologically.

During the last three decades an increasing number of voices have found the psychological understanding of person unacceptable and advocated alternative solutions. These solutions depend on the responses to questions related to the human vegetable issue. Some of these questions are: Is the human vegetable identical with the one you were before or is he someone else? In other words, could I exist at another time if and only if I now stand in some psychological relation to myself as I was, or shall be,

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¹Cf. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, tr. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-1975), I. 1, 355; IV. 1, 205; IV. 2, 44.

²Church Dogmatics I.1, 355.
then? Could I survive if my mind were lost? Advocates of the Psychological Approach argue that any past or future being that has my mind is me. A philosophical opponent of the Psychological Approach has convincingly argued that the Psychological Approach does not work in many particular instances. Therefore, to the questions raised above he would respond "Yes, the human vegetable is myself," whereas proponents of the Psychological Approach would say "No, the human vegetable is no longer myself."

Theological ethics has addressed the issue of personhood by proposing the recovery of pre-Cartesian concepts of person rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Sarah Coakley has offered a

cogent summary of one such alternate theological view which is based on what is known as the Cappadocian concept of person and later Greek Orthodox thought. She has suggested that this view rests on an understanding of the Christian Trinity as prototype of persons-in-relation. According to the proponents of this view, the doctrine of the Trinity can be used as a blueprint for human sociality and ethics. They argue that the concept of human person, which is central to human sociality and ethics, has its antecedent in a theological debate over divine persons, most clearly articulated by a group of three Greek theologians known as the "Cappadocian Fathers" of the fourth century. Although many prominent theologians have written with enthusiasm about this topic, this theological view is far from being uniform or coherent, let alone uncontested. Moreover, my own research into the theologies of the above-mentioned contemporary authors, as


well as the research of others, made me conclude that to date there is no adequate recovery of the Cappadocian concept of divine persons. My suggestion here is that both the Psychological Approach and non-psychological approaches to person are the ones that have sparked my interest in retrieving the Cappadocian concept of divine persons. Another motivational factor has been my previous work on the person of Christ in Cyril of Alexandria's thought.

The fourth century of the Christian era is well known for its important trinitarian disputes. During that century the Church endeavored to defend the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit against various heresies. In doing so, some of the eastern and western Fathers who were the fiercest fighters against these heresies had to clarify such terms as substance (οὐσία, substantia and person (πρόσωπον, ἴπόστασις, persona), in order to defend the biblical and traditional faith that the one God should be worshiped as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The dogma of the Holy Trinity is perhaps the hardest to understand by human reason. It has been extremely difficult for

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many to accept the paradox of three in one or one in three; to accept that one person is the cause of the two others in the Holy Trinity, but that all are God; that the three are equal and of the same substance with one another; that the affirmation of three persons does not imply three gods; that the three persons are real, not mere masks of the unique God.

In the present study I propose to investigate the contribution one of the Cappadocian Fathers, namely Gregory of Nyssa, made to the clarification of the trinitarian dogma. More exactly, I shall analyze his concept of divine persons. Since he is the Cappadocian who relied on philosophical skills the most, an analysis of his works will provide me with the most interesting material about the concept of divine persons. As some of Gregory's explanations were learned from his older brother, Basil, or perhaps from their common friend, Gregory of Nazianzus, occasionally I shall also refer to the teachings of the latter two. Nevertheless, because of considerations of time and space, the bulk of the dissertation deals with divine persons in Gregory of Nyssa. I would like to make it clear from the outset that I intend to deal with the concept of human person and human analogies Gregory uses only inasmuch as they help me to clarify the divine persons. Conversely, in this dissertation I do not intend to pursue the implications the concept of divine persons has on the concept of human person. Discussion of the
human person per se would certainly require considering such issues as free will, human freedom, gender, the image of God in humans, and the body-soul problem. Some of these issues have already been dealt with, others necessitate at least another dissertation.

In this chapter I shall establish the state of the question in the area of proposed research and then present the methodology of this dissertation. Studies dealing with the concept of divine persons or the Greek words used to express it (e.g. πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις) can be grouped into three categories: a) studies which either briefly mention the Cappadocian Fathers' works in a larger context or are confined to one or two of their works presented cursorily; b) studies that deal with either πρόσωπον or ὑπόστασις.

The most important such studies are the following:
but do not consider the Cappadocians; c) studies that deal with πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις in the Cappadocians, showing how they shaped the trinitarian notion of persons. Although I refer to studies from all three groups throughout the dissertation, it is mainly studies in the third group that define the status quaestionis for


me. As I shall endeavor to show, however, the latter are either too short or seriously deficient. But before this, I would like to answer the question whether a concept of person existed before the Cappadocians.

1. Did a Notion of Person Exist in Antiquity?

There is a whole contemporary debate on whether the ancients had a notion of person. In order to understand this debate and why I think that the ancients did not have a notion of person before the Cappadocians I need to indicate what I mean by a person. Such a definition is no easy task, as proved by today's numerous, and many times contradictory, definitions of a person. In attempting to do so, I want to indicate as basic a definition as possible, so that it can be accepted as axiomatic for possible theories of person by both sides of the debate. A working definition that would satisfy all these criteria is probably the following: a person is "an indivisible, unique and therefore non-replicable unity in human existence."

The issue of the person in classical antiquity is especially
important for my thesis. If the ancients were aware of, or interested in, the notion of person or individual, then the Cappadocians could have drawn on a previous development. But did such a notion exist? There are some scholars of antiquity who believe that the ancients did have such a notion. They contend that ancient writers' interest in the various traits of human personality—such as courage, rationality, love, even consciousness—is a pertinent proof that the ancients were aware of a notion of person. As I shall exemplify a little later when analyzing such an argument extensively, these scholars either confuse "person" with "personality," or "person" with "soul." As my definition of a person makes it clear, a person is a unique human existence, while personality is perhaps best understood as "the relatively stable organization of a person's motivational dispositions, arising from the interaction between biological drives and the social and physical environment." A child, a

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7 In the definition of personality, I would replace the word "biological" with "natural" so as not to exclude the soul.

mentally deranged human, or a human vegetable can be considered persons; they should be acknowledged as existential units, even if they do not have a personality or are not "ego-conscious." I do acknowledge that the ancients were preoccupied with the soul and its traits. But they did not connect soul with the individual, because before the Cappadocians they only had rudiments of a theory of the individual. I shall examine these rudiments shortly.

Another nuance which some of these scholars are willing to concede is that "there is probably not a (post-Cartesian) concept of 'person' in Greek philosophy. But there is a concept of rational animal, at least in Aristotle and the Stoics." What the author of this statement means is that the ancients did not have the modern, post-Cartesian concept of person, but they did have a certain concept of person, even if underdeveloped. I think that the kind of arguments these scholars use to contend that there was a notion of person in Greek philosophy (even if different from the modern notion, they concede!) prove only that the ancients were interested in distinguishing between the human species and various animal species. The ancients, I should re-emphasize, were hardly interested in distinguishing two human individuals from one another or a human individual from an

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Christopher Gill, "Is There a Concept of Person in Greek Philosophy?" in Psychology, ed. Steven Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 193.
individual animal.

Another series of studies has actually demonstrated that for various reasons the ancients did not identify, nor were they interested to elaborate on, the human individual. Although Plotinus came closest to recognizing a distinctive human individuality, he actually did not achieve this. Another step forward was made by Plotinus' best known disciple, Porphyry, who gave a definition of an individual as a unique collection of properties.

In a first article on "Forms of Individuals in Plotinus," John Rist remarks that one of the major contributions Plotinus made to thought was his recognition of the role of individuality. For Aristotle, the individual could not be defined. Philosophy should therefore be concerned with the individual only inasmuch as he is a member of a class. As for a Platonic philosopher's

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11 Aristotle, Metaphysics 1036a5-6.
view on the issue of individuality, Rist quotes a good summary of it by Grube:

We must remember that from first to last the aim of the Platonic philosopher is to live on the universal plane, to lose himself more and more in the contemplation of truth, so that the perfect psyche would, it seems, lose itself completely in the universal mind, the world-psyche. Hence it remains individual only in so far as it is imperfect, and personal immortality is not something to aim at, but something to outgrow.\(^{12}\)

Plato and Aristotle spoke of Forms (or Ideas) as corresponding to one set of things that have a common name,\(^{12}\) that is, Forms are of universals. Moreover, both of them agreed that there is a Form of Human,\(^{13}\) but they did not accept that there could also be a Form of the individual known as Socrates. Although not rejecting Forms of universals, Plotinus raised the question of the possibility of existence of Forms of individual humans and believed in the existence of such Forms. In his view, one can speak of a Form of Socrates.\(^{14}\) This strange view of Plotinus led Rist to state: "I believe it may now be assumed ... that Plotinus was one of those Platonists who subscribed to a heretical version of Platonism according to which there are not only forms of

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\(^{13}\)Plato, *Republic* 596a5-7.


\(^{15}\)Ennead* V.7.
species but also forms of individuals, at least in the case of individual men."

Plotinus discusses Forms of individuals in the following treatises: Ennead V.9 [5] 12; Enn. V.7 [18]; Enn. VI.5 [23] 8.21-42; Enn. IV.3 [27] 5.8-11 and IV.3.6.15-17; Enn. VI.7 [38] 3.10; VI.7.8.1-5; VI.7.9.20-46; VI.7.11.14-15; Enn. VI.2 [43] 22.11-17; Enn. VI.3 [44] 9.2-ff. The sections that offer much on the subject are the first three. As Rist has rightly noted, in Enn. V.9 [5] 12 Plotinus is somewhat hesitant about Forms of individuals, but here for the first time he raises the question

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"For Greek text and English translation see Plotinus, Enneads, 7 vols., tr. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966-1988). In square brackets I mark the chronological order in which the Enneads were written, as indicated by Porphyry in his edition of the Enneads.

of the possibility of their existence:

But if the Form of man is there ... then one must say that the Forms of universals (καθόλου: ἑιδή) are there, not of Socrates but of man. But we must enquire about man whether the form of the individual (οὐκαθέκαστα) is there; there is individuality, because the same [individual feature] is different in different people.19

The treatise where Plotinus most clearly affirms the existence of Forms of individuals and his belief in them is Enn. V.7 [18]. The question opening this treatise is "Is there an idea of each particular thing?" And the answer to it is "Yes." Plotinus bases his argument on the immortality of the soul, saying that "If Socrates, that is the soul of Socrates, always exists, there will be an absolute Socrates in the sense that, in so far as they are soul, individuals are also said to exist in this way in the intelligible world."20 Yet Plotinus does believe in reincarnation, as another treatise contemporaneous with Enn. V.7 such as Enn. 3.4 [15] shows. Therefore, when realizing that such a doctrine could give a death blow to the theory of Forms of individuals if the latter is based on the immortality of the soul, he immediately tries to address this issue and accommodate it to his new theory. And he does seem to accommodate the two theories by considering in Enn. V.7.3.7-10 that even a craftsman who makes two identical things is aware of their "logical

20Enn. V.7.3-6.
difference." By "logical difference" he means "numerical difference." In Rist's words, "although X is reincarnated as Y, he can never blot out that former X-ness that did in fact exist. Once existence has occurred, so to speak, it cannot be eliminated." Therefore, the Form of X will continue to exist in the intelligible world, even if X is reincarnated as Y.

The reason why Plotinus found it necessary to postulate a Form for each human, as well as a Form of Human, is thus stated:

No, there cannot be the same forming principle (λόγος) for different individuals, and one man will not serve as a model for several men differing from each other not only by reason of their matter but with a vast number of special differences of form. Men are not related to their form as portraits of Socrates are to their original, but their different structures must result from different forming principles."

Compared with Enn. V.9.12, Enn. V.7 represents a progress in the sense that the use of such an argument as the existence of the soul to account for the differences between the Forms of various individuals shows that Plotinus has realized the importance "of differences of character, as against those of bodily features.":

Elsewhere Plotinus inquires about the possibility of the existence of the Forms of individual animals or individual...
Furthermore, he finds the hypothesis of Forms of animals less attractive than that of Forms of human individuals and completely rejects the Forms of individual fires because in his view Fire is a continuum. Having turned his attention twice to the relevant passages where Plotinus discusses the Forms of individuals, Rist concludes that:

[From the time he wrote 5.7, Plotinus accepted certain Ideas of individuals, and ... his conviction was strongest in the case of individual men. It is possible that he positively reaffirms his position in 4.3.5, but at least we must maintain that he nowhere withdraws or rejects it, explicitly or implicitly.]

Who could have possibly influenced Plotinus' theory of Forms of individuals? Rist suggests that it might be Aristotle who alludes to this in Met. 990b14 and the Stoics through their distinction between κοινός ποιόν and ἰδιώς ποιόν. I shall first present the Aristotelian influence. In the above-mentioned passage Aristotle wrote:

For according to the arguments from the existence of the sciences there will be Forms of all things of which there are sciences, and according to the argument that there is one attribute common to many things there will be Forms even of negations, and according to the argument that there is an object for thought even when the thing has perished, there will be Forms of perishable things; for we can have an image

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22Enn. VI.5 [23] 8.21-42.
24Rist, "Forms of Individuals in Plotinus," 229 f.
In his recent book on Plotinus, Gerson has paid close attention to Aristotle's influence. Yet, besides alluding to *Met.* 990b14, Gerson adduces the testimony of the Peripatetic Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. ca. 200 AD) who attempts to explicate the passage in Aristotle. I now quote Alexander:

The argument that tries to establish that there are Ideas from thought (τῶν ὑμνευόντων) is as follows. If whenever we think of man or focted or animal, we are thinking of something that is both among the things that exist yet is not one of the particulars (τῶν καθέκαστον) (for when the latter have perished the same thought remains), clearly there is something besides particulars and perceptibles, which we think of whether the latter exist or not; for we are certainly not then thinking of something non-existent. And this is the Form and an Idea. Now he [Aristotle] says that this argument also establishes Ideas of things that are perishing and have perished, and in general of things that are both particulars and perishable—e.g., of Socrates, of Plato; for we think of these men and preserve some image of them even when they no longer exist. And indeed we also think of things that do not exist at all, like a hippocentaur, a chimaera; consequently neither does this argument show that there are Ideas.  

Alexander explains that, in his critique of the Platonic Forms, Aristotle says that the "argument from thought" would lead the Platonists to conclude that there are Forms of particulars, a conclusion which they may want to avoid. Gerson contends that "Plotinus certainly knew the argument as it appears in the

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2Met. 990b10-14.

Metaphysics and quite possibly knew of the longer version" as it appears in Alexander's commentary. What is surprising, however, is that Plotinus accepted the conclusion envisaged by Aristotle, thus becoming the representative of a heretical version of Platonism.

I shall now turn to the second influence on Plotinus' theory of Forms of individuals, i.e., the Stoic distinction between κοινῆς ποιῶν and ιδίως ποιῶν, the two components of the second Stoic category, the qualified (τὸ ποιῶν). A search through the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae CD-Rom, reveals that the phrase κοινῆς ποιῶν never occurs in Enneads, and neither do its two components within four lines of each other, while ιδίως ποιῶ never occurs once at Enn. VI.1 [42] 30.6, though its two components (ιδίως and ποι-) never occur elsewhere in the Enneads within four lines of each other. Yet Enn. VI.1.30 is a later treatise, number 42 in Porphyry's chronology of the Enneads, and the passage concerned is nothing but Plotinus' famous critique of the Stoic categories. So, it is normal to find a reference to the "individually qualified" in Enn. VI.1.30. I therefore conclude that it is not in this treatise that one should look for Stoic influences on

Gerson, Plotinus, 74.

It is probably worth mentioning that Gerson (Plotinus, 72-78) is totally uninterested in this influence on Plotinus, although Rist mentions it explicitly in his "Forms of Individuals," 226 f.
Plotinus' Forms of individuals. Neither its date nor its content make it relevant for our purposes. Rather, one should look for a treatise which precedes or at the latest is contemporaneous with Enn. V.7 [18] and this can be counted as a second method of detecting an influence of the second Stoic category on Plotinus. Rist points out that Enn. II.4 [12] 4 can be such a reference. Chronologically, Enn. II.4 [12] 4 was written after Enn. V.9 [5], where Plotinus is still hesitant about Forms of individuals, but before Enn. V.7 [13], where he affirms his belief in such Forms. Thus, in Enn. II.4.4.2-4 he writes: "If, then, the Forms are many, there must be something in them common to them all; and also something individual, by which one differs from another."

This idea, Rist suggests, may be of Stoic origin. The suggestion should be taken seriously, especially since a later Neoplatonist such as Simplicius certifies that the Plotinian notion of Forms of individuals was associated with the Stoic "individually qualified."

By specifically inquiring into the possibility of the existence of Form of individuals, Plotinus went farther than any other ancient thinker before him in elaborating a formal theory of the human individual. One would expect to find in the Enneads a deeper reflection on this topic. Unfortunately, this was not

3Rist, "Forms of Individuals," 226.

33Simplicius, On Aristotle's On Soul 217, 36.
the case and we have to be satisfied with what is left which testifies to an underdeveloped understanding of the concept of individual.

Although generally agreeing with Rist about the interpretations of the Enneads passages where Plotinus deals with Form of individuals, Armstrong argues that Plotinus had a more elaborate theory of individual humans. Yet, he bases his argument on the confusion between person and personality which I mentioned earlier.

2. The Status Quaestionis in Pagan and Christian Thought

Next I shall discuss several studies dealing with the history of the concept of person in antiquity and late antiquity and the history of two major technical terms (πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις) used by the Cappadocians to indicate the divine persons.

First, I shall consider an article by the Dutch scholar Cornelia J. de Vogel, "The Concept of Personality in Greek and Christian Thought." De Vogel wants to show that a word for either "person" or "personality" is by no means lacking, either

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34 Armstrong, "Form, Individual and Person in Plotinus," 59 f.

in Greek or in Latin, and that "the first metaphysics of man as a moral person is found in Greek philosophy, and of man in his individuality as well" (p. 22). Initially, the author defines "person" and "personality" as distinct: "Person is man as a rational and moral subject, free and self-determining in his actions, responsible for his deeds," whereas "personality is man's individual character, his uniqueness" (p. 23). In the notion of "person," then, she emphasizes rationality and morality. These two elements make humans superior to both inanimate things and animals, since self-determination and responsibility depend on the faculty of reason. De Vogel contends that in this general sense "there is a great deal of reflection on the 'person' in Greek philosophy" (p. 23).

To support her claim, de Vogel resorts to some seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers such as John Locke and Christian Wolff, or Neo-Kantians such as Georg Windelband, who define the person in terms of self-reflection and self-consciousness.\(^{36}\) Having set this theoretical framework, de Vogel then goes back to Homer and the lyric poets, trying to show that their world appears to us "as a very personal world: the Homeric heroes appear to us as personalities" (p. 57). Other Greek poets

also are eager to portray strong characters or what we would call today "strong personalities." One of the characteristics of the Homeric heroes is their self-determination, which is respected even by the gods. In referring to these characteristics of the Homeric heroes, de Vogel concludes: "[t]hat is what we called person" (p. 26). Next, she moves from poetry to philosophy, considering both Greek and Latin philosophers: Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Anaximenes, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius and Plotinus, to mention but the most important. All of them are to various degrees preoccupied with issues related to the human being and his soul. Again she concludes that their preoccupation with these aspects of the human life betrays their interest in persons.

Only Plotinus leads her to conclusions more relevant to my present study. De Vogel considers Enneads V.7 and VI.5.8.21-42 which, are important for his theory of Forms of Individuals, as I pointed out earlier. After introducing the arguments of Enn. V.7.1, de Vogel concludes: "I do not hesitate to say: here we have a full-grown metaphysics of the personality" (p. 54). Indeed, it might have been better if she had hesitated, because the passages in question only point to Plotinus' attempts to grasp a notion of individual, not personality, and these attempts constitute only a beginning, not a full-grown theory.

De Vogel's article is only partially faithful to its title.
Although dealing rather satisfactorily with the concept of personality in Greek thought, the article allots no more than three pages, mainly in the conclusions, to the concept of personality in Christian thought. Nor does she give a proper treatment to the concept of person, which is constantly confounded with the concept of personality, despite their being recognized at the beginning of the article as formally distinct. Moreover, de Vogel uses a psychological definition of the person, inspired by modern philosophy, especially John Locke's. Yet, as A. Michel showed in an article about the history of the word "hypostasis," the psychological view of the person is wrong, since it confuses the self with the perception of the self or, put in a more general way, the object known with the knowledge itself. By asserting the self-knowledge of the self, modern philosophers such as those mentioned above and many others in their tradition prove only that the self can know itself, not what the self is nor that the self exists.

As I demonstrate especially in Chapters One and Two, prior to the Cappadocians there scarcely was a concept of person in ancient philosophy. Moreover, it was the Cappadocians who were the first to provide a rather complex concept of person. Therefore, what de Vogel does in her study is to judge an epoch

\[ A. \text{ Michel, "Hypostase" in Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, ed. E. Amann et al., vol. 7/1 (Paris: printed for Letouzey et Ane, 1927), col. 433-34.}\]
by the categories of a later epoch; this is known as "anachronism" and usually leads to misinterpretations. De Vogel depicts here not the notion of "person" which we find in the Church Fathers and which was vaguely suggested, for example, by Plato in *Theaetetus* and further elaborated by Plotinus and Porphyry, but rather a notion of person in agreement with a modern, psychological definition. Yet, an even more interesting and for me a far more challenging case of psychological understanding of the person is Stramara's doctoral dissertation which I shall present next.

While I was writing my dissertation, the American scholar Daniel F. Stramara, jr., wrote and defended a dissertation on the concept of divine persons in Gregory of Nyssa, entitled "Unmasking the Meaning of Πρόσωπον: Prospōn as Person in the Works of Gregory of Nyssa." Stramara proposes to demonstrate that the term πρόσωπον in Gregory of Nyssa's works: 1) does not mean mask but 2) it is used as a psychological term referring to person, and this as a self-aware psychological agent (p. 1). To be more accurate about the second point, Stramara proposes to demonstrate that Gregory did understand a person in the modern sense of a center of consciousness.

To substantiate the meaning of πρόσωπον in Gregory's works

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313 instances are analyzed. Stramara considers only those works which are unanimously accepted as written by Gregory of Nyssa. Gregory applies the term to denote the divine persons 28% of the time, exegetical personage 16.7% of the time, human face 15.6% of the time, and human person 12.3%; πρόσωπον only means mask 0.7% of the time. Including prepositional phrases and the connotation of πρόσωπον as person, the term refers to a person (whether divine or human) 71.4% of the time.

In Chapters Three through Six the psychological meaning is studied by way of 1) a philological analysis of psychological terms used in connection with person, and 2) contextualizing Gregory's thought with Stoic and Neoplatonic psychology. Stramara concludes that Gregory of Nyssa understood πρόσωπον as a psychological being, operating out of a center of self-awareness, being both subject and object to oneself.

I agree with Stramara's first point, namely that most of the time the term πρόσωπον in Gregory of Nyssa's works does not mean mask. Stramara's comprehensive analysis of the 313 instances of the term πρόσωπον in Gregory's works is most welcome and brings an important contribution to patristic scholarship. πρόσωπον is shown to have a wide spectrum of meanings in Gregory's works, ranging from anatomical face, surface, face to face, gaze, and mask to person, subject, face of God, exegetical personage, and incarnate Logos (pp. 29-110). To express the idea of mask, most
of the time Gregory prefers the more technical term προσωπείαν to πρόσωπον. He was well acquainted with the theater, as one of his brothers, Naucratius, was an actor. In Ep. 9.1, Gregory provides a detailed account of stage props and dramatic paraphernalia.

My only difficulty with Stramara's first part is that none of the authors he cites refers to Gregory whom Stramara claims to have said that Gregory means mask by πρόσωπον. Barth, for example, writes "But did not persona, πρόσωπον, also mean "mask'? Might not the term give new support to the Sabellian idea of three mere manifestations behind which stood a hidden fourth?"

I am sure that when he wrote this Barth was thinking of Basil of Caesarea and his attempts to banish the term πρόσωπον from trinitarian vocabulary because of its Modalist overtones.

Although simplifying the issues, Barth disapproves of the use of person both in the modern sense (the concept of person as a center of consciousness that Stramara tries to promote) and in

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1See Gregory of Nyssa, Vita s. Macrinae 8, GNO 8.1.178, 9-15.

2Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics I.1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 355. This is the text Stramara summarizes on p. 4 of his dissertation.

the patristic and medieval sense. Instead he proposes that we use "mode of existence," because this phrase avoids all the dangers of the overused word "person." Neither does Karl Rahner, the second defendant on Stramara’s list, envisage Gregory of Nyssa when saying that πρόσωπων meant mask. Like Barth, Rahner probably has in mind Basil’s letters where πρόσωπων is said to be Modalist. Even less does Walter Kasper, the third defendant on Stramara’s list, "simply equate the term πρόσωπων with mask."

For conformity, I quote Kasper’s text:

Tertullian’s distinction between natura and persona was difficult for the East, because persona was translated as prosōpon; prosōpon, however, meant a mask, that is a mere appearance, and thus suggested modalism. For this reason Basil issued a warning that, as understood in the confession of faith, the persons (prosōpa) of God exist as hypostases.

If one reads Kasper’s text with more care than Stramara, one discovers that Kasper is aware that πρόσωπων sounded Modalistic, although he says that Tertullian’s distinction was difficult for the East, because persona was translated as prosōpon; prosōpon, however, meant a mask, that is a mere appearance, and thus suggested modalism. For this reason Basil issued a warning that, as understood in the confession of faith, the persons (prosōpa) of God exist as hypostases.

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1: "What is called 'personality' in the conceptual vocabulary of the 19th century is distinguished from the patristic and medieval persona by the addition of the attribute of self-consciousness" (Barth, Church Dogmatics I.1, 357).

2: Barth, Church Dogmatics I.1, 359.


5: Walter Kasper, The God of Jesus Christ, tr. Matthew J. O’Connell (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 259. I would like to add that I also consulted the German original for conformity.
and could have meant mask to Basil, but that even Basil accepted it if understood in the sense of hypostasis.

To conclude my commentaries on Stramara's first part of the dissertation, I should say that the problem does not reside in the fact that Barth or Rahner or Kasper say in a qualified way that πρόσωπον means mask at one point in the history of Christianity. The problem is that Basil of Caesarea believed the same thing and in his dissertation Stramara ignores Basil's contention.

Next I shall consider Stramara's second point of the dissertation, namely that πρόσωπον as person in Gregory means a self-aware psychological agent. It is worth noting from the outset that throughout his dissertation Stramara has an unwarranted tendency to sprinkle words such as "psychological," "personality," and "consciousness." When he considers the 313 instances of πρόσωπον, Stramara has to acknowledge that in at least several cases Gregory uses πρόσωπον with the sense of mask. But he contends that "'mask' does not denote a false reality, a façade. It is a psychological disposition" (p. 54). I argue that a "mask" is not limited to psychological disposition and can be used to denote a reality other than the true, i.e. natural, reality. For example, at the beginning of the twentieth century, white actors who played Othello had to paint their faces black; this is an example of a mask that is neither a psychological
disposition nor a true reality. I agree with Stramara that a
mask can be a psychological disposition as well, but I disagree
with him that such a disposition cannot signify a false reality.
If it is a disposition against nature, it sometimes has an aura
of false reality."

When discussing the meaning of προσωπείων, Stramara quotes a
text from Lucian of Samosata:

Noticing that the dancer had five masks (προσωπα) ready—the
drama had that number of acts—since he [a barbarian] saw
but one dancer, he enquired who were to dance and act the
other roles (προσωπεία), and when he learned that the dancer
himself was to act and dance them all, he said: I did not
realize, my friend, that though you have only this one body,
you have many souls (ψυχας)."

Stramara's comment immediately following this text is: "The
προσωπείων is connected with personality" (p. 58). I believe that
the text clearly connects προσωπείων with soul, not with
personality. Stramara fails to see these nuances.

In another context where he discusses the meaning of προσωπείων

"See Cicero, De officiis I, 32, 115: "The role (persona)
we choose in life, however, depends entirely on our own wishes.
Thus some apply themselves to philosophy, others to
jurisprudence, others to oratory" ("ipsi autem gerere quam
personam velimus, a nostra voluntate proficiscitur. Itaque se
alii ad philosophiam, alii ad ius civile, alii ad eloquentiam
applicant," in Marcus Tullius Cicero, De officiis, ed. M.
Winterbottom [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994]. ET in
Cicero, On Moral Obligation, tr. John Higginbotham [Berkeley, CA:
University of California Press, 1967], 80). For more on role-
playing see Cicero, De officiis I, 31-33.

"Lucian of Samosata, De salutatione 66, Loeb 5:268;
as "personality or psychological person" (pp. 67-69), Stramara gives two examples from Gregory of Nyssa's works. In both cases, the reference is actually to πρόσωπον as the image of God in humans. It is we in the modern era who consider the soul or the image of God in humans to be part of the personality. Stramara again tries to foist a psychological meaning on Gregory terminology.

Ever since I discovered this dissertation I have asked myself, What could have influenced Stramara to take this psychological turn? I believe one answer can be found in the following statement he makes in an endnote at the beginning of Chapter Three: "With regard to the whole question of the origin of the idea of self-consciousness, the Plotinian and Stoic scholar suggests that Descartes is indebted to Augustine who is in turn indebted to Plotinus; see Andreas Graeser, Plotinus and the Stoics (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 126." Stramara thus has inferred that if Descartes is indebted to Plotinus (via Augustine), then so should Gregory of Nyssa be as well. Moreover, if Descartes had a psychological notion of person (after all, scholarly agreement favors Descartes' influence on Locke), then so does Gregory of Nyssa; and that is why Stramara attempted to demonstrate the latter point. Stramara's intentions become even more evident on pp. 193-194, where he quotes Wallis'...

remark that:

The result of Plotinus' approach to religious experience was the transposition of Greek philosophy into a new key .... The decisive step was Plotinus' identification of metaphysical realities with states of consciousness. From a psychological point of view, his account of consciousness forms a remarkable contrast both with Classical Greek philosophy, which, except for a few passages in Aristotle..., had barely recognised the concept, and with the Cartesian identification of 'consciousness' with 'thought' or 'mental activity'.

Both before and after this quotation, Stramara wants to make Gregory identify "consciousness" with "thought" or "mental activity," thus making him a precursor of Cartesianism.

Before proceeding to analyze Stramara's presentations of the "person as a center of consciousness" in Plotinus and Gregory, I would like to draw attention to two methodological problems in Stramara's approach. First, not once does he ask himself the question whether Gregory was really influenced by Plotinus or others; still less does he attempt to prove any such influences. He assumes that "Gregory of Nyssa's psychological anthropology is deeply influenced by the Stoic, Glean, and Plotinian psychological perspectives" (p. 227). It is not surprising that Stramara deliberately overlooks an important work dealing with the possibility of such an influence on the Cappadocians, Rist's

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"Basil's 'Neoplatonism'." This article demonstrates that Plotinus' influence on both Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa is extremely limited. If Stramara had used this article in his dissertation, he could not have assumed Plotinus' unproved influence on Gregory of Nyssa. Second, even if Plotinus made such an important contribution to the notion of self-consciousness, he did not connect it with the notion of person for the simple reason that he did not have a notion of person beyond the very primitive one represented by the theory of Forms of Individuals. The definition of a person as a center of consciousness implies at least two terms: person and consciousness. If the ancients spoke of consciousness, it does not follow that they necessarily connected it with person (as we moderns do). From the examples already presented and the ones I shall present, it appears that the ancients connected consciousness with soul. To avoid condemning theories before presenting them, I shall now turn my attention to Stramara's presentation of the center of consciousness in Plotinus.

Stramara says that the notion and imagery of a center of consciousness can be traced back to the Stoics (p. 219). He uses

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an example provided in Rist's *Stoic Philosophy*: Chrysippus depicts the *hegemonikon* as a spider in the center of a web it has spun, causing the filaments to vibrate. Hence Rist argues that for Chrysippus the governing principle functions as "the centre of consciousness" within the human being. Toward the end of his book, however, Rist warns that, although the tendency of the Old Stoa can thus be seen as explaining human activity as psychosomatic activity, it did not bring them much nearer to an explanation of the nature of the human person itself, as distinct from its activities.... The fact is that Chrysippus did not go far enough for his own purposes in exorcizing the talk of soul and body which he had inherited from earlier philosophers.

On the same page 219 of his dissertation Stramara quotes Blumenthal as finding remarkable Plotinus' "concept of the 'we' as a mobile centre of consciousness." Yet Stramara fails to notice that Blumenthal, a few pages previously, confirms Rist's fears about the Stoics in the case of Plotinus: in regard to the doctrine of the Soul, "Plotinus followed in the direction of Plato. The soul was a separate substance, and at least in intention, independent of the body with which it was merely associated. On this basis Plotinus constructed his

\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Rist, 1969, 87.}}}
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\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Rist, 256.}}}
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\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Blumenthal, 1971, 140.}}}
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psychology."

The examples Stramara gives from Plotinus (pp. 220-3) all refer to the soul as possessing consciousness, not to a person as a center of consciousness. Stramara himself avers that "Plotinus nowhere explicitly refers to a 'center of consciousness'" (p. 222). But he is ready to forgive Plotinus for this ("I, however, do not fault him for this," p. 222) and also ready to paraphrase Plotinus in order to make him speak in favor of a center of consciousness.

Then, as if he had demonstrated the idea of a center of consciousness in Plotinus, Stramara proceeds to demonstrate it in Gregory of Nyssa, of course, taking for granted that Gregory knew Plotinus very well. Stramara goes so far as to coin the Greek phrase το κέντρον τῆς διανοίας (center of consciousness) which, as expected, is not evident in any of the ancient authors he studies. I quote one example from Stramara cites from Gregory and then Stramara's interpretation. Other examples and commentaries (pp. 223-7) are similar and can be easily checked for conformity:

Let what has been said be demonstrated by what happens in your soul when you think about God. Look up to the sky and consider with your imagination (λυγσμός) the depths beneath, reach out with your mind (διανοια) to the sides and corners of the subsisting universe, and consider what is the power which holds these things together like a sort of bond of everything, and you will see how

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"Blumenthal, Plotinus' Psychology, 135.
involuntarily the shape of the cross is engraved upon your mind (διάνωμα) by the thought of the divine power, a shape which goes from the heights to the depths and stretches across transversely to the furthest corners."

I reproduced exactly Stramara's translation and parenthetic variants. He not only insists that διάνωμα means consciousness in Gregory, he interprets Gregory's text by paraphrasing it to read "stretch your consciousness to the horizontal poles and farthest vertical points of the subsisting universe ... [thus] the geometrical figure of the cross is automatically engraved upon your consciousness" (p. 223). After several additional examples, Stramara is forced to recognize that "the mental imagery of Gregory of Nyssa is not graphically explicit" (p. 226). But this does not prevent him from immediately asserting that "While the terms κέντρον and διάνωμα are not juxtaposed, the concept το κέντρον τῆς διάνωμας is hardly outside the ambit of Gregory's thought" (p. 227).

"Gregory of Nyssa, De tridui spatio, GNO 9. 301, 1-10; Hall 47.

'Cf. Stramara, "Unmasking," 191-195, where he argues unconvincingly in favor of διάνωμα = consciousness. On pp. 187-201, Stramara also argues that Gregory used two other words to designate consciousness: συνείδησις and διανοητικόν. If συνείδησις is indeed a Greek word for consciousness (used even in the New Testament, Latin conscientia), the case for the other two is hardly convincing. The difference between Plotinus' συναισθησις and Gregory's συνείδησις is most probably due to the former's connection with sense-perception, in Stramara's view. Otherwise, he has no problem in stating with certainty that the Plotinus influenced Gregory of Nyssa.
To these arguments which do not support a view of person as a center of consciousness in Gregory of Nyssa, one can add the following. In one instance, when translating from Greek into English, Stramara adds words in order to make the text speak in favor of a self-aware agent: speaking of the Holy Spirit, Basil of Caesarea says that it has αὐθεντικὴν καὶ δεσποτικὴν ἐξουσίαν (AE 3.4; SC 305:160). In Stramara's translation the text becomes: "an authentically independent and self-governing authority" (p. 377). The underlined words have been added by Stramara.

After this analysis, I conclude that Stramara's case for a view of the person as a center of consciousness in Gregory of Nyssa is unconvincing. I now turn my attention to four studies of the Greek terms used by the Cappadocians to designate divine persons.

An important investigation into the history and meanings of the word ὑπόστασις was published by the German scholar Heinrich Dörrie in 1955. Two thirds of it deal excellently with the philosophical use of the term. Yet, as he enters the final


3Dörrie's interpretation of the Stoic use of ὑπάρξις as a form of existence subordinate to ὑπόστασις has been challenged meanwhile: see A. A. Long, "Language and Thought in Stoicism" in Problems in Stoicism, ed. A. A. Long (London: Athleton, 1971),
third of his effort with consideration of the Christian use of ὑπόστασις, Dörrie exaggerates the influence of Athanasius of Alexandria, basing himself on some pseudo-Athanasian fragments. Dörrie says that ὑπόστασις (=substantia) was one of the strongest technical terms of late antique philosophy (p. 13). Nevertheless, as the Church historian Socrates relates in his Ecclesiastical History, the term was not used by earlier Greek philosophers. Dörrie cites the passage:

[I]t appears to us that the Greek philosophers have given us various definitions of ousia, but have not taken the slightest notice of hypostasis. Irenaeus the Grammarian indeed, in his Alphabetical [Lexicon entitled] Atticistes, even declares it to be a barbarous term; for it is not to be found in any of the ancients, except occasionally in a sense quite different from that which is attached to it in the present day. Thus Sophocles, in his tragedy entitled Phoenix, uses it to signify "treachery": in Menander it implies "saucé": as if one should call the "sediment" at the bottom of a hogshead of wine hypostasis. But although the ancient philosophical writers scarcely noticed this word, the more modern ones have frequently used it instead of ousia."

Dörrie himself notes that Plato, for example, did not use the


Nevertheless, he adds that Plato used the verb ὑφίσταμαι (of which ὑπόστασις is the verbal substantive) twice in Philebus 19A and the Laws 6, 751E in the sense of "to assert that one can do something."

Dörrie starts the analysis of the Christian use of ὑπόστασις by affirming that, prior to Athanasius, its use did not differ at all from its use by non-Christian authors (p. 52). Thus, in the New Testament ὑπόστασις occurs only five times: in 2 Cor 9:4 and 11:17 it means "state, condition" (pp. 17, 52); in Heb 1:3 and 3:14, "reality" or even "being" (p. 52); in Heb 11:1, something between "realization" (Realisierung) and "reality" (Realität) (p. 62). The Epistle to Diognet 2, 1 discusses the "reality" (ὑπόστασις) of pagan gods, and Tatian (ad Graecos 5) calls God the "basis" or "foundation" (ὑπόστασις) of everything (p. 52). According to Dörrie, ὑπόστασις was not a central concept for Clement, whereas for Origen it was almost indistinguishable from οὐσία (p. 53). Nevertheless, Dörrie mentions Origen's CCEls VIII,12 where the great Alexandrian says: "...we worship the Father of the Truth and the Son who is the Truth: they are two realities in hypostasis (ὅντα δύο τῇ ὑπόστασι πράγματα), but one in

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61 I checked it with the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae CD-Rom (Irvine, CA: University of California, 1995).

62 Dörrie, "Ὑπόστασις," 14 n. 7.
unanimity, concord and identity of the will."

Here, Origen envisages the Father and the Son as two distinct realities; Dörrie believes that this text was important for Athanasius when he formulated a distinction between υσια and υμωστασις (p. 54).

In my opinion, CCels VIII,12 is not necessarily the most important text in which Origen suggests the distinction between υσια and υμωστασις. Other texts make this distinction even more clear. ComIn II,10,75-76 even applies the term υμωστασις to the Holy Spirit. Yet, despite Origen's endeavour to distinguish between υσια and υμωστασις, his opinion did not carry influence. This lack of influence is attested by fourth-century difficulties in formulating the trinitarian doctrine.

Dörrie then observes that the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) explicitly condemned those who distinguished between υσια and υμωστασις with respect to the Father and the Son (p. 55). The anathema following the confession of faith of this council reads: "If anyone says that the Son is of another substance or hypostasis (ει δεισεσ ουσιας η υμωστασις), the catholic and apostolic

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Church anathematizes him. Dörrie also notes (p. 57) that, despite his support for the Nicene creed, Athanasius of Alexandria acknowledges in his Tomus ad Antiochenos 5 (written in 362) the necessity of distinguishing between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις and of accepting "three hypostases" in regard to the Holy Trinity.

Dörrie asserts that in his Oratio contra Arianos IV.1 Athanasius "defended with strong words the unity of being and hypostasis," thus bringing "to an end the history of the meaning of ὑπόστασις, by establishing its use" (pp. 57, 59). In other words, it was Athanasius who established that ὑπόστασις meant "individual or person" and as such it was to be distinguished from substance. Yet, scholars today agree that both the Oratio contra Arianos IV and other works Dörrie invokes to buttress his arguments are unlikely to be by Athanasius. Therefore, as


previously stated, it is clear that Dörrie exaggerates the influence of Athanasius in the shaping of ὑπόστασις as a theological concept. Moreover, if Athanasius had played such an important role in this matter, the difficulties encountered by the Cappadocians in their fight against the Neo-Arians would not have existed. But this was not the case.

Another important study of Greek words used to designate divine persons is the comprehensive encyclopedia entry "Hypostase" written by the French scholar A. Michel. The article in question contains an analysis of the term ὑπόστασις beginning from early Christian writers, in both East and West, to Modernist Roman Catholics such as Alfred Loisy. Unlike Dörrie, when treating of the Cappadocians, Michel recognizes their paramount role in establishing the meaning of ὑπόστασις for trinitarian theology. Unfortunately, in an article of such a large scope it is not possible to allot more than two to four columns to each historical figure. Hence, although accurate, Michel's treatment of the Cappadocians (columns 381-385) is quite brief. In addition, his article is occasionally influenced by the views of the nineteenth-century French Jesuit Théodore de Règnon whose insights have been seriously challenged in recent

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"A. Michel, "Hypostase" in Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, ed. E. Amann et al., vol. 7/1 (Paris: printed for Letouzey et Ane, 1927), col. 369-437."
years."

In his exposition of the history of ὑπόστασις, A. Michel mentions Letter 38, a dubious work by Basil. Letter 38 of the Basilian corpus, an important piece treating the differences between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, used to be attributed to Basil of Caesarea. Yet, scholarly studies have shown that in reality this letter belongs to Gregory of Nyssa, a conclusion which most contemporary students of Basil accept. Regrettably, Michel


does not quote Letter 38 directly, but Tixeront's summary of it:

Oûsia is that which is common in the individuals of the same species (τὸ κοινὸν) and which they possess equally.... But this oûsia could not really exist unless it is completed by individual characteristics which determine it. These characteristics receive various names: ἰδιότητες, ἰδιώματα, ἰδιαζόντα σημεία, ἰδαν γνωρίσματα, χαρακτήρες, μορφαί.... If one adds these individual characteristics to the oûsia, one has the ὑπόστασις. The hypostasis is the individual determined, existing apart, which contains and possesses the oûsia, but is opposed to it as the proper to the common and the particular to the general. 

Michel also adds that Basil did not use ὑπόστασις as a synonym of πρόσωπον, since he thought that the latter had Modalist connotations. Unlike Basil, however, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa did use the terms as synonyms. One should recognize that Michel's findings are correct, but there are many more nuances which he was unable to discuss in his short treatment. Nor did he have the necessary space to show whether there was an evolution of the Cappadocian view on person. These and similar issues will be examined in the present dissertation.

A more recent study of ὑπόστασις is Jürgen Hammerstaedt's encyclopedia entry "Hypostasis (ὑπόστασις)." He analyzes the term beginning from non-Christian ancient philosophers to the sixth-century Monophysite John Philoponus. Although incorporating the results of more recent scholarship,

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Hammerstaedt's treatment of the Cappadocians is, like Michel's, understandably brief and thus not too helpful.

The last study I consider is André de Halleux's "'Hypostase' et 'personne' dans la formation du dogme trinitaire (ca. 375-381)." This is an invaluable piece of research on the two terms that caused so much turmoil at that time, especially in the Church of Antioch. De Halleux approaches the Antiochian debate on the trinitarian formulae of the three hypostases and three persons by questioning two of their witnesses: Basil of Caesarea and Jerome both of whom presented the points of view of those whom de Halleux calls "Neo-Nicenes" and "Old-Nicenes" respectively. According to de Halleux, the "Old-Nicenes" understand ὑπόστασις as a synonym of οὐσία, whereas the "Neo-Nicenes" distinguish between them (pp. 317 ff). He analyzes


The titles "Neo-Nicene" and "Old-Nicene" were originally coined by Th. Zahn and "vulgarized" by A. von Harnack. According to Zahn's theory of Jungnizänismus, the Fathers of Nicaea allegedly defined the homoeousion by the numerical unity and identity of the divine ousia (Neseneinheit). The Cappadocian Fathers allegedly departed from this definition: they understood the homoeousion in the sense of the homoiouselon, i.e., as the mere equality (Wesengleichheit) of the first ousia in the generic unity of the second ousia (see Theodor Zahn, Marcellus von Ancyra [Gotha, 1867], 87; A. von Harnack, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, 4th ed., vol. 2 [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1909], 262-264). In the meanwhile, patristic scholars have discarded the theory of Jungnizänismus as it appears in the Zahn-Harnack formulation.

Another scholar, Jean Gribomont ("Intransigence and
some representatives of the "Old-Nicene" group, Paulinus of Antioch and his allies from Palestine, the Egyptian confessing bishops exiled at Diocesarea. He thus attempts to trace the origin of the "Old-Nicene" formula of the three prosōpa, which was contested by the "Neo-Nicenes." He completes his long article with a study of the conclusion of the controversy around the two formulae which turned favourable to the "Neo-Nicenes" who were supported by Emperor Theodosius I. De Halleux also considers Gregory of Nazianzus' failed attempt at reconciliation in Constantinople. His main conclusion is that:

[I]n assimilating the person to the hypostasis, the council of Constantinople canonized in triadology the Greek metaphysics at the expense of the Latin phenomenology, in the same way as fifty years later the council of Chalcedon would assimilate in christology the persona of Pope Leo to the ὑπόστασις of Cyril of Alexandria (pp. 667 f).

De Halleux's is by far one of the most comprehensive studies to date of the theme of trinitarian persons in the Cappadocians. It is also unique in starting from the pair πρόσωπον-ὑπόστασις.

Irenicism in Saint Basil's 'De Spiritu Sancto',' Word and Spirit 1 (1979): 116, following M. Simonetti, said that Basil first appeared in the group of the "Neo-Nicenes" who were basically of sound faith but did not accept the ὑμωνύμιον because it was not biblical.

De Halleux uses the terms "Neo-Nicene" and "Old-Nicene" in senses different from both Zahn's and Gribomont's. It is in this third sense that the two labels are being increasingly used today especially in German circles (cf. H. C. Brenneck, "Erwägungen zu den Anfängen des Neunizanismus" in Oecumenica et patristica. Festschrift für Wilhelm Schneemelcher zum 75. Geburtstag, eds. D. Papandreou et al., [Chambesy: Metropole der Schweiz, 1989], 241 and V. H. Drecoll, Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea, 17 ff.)
Nevertheless, the study does not consider Gregory of Nyssa but Basil. Nor does it mention the development in Basil's theology with regard to the use of ὑπόστασις, which I have already suggested.

To conclude the status quaeestionis, I should say that it is indeed necessary to study the Cappadocian concept of person, since no one before the Cappadocian Fathers proceeded as far as they did in elaborating on this concept. The ancients did not have such a concept because of the strong Platonic interest in universals and the Aristotelian interest in an individual only inasmuch as he is a member of a class. The only significant contribution to this concept between Plotinus and the Cappadocians is Porphyry's. I shall consider it in detail in Chapter Two when dealing with philosophical influences on Gregory of Nyssa. Moreover, to date a satisfactory study of the concept and terminology of the "person" in Gregory of Nyssa does not exist.

2. Methodology

I shall proceed by analyzing the possible philosophical influences on Gregory of Nyssa's concept of person. Thus, Chapter Two will deal with individuals in Aristotle and the Stoics, relation in Aristotle, the individual as a collection of
properties in Platonism, and the Plotinian will of the One. Chapters Three and Four will consider the concept of divine persons in Gregory's lesser trinitarian treatises. More specifically, Chapter Three deals with *To His Brother Peter, On the Difference between Ousia and Hypostasis*, while Chapter Four with *To Eustathius, On the Holy Trinity, To Ablabius, On Not Three Gods* and *To The Greeks, Based on the Common Notions*. In Chapter Five I shall focus mainly on divine relations in Gregory's *Against Eunomius* and the *Refutation of the Confession of Faith of Eunomius*. Chapter Five will begin with a presentation of the patristic antecedents of divine relationality in Tertullian, the Alexandrian theologians (Origen, Dionysius, Alexander, Athanasius), and Basil of Caesarea. Then Gregory's own view of divine relations will be analyzed, as well as the ways in which relationality is a part of the concept of divine persons. Further clarifications will be brought when the issue of the will of God will be investigated in the same chapter.

In this dissertation I combine three methodological approaches: a) the integral or synchronic model, b) textual analysis and c) where possible, the analysis of Greek trinitarian terms, e.g. πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις, οὐσία.

a) The "integral model attempts a synchronous understanding
of the development of the central ideas of Christianity." [1] Developed primarily by historians of doctrine (e.g., Adolf Harnack and Reinhold Seeberg), it proves a useful tool for both systematic theologians and historians. In comparison with other methods, such as "the special history model" or "the great thinker method," the "integral model" provides a broader and more complex view of the development of doctrine. With the support of historical criticism, this method shows that a certain doctrine appears as a consequence of interactions between theological topics and other issues, e.g., social concerns, politics, and ecclesiastical confrontations.

b) Textual analysis, the most used method in the present dissertation, provides an opportunity to follow one thinker's development of ideas in a specific text. This approach enables me to examine Gregory's treatment of the concept of person in select texts. Attention will also be paid to how his views on person in a particular text fit into his overall vision. Nonetheless, an attempt to identify a growth of Gregory of Nyssa's doctrine of divine persons should be regarded with reservations, since there is little agreement among scholars concerning the chronology of his works.

c) Concerning the analysis of terms used to refer to

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trinitarian persons (πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις), I collected data on the occurrence of these terms in the three Cappadocians, using the Thesaurus Linguæ Graecæ CD-Rom. The result was almost one thousand entries. I then separated the authentic works from the spurious and considered the occurrences in the authentic works alone. My next step was to examine the places where these terms occur and to see if they were relevant for the concept of person. At this point, I looked not only at the terms themselves but also at the context. Sometimes it is necessary to consider the larger context or even an entire writing.

The advantage of this method is that it directs me to most of the texts where a discussion of the person takes place. Nonetheless, if the context is not thoroughly considered, a major disadvantage of this method is to remain at a merely philological understanding of the terms involved, without noticing their theological or philosophical meanings. Besides πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις, Gregory of Nyssa used other terms to express the notion of person: "individual or indivisible" (ἄτομον), "partial substance" (μερική οὐσία) and "particular substance" (ἰδική οὐσία). All of these will therefore be considered, as well.
CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS THAT SHAPED GREGORY OF NYSSA'S VIEW OF AN INDIVIDUAL

In this chapter I shall present some philosophical concepts which contribute to a pre-history of the concept of individual. These concepts are important for the scope of my study, as Gregory and the other two Cappadocians used them at various times to promote their own concept of individual. Nevertheless, as Dörrie noted, it is not possible for the modern researcher to measure the width and depth of Gregory of Nyssa's knowledge of philosophy from citations—a method used comfortably with Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea—since Gregory is a master of "thought-citation," whereby an idea is taken over from somewhere else, but then completely remodelled and reworded so that all direct verbal parallelism with the original disappears. Nonetheless, I suggest that he may have used the concepts discussed below. In some cases this borrowing is obvious, in others not. Suggestions that Gregory was a convinced Platonist, although disguised as a

Christian to avoid accusations of heresy,¹ have been either generally regarded with reservations or simply discarded.² The following philosophical concepts will be dealt with in this chapter: individuals and relations in Aristotle, individuals in Stoicism, the individual as a collection of properties in Platonism, and the Plotinian will of the One.

1. Individuals in Aristotle

Aristotle's notion of an individual is neither consistent nor clear-cut throughout his writings. In an early work such as the Categories he tries to establish some rules to be used in logical and linguistic analysis as well as in describing being (γόνευμα). To describe things, he first distinguishes between objects and properties; then, he also distinguishes between general and particular, or between universals and individuals. He attaches


general and individual to both objects and properties. Thus, in the *Categories* 2 one can read of individual objects, individual properties, general objects, and general properties. Objects and properties are said to be combinations of "things said without any combination" (2a25); the things said without any combination came to be known as "categories" (hence the later title of the work). In this work, Aristotle conceives of ten such categories: substance (οὐσία), quantity, qualification, a relative, where, when, being-in-a-position, having, doing, or being-affected (*Cat.* 1b25-27). In later works Aristotle calls the latter nine categories "accidents."

In dealing with the category of "substance," Aristotle says that there are primary and secondary substances; the former he calls "individuals," the latter "species" and "genera."

A substance (Οὐσία)—that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily (πρῶτος) and most of all—is that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g. the individual man (ἄτιμος ἰδιώμος) or individual horse (ἵλιος ἰδιώμος). The species in which the things primarily called substances are, are called 'secondary substances' (δεύτεραι οὐσίαι), as also are the genera of these species. For example, the individual man belongs in a species, man, and animal (ζώον) is a genus of the species; so these—both man and animal—are called secondary substances. (*Cat.* 2a11-18)

Nevertheless, from *Cat.* 2 we learn that Aristotle not only

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conceives of individual substances, but also of non-substantial individuals, e.g. individual qualities ("this white").

What then is an individual? Aristotle says that individuals are indivisible (ἄτομον or ἄτομος). At Cat. 1b6-7 an individual is that which is "one in number" (ἐν ἄρμῳ, cf. also 3b12).

Nevertheless, as the Aristotelian scholar Frede noted:

[B]eing one is not a proprium of individuals: species and genera, i.e., the kinds into which objects fall, also have a kind of unity. One can, for example, count the species of a given genus. The kind of indivisibility characteristic of individuals must, then, be a special kind of unity. Frede concludes that Aristotle uses the expression "one in number" more frequently by way of contrast with "one in kind or species" and "one in genus," and thus in the Categories, "genera and species, in a certain respect are one and, hence, indivisible, but in another respect, are not one and, hence, divisible." According to this schema of division, individuals are completely indivisible. Yet what kind of division does Aristotle have in mind?

At Cat. 1b3-9 Aristotle says that individuals are "not said of any subject" (κατ᾽ οὐδενὸς ἐποκειμένου λέγεται). This statement is not easy to understand without examples. Aristotle mentions both

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'Michael Frede, Essays in Ancient Philosophy (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 51.

individual substances and individual properties: individual human, individual horse, and individual knowledge-of-grammar are not said of any subject. In other words, they have no further subjects (ὑποκείμενα) underneath them of which they can be predicated. To this can be added Aristotle's statement that in the case of secondary substance "the subject is not, as the primary substance is, one, but man and animal are said of many things," and a clearer picture emerges of what he means by an individual. The species "human" and the genus "animal" are not individuals, because they are said of many things, i.e., they have a plurality of subjects. Frede notes that this strongly suggests that "an individual does not have any actual parts and is indivisible, because it has no subjects."

It is not clear what exactly Aristotle means by non-substantial individuals, and modern commentators are at variance. Some maintain that individual properties (e.g. Socrates' health), at least in the Categories, are individuated by their bearers, while others claim that they are individuated independently of

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'Cat. 3b16-18: οὐ γὰρ ἐν ἑστὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ὃσπερ ἡ πρώτῃ υγείᾳ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πολλῶν ὁ ἀνθρώπος λέγεται καὶ τὸ ζώον.

'Frede, Essays, 52. I disagree with Frede when he then tries to "avail himself" of the Scholastic terms "integral" and "subjective" to explicate Aristotle's notion of "part." Devised later, these Scholastic terms, however exactly they overlap with Aristotle's notions, can obfuscate our understanding of Aristotle.
their bearers. Gregory of Nyssa, however, does not seem to have been concerned with this issue and thus I shall not pursue it. Nevertheless, Frede is correct that Aristotle's notion of an individual is weak in the *Categories*, precisely because of the presence of non-substantial individuals; we tend to ground our notion of an individual in objects rather than properties.

As we can see in his account of primary and secondary substances, Aristotle in the *Categories* moves back and forth between ontology and logic. The ontological example ("primary" versus "secondary substance") is easily transposed into logic to illustrate the difference between "individual" and "species." Aristotle returns to this theme in later works such as *De Interpretatione* 17a39-40 where he regards "species" as "universals." By *Metaphysics* 7.13, however, he has changed his mind dramatically and raises doubts as to whether kinds or universals really exist:

[I]t seems impossible that any universal term should be the

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1 G. E. L. Owen, "Inherence," *Phronesis* 10 (1965): 97-105 and Michael Frede, *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*, 55-63 advocate the former position, whereas G. B. Matthews and S. M. Cohen, "The One and the Many" *Review of Metaphysics* 21 (1967-8): 630-655 and R. Heinaman, "Non-Substantial Individuals in Aristotle," *Phronesis* 26 (1981): 295-307 the latter. Rist thinks that "Owen has not established his case, and perhaps both he and his critics are right. There is also the possibility that Aristotle did not see the problem at this time. If that were true, Heinaman's good evidence from later works does not necessarily help" (*The Mind of Aristotle*, 327 n. 6).


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name of a substance. For primary substance is that kind of substance which is peculiar to an individual, which does not belong to anything else; but the universal is common, since that is called universal which naturally belongs to more than one thing. . . . Further, substance means that which is not predicatable of a subject, but the universal is predicatable of some subject always" (Met. 1038b10-12).

After the Categories, the phrase "secondary substance" disappears. As Frede notes, Aristotle's dramatic change of mind also represents a major change in his notion of individual: "if there are no genera and species, individuals no longer can be taken to be the ultimate, indivisible parts of genera." Moreover, Aristotle contends that the individual cannot be defined:

But when we come to the concrete thing, e.g. this circle, i.e. one of the individual circles, whether sensible or intelligible (I mean by intelligible circles the mathematical, and by sensible circles those of bronze and of wood), of these there is no definition, but they are known by the aid of thought or perception." He thus shows that philosophy can only be concerned with individuals inasmuch as they are members of a class.

That said, our immediate question is whether the

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3: Frede, Essays, 63.

4: Met. 1036a1-6.
Cappadocians were familiar with Aristotle. Recently, Stead corrected his earlier estimate, placing Christian knowledge of Aristotle's *Categories* and its distinctive treatment of substance in the late 350s, "when it perhaps began to be noticed by Arian logicians." He contends that if Christians use the language of primary and secondary substance before 350, they do so in a non-technical sense. The Cappadocians, who flourished since the 360s in their fight with Arian logicians, use the language of "individual" and "universal" to distinguish between individuals and their common substance, as I demonstrate in the next chapters. Nevertheless, it is hard to affirm with certainty whether the Cappadocians took these notions directly from Aristotle or from handbooks of logic or philosophy currently in circulation. The examples I am about to give are instances in which Gregory of Nyssa seems to hint at an acquaintance with

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"The conclusion about an Aristotelian influence on the Cappadocians will probably baffle some Eastern Orthodox theologians. Yet, even Georges Florovsky noted that in eschatology too "it was Aristotle and not Plato who could help Christian philosophers." Aristotle's understanding of "the unity of human existence" was of great importance, according to this Russian Orthodox theologian (see Georges Florovsky, *Aspects of Church History*, ed. Richard S. Haugh [Vaduz: Büchervertriebanstalt, 1987], 75).
Aristotle's ideas. In one example he even mentions the *Categories* by name. Even in this case, however, it is not possible to claim beyond doubt that he had first-hand knowledge of the *Categories*. Here are the examples:

1) At CE II, 237 Gregory writes: "our nature was created capable of science" (δεκτικὴν πάσης ἐπιστήμης τὴν φύσιν ἡμῶν ὄντος ἰσχίσαντα). This is reminiscent of Aristotle's *Topics* 130b8: "man is a rational animal, capable of intellect and science."

2) At CE I, 172 ff. Gregory does not admit to degrees of substance (οὐσία), either in the case of God or in the human case. At CE I, 180 ff Gregory returns to the issue of the degrees of substance and adds that the subject itself (αὐτὸ τὸ ὑποκείμενον) is the one to which οὐσία is properly applied (CE I, 182). From this point of view, there is no difference of substance between the Father and the Son.

Gregory takes this opportunity to censure Eunomius for not knowing "the philosophers outside the faith" who never made "this mad statement" that there would be degrees of substance within the same substance (CE I, 186). "Nor does such a thing agree with either the divinely inspired texts or common sense," he adds in the same passage. Is the phrase "philosophers outside the faith" an allusion to Aristotle and the Peripatetics? I believe so, since Aristotle himself says: "Of species ... no one is more

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"See also Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Petrum* 2.
truly substance than another" (Cat. 2b23-24). He then adds that the same holds true for individuals: "one individual man is not more truly substance than an individual ox" (Cat. 2b27). At Cat. 3b33, he states quite clearly that "Substance does not admit of variation of degree" (ὅτι οὐσία ουσίας όυκ ἔστω διέταται τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἔττον).  

3) At CE III, 10, 50 Gregory mentions Aristotle's *Categories* and their language as used by Eunomius. This is the passage in which Gregory mentions the *Categories* by name. He writes in reference to Eunomius:

He who laboriously reiterates against our argument the Aristotelian division of reality (τῶν ὁμολογιῶν), has elaborated 'genera,' and 'species,' and 'differentiae,' and 'individuals,' and advanced all the systematic treatment (τεχνολογία) of the *Categories* for the injury of our doctrines.  

As Moreschini notes in commenting on this passage,

In reality, it is Gregory who, in his refutation of Eunomius, employs correctly the Aristotelian *Categories*. He distinguishes -- as in CE III, 10, 49-50 -- between substance and accidents, and then in God between substance and goodness; the former is inaccessible, the latter are shared also by the human nature.  

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1: The last reference (Cat. 3b33) is also indicated by W. Jaeger, the editor of the critical edition of Gregory's CE (GNO 1, 80 note).

2: ET, slightly modified by me, in NPNF 2.5:247.

Other scholars today are even inclined to think that Gregory of Nyssa knew the *Categories* from Porphyry's *Isagoge.* This suggestion, of course, is not to be excluded, especially since I myself think that Gregory was familiar with the *Isagoge*, as I endeavor to demonstrate later in this chapter.

The Cappadocians compared the three divine persons with three individuals having the same nature or species, all equally divine. Therefore, their solution to the issue of divine unity is considered to be rather weak—(this weakness will become evident in Gregory's *Ad Abiabium*). Yet it is acknowledged that the Cappadocians managed to provide some counterbalancing features to express a stronger divine unity. Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, argued that the divine nature is simple, without

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*Stead, Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, 162.

Joachim of Fiora revived the Cappadocian theory in the thirteenth century, but without the necessary supporting features for divine unity. His teaching was condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.
degrees, that one single activity or energy is exercised by the three together, that the persons do not differ in rank but only in their mode of existence.

2. Relation in Aristotle

As I shall demonstrate extensively in Chapter Five, both Gregory and his Christian predecessors drew heavily on Aristotle's notion of relation. One of the arguments used in the third and fourth centuries C.E. to establish that the Son was God was the so-called argument from relations: if the Father is divine, the Son, who is a correlative of the Father, is also divine. To speak about relation Gregory of Nyssa used the following Greek expressions: τά πρός τι, πρός τί πως ἔχειν, and σχέσις. The first phrase is the Aristotelian technical phrase for relation, the second is the Stoic technical term for relation (although it is used occasionally by Aristotle, too), and the third term is the noun used by many Greek speakers of antiquity (with the exception of Aristotle himself) to refer to "relation." It is worth noting from the outset that, although all of the above expressions are currently rendered in English as "relation," the τά πρός τι

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2See Chapter Five below for details.

literally means "things [said] in relation to [something else]," and πρός τι πως ἔχειν means "relative disposition." An examination of the Aristotelian notion of relation is therefore in order here. Since not all of the issues connected with relation in Aristotle are of importance for my dissertation, I shall touch mostly upon those which retained the attention of patristic writers.

Unlike substance, the category of relation did not undergo dramatic changes in Aristotle's thought. It did, however, follow a certain development from an earlier work such as Categories 7 to a later work such as Metaphysics 5.15 as I shall demonstrate shortly. Let me begin with the definition of relation Aristotle gives in Cat. 7:

(D1) 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 other way in relation to something else. For example, what is larger is called what it is than something else (it is called larger than something); and what is double is called what it is of something else (it is called double of something); similarly with all other such cases.

"Of" and "than" represent in this translation the Greek genitive

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"In my presentation of Aristotle's category of relation I rely on the comments J. L. Ackrill made in Aristotle's "Categories" and "De Interpretatione", 98-103 (referred to as Ackrill hereafter), as well as a recent article that tries to bring further clarifications to this issue, Fabio Morales, "Relational Attributes in Aristotle," Phronesis 39, no. 3 (1994): 55-274 (Morales hereafter).

2Cat. 6a36-40.
that is meant to modify the correlates of a relation. Yet Aristotle also gives examples of correlates followed by some other cases (accusative and dative) or by the preposition πρὸς (6b8-10). Thus, 1) the master is called "master of a slave," 6b29 (δούλου, in the genitive), 2) the mountain is called high "in relation to something else" (e.g., another mountain), 6b8 (πρὸς ἐπερον, in the accusative), and 3) that which is similar is called "similar to something else," 6b9 (ποιῆ, in the dative). This should not make one believe that by simply using certain grammatical cases one speaks of relatives, because that is not how Aristotle conceives of relation. I shall examine what he says next about relation.

All relatives are spoken of in relation to correlates that reciprocate. For example, the slave is called slave of a master and the master is called master of a slave; the double double of a half, and the half half of a double; the larger larger than a smaller, and the smaller smaller than a larger. Sometimes, however, there will be a verbal difference, of ending. Thus knowledge is called knowledge of what is knowable, and what is knowable knowable by knowledge; perception perception of the perceptible, and the perceptible perceptible by perception."

Christian writers picked up the property of reciprocation. They

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Cat. 6b28-35.
even used some of Aristotle's examples, such as master-slave and father-son.\footnote{See Chapter Five for examples.} Aristotle, however, adds a necessary qualification, namely that "all relatives ... are spoken of in relation to correlatives that reciprocate, provided they are properly given" (Cat. 7a22-23). An example of correlatives that are improperly given and thus do not reciprocate is: "wing of a bird" and "bird of a wing", for it is not as being a bird that a wing is said to be of it, but as being a winged (Cat. 6b38 ff.). Relatives are also generally simultaneous by nature:

Relatives seem to be simultaneous by nature (ἐμα γῆδιστώ); and in most cases this is true. For there is at the same time a double and a half, and when there is a half there is a double, and when there is a slave there is a master; and similarly with the others. Also, one carries the other to destruction (συναναρέα); for if there is not a double there is not a half, and if there is not a half there is not a double. So too with other such cases. (Cat. 7b15-21)

To prove that God the Father and God the Son are both divine and coeternal, Christian writers also used this property of simultaneity by nature. They also appropriated Aristotle's exact language: ἐμα, συναναρέα.\footnote{See Chapter Five for examples.} Nonetheless, Aristotle draws attention to some exceptions from this rule of simultaneity: knowable would seem to be prior by nature to knowledge, for there are first the things to be known and then comes the knowledge of them. Also, the destruction of knowledge does not entail the destruction of
the things knowable. "The perceptible" and "the measurable" also qualify as exceptions from the rule of simultaneity of the correlatives (Cat. 7b22-8a12).

Aristotle then raises the question of whether substances can be spoken of as relatives. He says that primary substances surely cannot be spoken of as relative, because "an individual man is not called someone's individual man" (the case for wholes), nor is an individual hand called someone's individual hand but someone's hand (the case for parts). Ackrill thinks that Aristotle probably means to suggest that it is linguistically improper to attach possessive genitives to designations of primary substances: one cannot say that something is "Callias's this ox," though one can, of course, say that this ox is Callias's (ox). But in the case of secondary substances, Aristotle admits that there is room for dispute: thus, a head is called someone's head and a hand someone's hand, and these seem to be relatives. To avoid the necessity of classifying parts of secondary substance (such as heads or hands) as relatives—-that is, the necessity of calling a substance an accident—Aristotle provides a second definition of relation:

(D2) Now if the definition of relatives which was given above was adequate, it is either exceedingly difficult or impossible to reach the solution that no substance is spoken of as relative. But if it was not adequate, and if those things are relative for which being is the same as being

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"Ackrill, 101."
somehow related to something (οἷς τὸ ἐμὲ ταύτῳ ἐστὶν πρὸς τί πως ἔχων) then perhaps some answer may be found. The previous definition does, indeed, apply to all relatives, yet this - their being called what they are, of other things - is not what their being relatives is. It is clear from this that if someone knows any relative definitely he will also know definitely that in relation to which it is spoken of. (Cat. 8a28-35)

At the end of Cat. 7, Aristotle clarifies that a head or a hand or any such substance can be known definitely without necessarily knowing definitely that in relation to which it is spoken of. Therefore, heads and hands and any parts of secondary substances would not be relatives, and consequently, no substances can be relatives (Cat. 8b15-2).

Since antiquity the interpretation of the second definition of relation (D2) and the difference between it and the first definition (D1) has engendered much discussion. I shall mention only briefly the two different interpretations Ackrill and Morales provide. First, however, I would like to note that while Aristotle is opposed to the idea of calling any kind of substances relatives, Gregory of Nyssa is not of the same mind. Gregory says that by attaching possessive adjectives to "God" one obtains a relational name such as "our God." 11 Morales too argues that Aristotle is correct: the phrase "John's cow" does not transform cow into a correlative. 12 Ackrill and Morales both

11<sup>CE</sup> I, 572-573.

12Morales, 258 n. 10.
use later works by Aristotle to interpret the relation between D1 and D2, two definitions that occur, as we saw, in an early work such as the *Categories*. Ackrill, on the one hand, maintains that the new criterion is also found elsewhere, e.g. *Topics* 6 (142a29 and 146b3). He finds the second criterion (D2) "too strong," if it is meant to imply that one could know that A (a given subject) is R (a relational predicate) only if one knew what it was R of. He says that the criterion is not satisfied by relational terms like "half" or "slave": one can know that 97 is half some other number without knowing definitely what that number is, and that Callias is a slave without knowing definitely who his master is. Morales, on the other hand, argues that Aristotle's second criterion for recognizing relational attributes (D2) is based on their peculiar indefiniteness. This indefiniteness may be eliminated by a definite knowledge of the correlate. The indefiniteness is quite evident in relational predicates like "to be the double of," "to be greater than," but it may pass unnoticed in terms such as "father" and "slave." Relatives such as "father" and "slave" are endowed with a

\[\text{\footnotesize 35According to the chronological chart of Aristotle's works provided by Rist in his *The Mind of Aristotle*, Cat. 7 was written ca. 353 (p. 283), whereas *Topics* 6 ca. 343 (p. 285), *Met.* 7 ca. 327, and *Politics* 1 ca. 324 (p. 287).}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize 36Ackrill, 101 f.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize 3\textsuperscript{7}Morales, 261. For his whole argument, see pp. 259-266.}\]
comparatively complete sense and they satisfy the first
definition (D1) of relatives, too. To explain why Aristotle
contends that parts of substance do not satisfy the second
criterion (D2), Morales appeals to Met. 7 where Aristotle says
that parts cannot exist if they are severed from a whole, "for it
is not a finger in any state that is the finger of a living
thing, but the dead finger is a finger only homonymously" (Met.
1035b23-25). To this Morales adds a theoretical explanation from
Aristotle's Politics 1 where a new discussion of wholes and parts
(severed feet and hands) is introduced: "things are defined by
their function and power; and we ought not to say that they are
the same when they no longer have their proper quality, but only
that they are homonymous" (Politics 1253a20-25). Morales
suggests that this latter criterion explains why parts of
substances can satisfy the definition D1 of relatives, but not
definition D2: "For since one must appeal to the whole in order
to define them, this reference is contained within the definition
(and the meaning!) of the respective terms. They have to be
considered, at least in this respect, definite enough."

A later work such as Met. 5.15 brings additional
clarifications to Aristotle's view of relation. Here he

\[\text{3Morales, 264. There is a misprint in the reference to Aristotle's Politics on this page: the quote is from Politics}
\[\text{1253a20-25, not 1253b20-25. The examples from Met. 1035b23-25}
\[\text{and Politics 1253a20-25 are actually suggested in Ackrill, 103.} \]
distinguishes three main groups of relatives: 1) those which are said to be "according to the number" (κατ’ ἀριθμόν), 2) those which are said to be "according to a capacity" (κατὰ δύναμιν), and 3) those which are said to be "as the measurable to the measure" (ὡς τὸ μετρητὸν πρὸς τὸ µέτρον). He then considers each group separately.

1) Relatives said to be "according to the number" (κατ’ ἀριθμόν). Aristotle exemplifies with: the double to the half, the treble to the third, "that which exceeds" to "that which is exceeded." Relatives such as the double and the half are in a definite numerical relation to 1, but others such as "that which exceeds" and "that which is exceeded" are in an indefinite numerical relation. "These relations are numerically expressed and are determinations of number, and so," adds Aristotle, "in another way are the equal and the like and the same, for all refer to unity" (Met. 1021a9). Thus something is called "equal" to something because both things have a common quantity; something is called "similar" to something because both things have a common quality; and something is called "the same" as something because both things have a common substance (Met. 1021a10-13). In this regard Morales notes that a particular quantity, quality, or substance has to be taken as the measure of comparison.\(^3\)

2) Relatives said to be "according to a capacity" (κατὰ

\(^3\)Morales, 267.
δύναμι). The examples provided for this group of relatives are: "that which can heat" to "that which can be heated," "that which can cut" to "that which can be cut," and in general the active to the passive. In this context, "that which has made (or will make)" is relative to "that which has been made (or will be made)." Aristotle includes the relatives father-son in this second group. Morales' observation is correct that this kind of relatives includes a cause-effect relation; he also includes here the relatives master-slave (from Cat. 6b30, 7a34 ff) "as a specification of the relatives 'the owner and the property'" -- since for the latter relation to exist some event justifying the property (acquisition, war, inheritance, etc) must have taken place, an event which implies a cause-effect relation.

The Church Fathers of the first centuries were most interested in the relatives father-son because of the biblical resonances of this example. Gregory of Nyssa is certainly among those who considered the father-son relation as the relation between "cause and that which is caused."

3) Relatives said to be "as the measurable to the measure" (ὡς τὸ μετρητὸν πρὸς τὸ μέτρον). The examples provided for this group

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4: At Cat. 8a24 "property" (κτήμα) is treated as a relational attribute.

5: Morales, 268.

6: Gregory of Nyssa, Ad Ablabium 55, 24 ff.
are: the measurable to the measure, the knowable to knowledge, and the perceptible to perception. Unlike the relatives in the previous two groups whose "very substance includes in its nature a reference to something else," relatives in the third group are called relatives because something else is related to them (Met. 1021a26-30). "For the thinkable implies that there is thought of it, but the thought is not relative to that of which it is the thought; for we should then have said the same thing twice" (Met. 1021a31-32). And similarly for the other examples. Now let us remember that the examples of relatives in this third group are those relatives which (unlike all other relatives) in Cat. 7 have been said not to be "simultaneous by nature" and the destruction of one relative from the pair does not carry the other to destruction (e.g., the destruction of knowledge does to produce the destruction of the knowable).

Starting from this third group of relatives, Morales believes he can provide an additional argument as to why Aristotle did not consider parts of substance as truly belonging to the category of relation. He states that in this third group, the two terms of a relation have an asymmetrical way of referring to each other: "the part is defined by reference to the whole (as fulfilling a particular function in it), but the whole is not defined by reference to the part. Since relatives of the third group may cease to be such once their determination has taken
place, the parts of substances (like hand, head, etc.) do not really belong to the category of the relative." He also considers, for similar reasons, that "wing" and "rudder" are not relatives, and their inappropriate inclusion in the Categories as examples of relatives has been a constant source of confusion in commentaries. Morales also draws attention to the fact that for Aristotle the predication of any relational attribute always presupposes an underlying nature: Aristotle "thus repudiates the idea that relations be postulated as principles of Being (Meta. 1088a20ff)."

3. Individuals in Stoicism

Like Aristotle, the Stoics used categories or perhaps "genera," γένη for logical, linguistic and metaphysical analysis. Unlike Aristotle, who originally taught ten categories, the Stoics conceived of only four which are significantly different from the Aristotelian ones. The various testimonies that we have about the Stoic categories (chiefly Plotinus and Simplicius) suggest

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1Morales, 270.
2Morales, 270 n. 30.
3Morales, 271.
that the fourfold Stoic division originates with Chrysippus."
These four categories are substance or substratum (ὑποκείμενον),
quality (ποιόν), disposition (πῶς ἔχον) and relative disposition
(πρὸς τι πῶς ἔχον)." At this point I should like to give an account
of the first two Stoic categories, as Basil of Caesarea and
Gregory of Nyssa seem to have been aware of them when
distinguishing between substance and individuals."

According to the Stoics, "substratum" corresponds to
"matter," being an existing thing (οὐσία). Zeno himself is
credited with having said that "substance is the prime matter of
all existing things." This substance the Stoics thought to be
eternal; moreover, in its totality it could neither grow nor
diminish. It was viewed as "qualityless," that is, as the
"substratum" of everything that exists. The Stoics also

\footnote{A. A. Long, 
Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics, 2d ed. (London: Duckworth, 1986), 160; see also Long 
& Sedley, Hellenistic Philosophers, 1:166. Where possible for
Greek original and English translations of Stoic texts, I use A.
A. Long and D. N. Sedley, The Hellenistic Philosophers, 2 vols

J. M. Rist, Stoic Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1969), 154. Other scholars render them as
substrate, qualified, disposed and relatively disposed (Long 
& Sedley, Hellenistic Philosophers 1:167).

In what follows, I rely in part on explanations provided
by Rist, Stoic Philosophy, 152-172; A. A. Long, Hellenistic
Philosophy, 2d ed., 160-163; Long & Sedley, Hellenistic
Philosophers, 1:162-166, 172-177.

According to Stobaeus, Eco. I 11.5a, p. 132, 26 w: οὐσίαν
de ēi na tēn tōn ὀντων πάντων πρώτην ἕλη (SVF 1.87).}
conceived of particulars as bits of substance. The particulars can undergo qualitative changes which the Stoics viewed as reconfigurations, but not changes, of the very substance. The qualitative changes are caused by the second constitutive element of the Stoic reality, the πνεῦμα ("current of air" or "breath"). This pneuma is what Chrysippus called "qualities" and, like substance, it is a corporeal entity (let us not forget that the Stoic universe is material!). Qua corporeal, these currents of air are capable of running through a body and informing it. They can mix with one another and with the "substance" (SVF I, 85). Therefore, in any particular entity there is both "substance" and "quality."

I now turn to the second category. The second Stoic category is not strictly speaking "quality" (ποιότης) but the "qualified entity" (ποιόν), that is, usually a substance having certain qualities. Justice is a quality, but the corresponding qualified entity is a just individual. On the one hand, this situation is due to the Stoic metaphysics' concern with particulars and its use of many human examples; on the other hand, it is due to the impossibility to separate in reality the first two Stoic categories. Sometimes, however, the Stoics

themselves neglected this distinction. The Stoics further divided their second category into the "commonly qualified" (κοινώς ποιόν) and the "peculiarly qualified" (ἰδίως ποιόν). It is not really easy to understand what they meant by the "commonly qualified," since they greatly emphasized the "peculiarly (or individually) qualified." However, some help can be found in Diogenes Laertius who claims that the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon (the head of the Stoic school in early to mid-second century BC) said that "an appellative is a part of language which signifies a common quality (κοινή ποιότητα), e.g. 'man', 'horse'; a name is a part of language which indicates a peculiar quality (ἰδιαί ποιότητα), e.g. 'Diogenes', 'Socrates'." Thus, the Stoics used the "commonly qualified" and the "individually qualified" to distinguish between what the Aristotelians and we today call species and individuals respectively. In other words, the Stoics used their second category, the "qualified," to make a distinction for which Aristotle used his first category, "substance."

The testimonies we have about the Stoics shed more light on

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7: Stead seems to confirm my observation: "... Stoic theory could accommodate the obvious distinction between the species and the individual (see p. 49) — but in terms of 'quality' (poion), not ousia." (Philosophy in Christian Antiquity, 182).
what they meant by "individually qualified." Most texts make it clear that an "individually qualified" entity is actually an individual. We thus learn of "a peculiarly qualified thing like Plato," or of "peculiarly qualified entities such as Dion and Theon." It is also worth mentioning a reference to the Stoics made by the sixth-century Neoplatonist Simplicius, because he connects the Stoic "peculiarly qualified" with the Plotinian Forms of individuals: "in the case of compound entities there exists individual form (τὸ ἀτομικῶς ἐἴδος)--with reference to which the Stoics speak of something peculiarly qualified (ἰδίως ποιόν)."

This passage from Simplicius helps us to comprehend that Neoplatonists did indeed associate the Plotinian Forms of individuals with the Stoic "peculiarly qualified." As Rist noted, Plotinus might have been influenced in his view of the Forms of individuals by the Stoic notion of "peculiarly qualified."

In returning to the relation between the first two Stoic categories, I would like to quote a text which will shed additional light on the topic and will help me to demonstrate


15 Stobaeus I.177,21: ἐπὶ τῶν ἰδίως ποιῶν ἧον Δίωνος καὶ Θέωνος (Long & Sedley, Hellenistic Philosophers, 1:168).

that Basil and Gregory used Stoic categories. The text comes from two different sources, Dexippus and Simplicius, but is almost identical in both accounts. Porphyry thus says, according to Simplicius:

The substratum has two senses, both with the Stoics and with the older': the first meaning of substratum is the qualityless matter, which Aristotle calls 'potential' ; in its second meaning, substratum is the qualified entity, subsisting either commonly or peculiarly; for both bronze and Socrates are substrata in those things that come to be in them or are predicated of them."

In other words the Stoics actually believed that their first category, substratum, means both "qualityless matter" and "qualified entity" (either commonly or peculiarly). This information accords with my earlier presentation of the first two

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'Again, Dexippus' account reads "potential body", and Dillon comments that "Aristotle does not actually say this, though he implies it (e.g. Metaph. 9.8, 1050a15; 14.1, 1088b1, 14.4, 1092a3) but he was generally held in later times to have done so, as was Plato (Albinus Did. 163, 6 ff.; Apuleius de Plat. 192; Diels, Dox. Gr. 567, 16)" (Dexippus, On Aristotle's Categories, 51 n. 74).

Stoic categories.

Now, turning my attention to the Cappadocians, I should say that Hübner has convincingly shown that Basil of Caesarea's concept of substance is predominantly Stoic." Basil describes the substance of the created world as the material substratum (\(\Upsilon \Lambda \kappa \kappa \omega \varsigma \Upsilon \rho \kappa \kappa \epsilon \iota \mu \mu \gamma \nu \)). Gregory of Nyssa rejects his brother's Stoic definition of the substance ("by ousia I do not mean the material substratum"\(^{3}\)), while embracing more decidedly the Aristotelian definition.\(^{4}\) Moreover, unlike Basil and the Stoics, Gregory thinks that there are various created ousiai, not only one: "one is the ousia of the fire, and another that of the water, and their meanings are different."\(^{5}\)

Despite these examples, however, I think that Gregory found the second definition of the Stoic substance from Simplicius' account -- substance is a peculiarly or commonly qualified entity

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\(^{2}\) E.g., Basil, AE. 2,4,11; 577C.

\(^{3}\) CE III, 5 (GNO 2, 168, 2-3): οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν οὐ τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον.

\(^{4}\) See the examples I provide at the end of the section dealing with the individual in Aristotle (2.1).

-- in agreement with Aristotle's own notion of substance; a qualified entity is a substance after all. In *Ad Graecos*, Gregory writes:

If somebody says that we call Peter and Paul and Barnabas three partial substances (οὐσίας μερικάς) (it is clear that this means particular (ὁλικὰς) [substances!]) -- for this is more accurate to say -- he should recognize that [by that] we do not mean anything else but the individual, which is the person (ἄτομον, ὅπερ ἐστὶ πρόσωπον).''

As these examples show, Gregory seems to have deliberately amalgamated Stoic and Aristotelian categories here: expressions such as "partial substance" (μερική οὐσία) and "particular substance" (ὁλική οὐσία) seem to be a mix of the Aristotelian οὐσία with the Stoic ὀνήματα,'' although they may as well betray a Porphyrian influence on Gregory.' Of course, this amalgamation is not unprecedented by the time of Gregory. As shown above, Diogenes of Babylon, a noted Stoic himself, uses "man" and

''See *Ad Graecos* 23, 4-8.

''Immediately after discussing Basil's Stoic notion of the substance, Stead says that Gregory of Nyssa's notion of substance is harder to interpret and warns that "phrases like ἁρμίκη or ἁδική οὐσία - 'partitive' or 'individual substance' - used to designate the individual are misleading; Aristotle's 'primary substance' is I think ignored." (Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, 182-3)

"horse" to exemplify what a commonly qualified entity is, whereas Aristotle uses the same examples for his secondary *ousia*. At the same time, my argument is also supported by what Porphyry tells us in Simplicius' account quoted above. Therefore, I conclude that Gregory did use the Stoic category of quality to shape his view of the individual. To be more specific, I should say that both brothers use both Stoic and Aristotelian categories in their treatment of the individual. Yet, whereas Basil's view is more Stoic, Gregory's is more Aristotelian.

4. The Individual as a Collection of Properties in Platonism

The definition of a sensible particular as a collection of properties (*ἀθροισμα*) - some scholars even translate it as "bundle of properties" - can be traced as far back as Plato's *Theaetetus* 157b-c where he suggests this idea in passing. After Plato a similar use of *ἀθροισμα* is encountered in Antiochus of Ascalon (2nd-1st c. BC) and Alcinous." Lloyd claims to have identified the passage from Antiochus in a quotation by Sextus Empiricus:

> For just as hand by itself is not a man, nor is a head, nor a foot, nor any other such part, but the compound made up of them is conceived as a whole, so also 'Man' is not barely animal, nor solely rational, nor mortal alone, but the aggregate of all these (τὸ ἐξ ἀπαντῶν ἄθροισμα)--that is to say,

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at once animal and mortal and rational."

A Platonist himself, Alcinous also applies the term ἀθροισμα to a sensible substance, as in the following example:

[S]ince of sense-objects some are primary, such as qualities, e.g. color, or whiteness, and others accidental, such as 'white' or 'colored', and following on these the composite entity (ἀθροισμα), such as fire or honey, even so there will be one sort of sense-perception concerned with the primary objects, called 'primary', and another concerned with secondary, called 'secondary'. The primary and secondary sensibles are judged by sense-perception not without the aid of opinion-based reason, while the composite (ἀθροισμα) is judged by opinion-based reason, not without the aid of sense-perception.

Yet, it was Plotinus who took his predecessors' suggestion a little further and Porphyry who presented it in a more accessible form. It is these last two views that I wish to present next. It should be kept in mind from the outset that, as a Platonist himself, Plotinus also elaborates the theory of an individual as a collection of properties in regard to a sensible substance. He does not say anything in this sense about intelligibles or the

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"For what follows about Plotinus I rely in part on Sean Mulrooney, "Boethius on 'Person'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1994), esp. 47-51.
divinity. Moreover, he excludes the souls of those sensible substances from the discussion:

but since here below [in the sensible world] also in the mixture and composition one element is body and the other soul ... and the nature of soul is in that intelligible All and will not fit the classification of what is called substance here below, we must, even if it is difficult to do so, all the same leave soul out of the investigation in which we are at present occupied."

The soul is a resident alien in the sensible world. Mulrooney warns that Plotinus does not investigate a human being qua human, but only qua sensible substance: "His investigation is thus a deliberately partial exploration of the full reality; and an exploration of the lowest part of that reality." Plotinus then proceeds to describe a sensible substance as "a conglomeration of qualities and matter" (συμφόρησις της ποιότητων και ύλης, Enn. VI.3.8.20) and "this compound of many [which] is not a 'something' but a 'such'" τούτο τὸ ἐκ πολλῶν, οὐ τὶ ἄλλα πολλῶν, Enn. VI.3.15.27') and "whose apparent existence [is] a congress of perceptibles" (τὴν δοκούσαν ὑπόστασιν αὐτῆς σύνοδος τῶν πρὸς αἰσθήσιν, Enn. VI.3.10.16). It should be noted here that, in using such phrases to refer to the "apparent existence" of sensible substances, Plotinus is consistent with his previous intention of not examining the soul of these substances. Therefore, the question

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"Mulrooney, "Boethius on 'Person'," 48f.

"Cf. Plato, Timaeus 49d-50b.

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to be asked is "What keeps these collections of properties together, making them human individuals for example?" As Mulrooney notices, no principle of unity is apparent, since an individual sensible substance is grasped as such by the senses and not by reason." Nevertheless Mulrooney insists, "against Lloyd, that there is a principle of unity for an individual sensible substance, namely the soul, but this principle is just not a sensible one. And of course, Enn. VI.3 allows for this conclusion, but unfortunately Plotinus is not interested in further elaborating on an individual as a collection of properties. Consequently, we should turn to his disciple Porphyry for further elucidation.

Porphyry wrote the Isagoge (or Introduction) at the request of Chrysaeorius, a Roman Senator, who had studied Aristotle's Categories with little success. In this work Porphyry expands on Plotinus' suggestion, describing an individual as a unique collection of properties which in themselves are not unique. Thus,

"Mulrooney, "Boethius on 'Person'," 50.

"In The Anatomy of Neoplatonism (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), A. C. Lloyd acknowledges that for Plotinus and the Neoplatonists 'a sensible individual is a bundle of qualities without genuine substance. It excludes a core self of form and matter for Socrates or Dion which would have been a substrate for their accidents' (p. 46). But Lloyd fails to acknowledge that Socrates or Dion does have a core self; it is just not a sensible one" (Mulrooney, "Boethius on 'Person'," 50 n. 73).
Socrates, this white, and this approaching son of Sophroniscus, if Socrates be his only son, are called individual. Such things are called individuals because each thing is composed of a collection of properties which can never be the same for another; for the properties of Socrates could not be the same for any other particular man. The properties of man, however, I mean the man in common, will be the same for a great many, more strongly, for all particular men as men. (Isag. 7, 20-26)

In this example, Porphyry allows for individual qualities ("this white"), individual relations ("this approaching son of Sophroniscus") and individual substances ("Socrates"). If one were to use Aristotelian language, one should say that Porphyry allows for individual categories, both substances and accidents. However, the best example for Porphyry's purposes seems to be the individual substance known as Socrates. It is Socrates who qua animal differs from a horse because of a specific difference such as rationality (Isag. 3, 16f); qua individual human, Socrates differs from other individual humans because of another specific difference, the hooked quality of his nose (Isag. 8, 15). The differences Porphyry mentions as distinguishing humans from other animals and from one another are both substantial and accidental.

Thus, he says: "Rational, mortal, and being capable of knowledge belong to man per se, but hook-nosed or snub-nosed belong accidentally and not per se" (Isag. 9, 11ff). Regarded in themselves, these and other differences are not unique, since they can be ascertained in many individuals, but their coming together uniquely describe an individual in Porphyry's view.

This Porphyrian definition of an individual was perhaps the most elaborate one to be found in the fourth century. It is quite likely that the Cappadocians were familiar with it, since in Basil's AE 2, 4 and Gregory of Nyssa's Ad Petrum 2 we see the example of Socrates is replaced with that of Apostles Peter or Paul who are described as unique collections of properties. Thus, Apostle Peter is described as the son of Jonah, born in Bethsaida and the brother of Andrew. Even if, as Rist has convincingly shown, "Basil knew very little Plotinus, we have to accept that he read Porphyry's Isagoge or a handbook that reproduced Porphyry's arguments. And so quite likely did Gregory of Nyssa." The Isagoge can be used as a beginner's guide to

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"In speaking of Gregory of Nyssa's Platonism in a recent article, Rist allows that "further investigation of the indirect effects of Porphyry might alter this picture in some details" (John M. Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy" in The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson [Cambridge:
Aristotle's *Categories* and, given its introductory purpose, *Isagoge*'s arguments are less sophisticated than the arguments Porphyry provides in his other Aristotelian commentaries. What is perhaps most important is that the particular doctrine of an individual as a collection of properties does not occur in such a clear formulation in any pagan author (still less in Christian authors!) prior to Porphyry. Therefore, the Cappadocians and later Neoplatonists might have been fascinated by it and adopted its use in their writings.

5. *The Plotinian Will of the One*

In searching for a concept of person in classical antiquity, scholars often also look for something that is essential in the constitution of human persons, namely the will, or rather free willing, as a factor or aspect distinct from, and irreducible to, intellect and desire or reason and emotion. One example is Dihle’s *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity,* 8 Dihle claims that there was no theory of will throughout the Greek philosophical tradition, because reason and intellectual knowledge played an extremely important role. In his view, the

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concept of will was implicit from the beginning in the biblical notion of obedience to the commands of God, and it was Augustine who formulated the first classical theory of the will. While other scholars today agree that Augustine formulated the first theory of will, they regard Dihle's book as highly flawed primarily because he simplistically labels the Greek tradition "intellectualist" and ignores historical evidence which speaks against his theses. The concept of person, however, should not be reduced to a discussion of free will, since it includes other major components as well, as I show in this dissertation.

From the point of view of my investigation into the patristic concept of divine persons, it would be tautological to speak of free will in God. It was evident to the Church Fathers that God was free. In their view, to deliberate is to take time to think of the distinction between right and wrong; that is, not to know this distinction immediately. This entails imperfection which cannot be attributed to God. Although speaking in favor of free will, Athanasius of Alexandria also wrote that "where there

is free choice, there is absolutely weakness also." In his Orations against the Arians (Or. I.35, I.52, III.62, III.66) Athanasius also suggests that "willing" or "deliberating" can "tilt" either way, that is, toward either the good or the bad.

A later Greek Church Father such as John of Damascus, in summing up the faith of the fathers before him, also considers that ἐπιλογή is not properly predicated of God:

But in the case of God, it is to be remembered, we speak of wish, but it is not correct to speak of choice. For God does not deliberate, since that is a mark of ignorance, and no one deliberates about what he knows. But if counsel is a mark of ignorance, surely choice must also be so. God, then, since He has absolute knowledge of everything, does not deliberate."


Therefore, when dealing with divine persons I propose to consider a different kind of will, such as was first expressed by Plotinus in Ennead VI.8.9.45-46 in regard to the One and repeated almost word for word in regard to the Christian God by Gregory of Nyssa as "God continually wills to be what he is and is adequately what he wills to be" (Contra Eunomium III, 1, 125). Enn. VI.8 is of major importance for the intellectual history of western civilization, because it introduces a radically new notion of the divine will as will of the self. As commentators of Plotinus have noticed, this notion is totally unprecedented and amazing by the standards of ancient philosophy. It cannot be traced back to the doctrines of divine providence, i.e., the divine will oriented toward the outside, toward the production of being and the regulation of the course of things. The novel notion which Gregory of Nyssa and some Christian predecessors added to this understanding of the divine will is that it can be both transcendent and immanent. Gregory's insight is the logical

**See also Jérôme Gaïth, La conception de la liberté chez Grégoire de Nysse (Paris: Vrin, 1953), 17-39.**


"Plotinus' later treatises On Providence (Enn. III.2-3 [47-48]) confirm this observation, since they present the classical view about the divine will."
consequence of biblical reflection on the Incarnation. At this point I shall focus on Plotinus.

Enn. VI.8 [39], entitled "On Free Will and the Will of the One," is a fairly late treatise and can therefore be regarded as a product of Plotinus' maturity. Both Rist” and Armstrong” think that 6.8 may have been provoked by the reading of a treatise on the nature of God, possibly Christian or para-Christian, now lost to us; but this opinion has not been generally accepted, according to Armstrong. Enn. VI.8 [39], along with its immediate predecessor in both chronological and thematic order, Enn. VI.7 [38], contain the profoundest and most powerful expression of the thought of Plotinus about the One or Good. The positive language of will, love and thought is used about the One here, but at the same time Plotinus makes it clear that he has no desire to abandon the negative (apophatic) way of approach to the One.

Enn. VI.8 starts quite reluctantly, since a better starting point does not exist, with an analysis of the concept of human freedom in order to ascend to the consideration of the freedom of

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the One. Plotinus' entire reaction seems to have been prompted by "a rash statement starting from a different way of thinking" which says that since the Good "happens to be as it is (τυχοῦσα οὕτως ἔχειν), and does not have the mastery of what it is, and is what it is not from itself, it would not have freedom, and its doing or not doing what it is necessitated to do or not to do is not in its power" (Enn. VI.8.7.11-16). It is not clear whether Plotinus considers this as a positive statement of doctrine other than his own or an attack on his doctrine. He takes it seriously, however, and tries to establish his own view of the One against this statement. What is interesting is that both his positive and negative ways of speaking about the One have been availed of and adapted by later Christian Platonists such as Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and Maximus the Confessor. For the purpose of showing how Gregory of Nyssa used Enn. VI.8, it is not worth presenting all the arguments that Plotinus produces against his opponent. I shall therefore be quite selective in my presentation.

Plotinus considers the "rash statement" contrary and absurd, because it would completely do away with the nature of free will and self-determination and our idea of what is in our power, and would imply that nothing is in anyone's power (Enn. VI.8.7.16-20). He endeavors to demonstrate that neither Intellect nor the One "happened to be," but they "had to be," exactly what they
are. In other words, there is no contingency but only necessity in the divine nature; I shall arrive shortly at the issue of what exactly necessity Plotinus is concerned with. In *Enn.* VI.8.9 Plotinus’ argument takes the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*:

If someone takes the 'happened to be' (συμφέσθη) as applying to the One, then it should be applicable to the Intellect also which is after the One. But I can show that the 'happened to be' does not apply to the Intellect; therefore, still less can it be applied to the One.  

He shows that the "happened to be" does not apply to Intellect, by using a second *reductio ad absurdum*: If the "happened to be" does not even apply to real being how could it apply to Intellect which is "beyond being (ἐπέκειμα ὄντος)?": "For, if anything is going to happen, it happens to being, but being itself does not happen, nor is it a casual occurrence that being is like this, nor does it derive being like this from something else, being as it is, but this is really its nature, to be real being." The First Principle therefore has to be in the way it is.

The First is also "all power, really master of itself, being  

\[\text{If } A, \text{ then } B. \text{ But if not } B, \text{ then not } A.\]

\[\text{Enn. VI.8.9.24-29; see also Enn. VI.8.16.34 and 19.13. This is an allusion to Plato, Republic VI.509B9: the Good is beyond intellect and being (ἐπέκειμα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας). For the historical aspects of this phrase, see John Whitaker, "Ἐπέκειμα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας," Vigiliae Christianae 23 (1969): 91-104.}\]

\[\text{Enn. VI.8.9.24-29.}\]
what it wills to be." The latter statement is perhaps one of the most important in the whole treatise because it expresses the will as will of self and connects it with being. As I mentioned, the definition of divine will as will of self is unprecedented before Plotinus, because divine will was thought of only as providence. The connection of will with being shifts the emphasis from will as power to deliberate to the will as power to be, yet another dramatic shift, this time from gnoseology to ontology. It is the necessity of being what it wills to be that Plotinus has in mind for the First Principle, and not a necessity imposed on it by someone else who is superior to it. Otherwise, we would have to postulate another First Principle on which no one else can impose anything. In his commentary on Enn. VI.8.9, Leroux notices the difficulty in putting together propositions that contradict so explicitly the doctrines of the classical philosophy to which Neoplatonism is heir: "for example, how to integrate a proposition affirming that there is necessity only in the inferior beings (Enn. VI.8.9.11-12), when this very necessity--when opposed to these beings' contingency--seems to be reserved to the superior hypostases alone?" The explanation

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Enn. VI.8.9.45-46.

*At the beginning of Enn VI.8 Plotinus comments on Aristotle's discussion of the freedom of the will in the Nicomachean Ethics. The Stagyrite discusses the freedom of the will in terms of choice there. For Aristotle's limited influence on Plotinus' Enn. VI.8, see Rist, Human Value, 106-108.*

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Leroux provides is that here Aristotle's heritage is transformed slightly for the sake of refutation."

Leroux regards as strategic the introduction only as late as Enn. VI.8.44 ff. of the new concept of will for two reasons: a) this concept is the only one which seems to resist the ordeal of the negative theology that in chapters 8 and 9 removed the majority of the predicates of the One; b) the predicate of power (δυνάμει), retrieving the classical relation between hegemony and will, makes the concept of will become the only one capable of refuting the "rash statement" and giving content to the metaphysics of the One."

The First Principle is not only beyond being but it also generates being." Leroux distinguishes at this point between how the One generates and how the Intellect generates being. The latter generates being like a demiurge. The former generates being in the same way in which the Good of Plato's Republic does: the One is before all beings, as their principle or source, "it overflows." There is no voluntary or deliberative process


'Leroux, "Commentaire," 308 f.

"Enn. VI.8.9.29.

"Enn. III.8.9.41.

"Enn. V.2.1.8; V.1.6.7.

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involved in this case. This overflow is involuntary and necessary. As Rist notices when discussing the issue of the generation of new beings by the One, Plotinus is less worried by the Parmenidean dictum "nothing can come from nothing" than are most of his predecessors. As Plotinus clearly outlines in Enn VI.8.19.19 and V.5.12.57, although new beings arise "from the One," they are not part of the One or transformations of the One. In this Plotinus differs significantly both from Milesians and early Pythagoreans, for whom this notion of new beings arising from a First Principle was unknown, and from Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, who were still under the spell of Parmenides.

In Enn. VI.8.10.6 ff. Plotinus explicitly connects "happened to be" with coming to be "by chance" (ἐκ τύχης). But how, he asks, could one attribute chance to the principle of all reason and order and limit, i.e., to Intellect? "Chance is certainly mistress of many things," continues Plotinus, "but is not

11 Enn. V.4.1.29; V.1.6.26.
13 Rist, Human Value, 104.
14 Rist, Human Value, 104. The generation of beings is important for Gregory of Nyssa who has similar remarks about how God the Father is father (or rather author) of created beings, albeit his nature is different from theirs (CE III, 10, 10).
mistress of intellect and reason and order so as to generate them." Thus, he has answered the first part of the objection, namely that the One happens to be what it is. Plotinus now addresses the second part of the objection, namely that the One does not have the mastery of what it is.

Although he mentioned that Intellect is master of itself at Enn. VI.8.9.46, Plotinus returns to this issue and is more specific: Intellect is master of his own substance. He wrote this perhaps to refute those who believed that even the gods were subject to fate. For example, Alexander of Aphrodisias wrote that it is not in the power of the gods to be what they are, "for such an element is in their nature, and nothing of things which exist in this sense is in someone's power (ἐπὶ ἀυτῶ)." Intellect is before chance and master of his own substance, emphasizes Plotinus. "He is what he is of necessity, and could not be otherwise. Now he is not as he is because he cannot be otherwise, but because being what he is is the best." The idea that the divine is what it is because this is the best is a Platonic idea which makes freedom basically reside in the freedom

\[\text{Enn. VI.8.10.22: τῆς ἀυτῆς οὐσίας κύριος.}\]

\[\text{Alexander of Aprodisias, De Fatg, 32, 204, 10-14. ET, slightly modified by me, and Greek text in Alexander of Aphrodisias, On Destiny, Addressed to the Emperors, tr. A. Fitzgerald (London: The Scholartis Press, 1931), 136-137 (Greek also in Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca suppl. 2.2, ed. Bruns).}\]

\[\text{Enn. VI.8.10.24-26.}\]

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of the good. With the appropriate adaption, this idea was also rather widespread in patristic theology. Origen, Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa all believed that it was good for God to be the Father of such a Son.

Leroux's comment on the latter Platonic idea is important. He says that in the case of the Plotinian First Principle the freedom is absolute because it cannot orient itself toward what is inferior, whereas in other beings the movement toward the inferior results precisely from a lack of freedom. A similar idea is encountered in Gregory of Nyssa when he speaks of the divine Son who can orient only toward the good, and human sons who can orient toward either the good or the bad, according to their own will. Unlike Leroux, however, Gregory does not say that created beings are not free; on the contrary, they are free to choose the good and become adopted children of God, in this way following the example of the natural Son of God. The idea that humans have been created in God's image has perhaps played an important part in Christianity's strong affirmation of human freedom against the advocates of fate. Moreover, one has to keep in mind that Gregory speaks from within an incarnational system

Origen, De principiis I.2.9 and Commentary on Genesis (in Eusebius, Contra Marcellum I.4, GCS 14, p. 22, 11-18); Athanasius of Alexandria, Contra Arianos I.28 and III.59-67; Basil of Caesarea, Adversus Eunomium II, p. 593 A-B; Gregory of Nyssa, CE I, 584.

ŒFR III, I, 18; NPNF 2.5:148.

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in which God "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being
born in human likeness" (Phil 2:7).

I should also note, in opposition to Leroux, that in
referring to the will of the First Principle, Plotinus uses two
Greek words interchangeably: βουλής and θέλης. Leroux advocates
a point of view which alleges that Plotinus' uses predominantly
θέλης in regard to the divine, a usage allegedly confirmed by
the Christian tradition. The same does not hold true for
Gregory of Nyssa who uses βουλής in reference to God in the
passage where he draws his inspiration from Enn. VI.8.

Yet, let us not forget that Plotinus prefers the negative
way of approach to the divine. The final step in the negative
way is the necessity of negating one's negations. Plotinus
takes this step and says that we should "rather throw 'what it
wills to be' away to the beings, [because Intellect] itself is
greater than all willing, setting willing after itself."

---Leroux, "Commentaire," 310 following Theodor Gollwitzer,
Plotins Lehre von der Willensfreiheit, vol. I (Kempten, 1900) and
Carolina W. Zeeman, De Plaats van de Wil in de Philosophie van

---Armstrong reminds the reader at this point how strong
the apophatic way of knowing is stressed by the Athenian
Neoplatonists Proclus and Damascius and the Christian Pseudo-
Dionysius the Areopagite.

Conclusions

In summary then, I should say that Gregory of Nyssa used the philosophical concepts as presented above. He borrowed them without acknowledgement either directly from their authors or from the works of his Christian or pagan predecessors. These concepts inform his thinking about the individual. Nevertheless, none of these concepts singularly represents a sufficiently sophisticated view of the individual, and still less of the person. It was the Cappadocian Fathers who provided the first fully developed version of the person. The Christian debate about the Trinity forced the development of the concept of person in the direction in which it matured.
CHAPTER 3

THE LESSER TRINITARIAN TREATISES I: TO HIS BROTHER PETER, ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUSIA AND HYPOSTASIS

In thirty-four manuscripts the treatise entitled To His Brother Peter, On the Difference between Ousia and Hypostasis (Ad Petrum hereafter) is attributed to Basil of Caesarea and in ten others to Gregory of Nyssa. Therefore, until quite recently it was believed to be the 38th Letter of Basil of Caesarea. Yet, studies such as those undertaken by Cavallin, Hübner, and Fedwick have shown that in reality the letter belongs to Gregory

References to the Greek text will be to Saint Basil, Lettres, text established and translated by Yves Courtonne, vol. 1 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1957), 81-92. Other quotes from Basil's letters are based on the other two volumes produced by Courtonne (Paris: Les belles Lettres, 1961 and 1966) and referred to as, e.g. Courtonne 3:53. I also consulted the English translation of this letter, St. Basil, The Letters, tr. Roy J. Deferrari, vol. 1 (London: W. Heinemann, 1926); however, since Deferrari's translation is not too reliable, I have had to alter it.


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of Nyssa, a conclusion generally accepted. Nonetheless, there is a group of German scholars who do not accept the Gregorian authorship. I find their arguments unconvincing, especially since Drecoll, although attributing the treatise to Basil, confesses that "stylistically Gregory's authorship seems to be somewhat closer." The addressee of this treatise is Peter of Anessi, the brother of Gregory of Nyssa and a bishop of Sebaste. Concerning its date, scholars agree that Ad Petrum was written sometime after Basil's death on January 1, 379. Daniélou dated it to 381, May to 379 or a little later.


As the title declares, the letter proposes to explain the difference between ὀργία and ὑπόστασις, two Greek words the Cappadocians used to refer to substance and person respectively. The work is very similar to Basil's Ep. 236, in which the entire sixth section is devoted to the same topic. Pouchet noted that, after the death of his brother Basil and inspired by Ep. 236, 6, Gregory of Nyssa composed a more substantial dissertation on the same topic, the famous Ep. 38 in the Basilian corpus.

In this chapter I present and analyze Gregory's view of the divine persons as it emerges from Ad Petrum. This evaluation helps me to understand more clearly the Cappadocians contribution to the notion of person and the formulation of trinitarian dogma. I shall begin the presentation by considering the difference between substance and person as an analogy of the difference between common and particular (or species and individual). Further differences between the two will follow. Having distinguished between nature and person, I shall consider some of Gregory's definitions of the person and then see how they apply to divine persons.

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*R. Pouchet, Basile le Grand, 60.

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To explain the distinction between God's substance (οὐσία) and the divine persons (ὑποστάσεις), the Cappadocians used the analogy of the common and the particular. I already presented the difference between common and particular in Aristotle and the Stoics in Chapter Two, where I also discussed how Basil and Gregory might have adopted this distinction. Yet, I consider it necessary to bring additional examples from the two Cappadocian brothers. I think it is in order to present first the position Basil expresses in Ep. 236,6. Then I shall show how Basil influenced his younger brother. Basil's text reads:

'Ουσία and ὑπόστασις have the distinction that the common has with reference to the particular (τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ καθ' ἐκαστὸν); for example, just as 'animal' (ζῷον) has with reference to 'a particular human' (ἀνθρώπου). For this reason we confess one substance (οὐσία) for the Godhead, so as not to hand down variously the notion of being; but we confess that the ὑπόστασις is particular, in order that our conception of Father and Son and Holy Spirit may be unconfused and plain. For unless we think of the characteristics that are sharply defined in the case of each, as for example fatherhood and sonship and holiness (πατριωτικὰ, νόημα καὶ ἁγιασμὸν), but from the general notion of being confess God, it is impossible to hand down a sound definition of faith. Therefore, we must add what is particular to what is common and thus confess the faith; the Godhead is something common, the paternity something particular, and combining these we should say: 'I believe in God the Father'. And again in the confession of the Son we should do likewise--combine the particular with

"Animal" in English and other modern languages comes from the Latin word "animus" (=soul). Thus, "animal" means an "ensouled or living creature" and is probably the best rendering of the Greek ζῷον.
the common and say: 'I believe in God the Son.' Similarly too in the case of the Holy Spirit, we should frame on the same principle our utterance of the reference to him and say: 'I believe also in the divine Holy Spirit,' so that throughout the whole, both unity is preserved in the confession of the one Godhead, and that which is peculiar to the persons (τὸ ἐν προσώπῳ ἰδιαὶς) is confessed in the distinction made in the characteristics attributed to each."

Basil uses the example of "animal" (ζώον) versus "a particular human" (ὁ ἀνθρωπός) to show the difference between the common and the particular. It is clear that what he has in mind is the logical distinction between species and individual.

To explain the difference between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, Gregory uses a similar example, speaking of the "human" (ἀνθρωπός) versus "a certain human" (ὁ ἀνθρωπός). The context of Gregory's explanations is a reference to some of his contemporaries who do not distinguish between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις. When referring to God, they speak either of one ὑπόστασις or of three οὐσίαι. Ziegler is right in claiming that those who speak of one ὑπόστασις are probably strict pro-Nicenes for whom ὑπόστασις and οὐσία are synonymous and mean "substance," whereas those who speak of three οὐσίαι are probably Homoiousians, Homoians and Anomoians.

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14Ad Petrum 1.
15Thierry Ziegler, "Les petits traités trinitaires de Grégoire de Nysse. Témoins d'un itinéraire théologique (379-383)" (Ph. D. diss., Faculty of Protestant Theology, University of Human Sciences of Strasbourg, 1987), vol. 1, 127.
Gregory writes:

From among all names some, used for subjects plural and numerically diverse, have a more universal meaning, as for example 'human' (ἄνθρωπος). For when you say "human," you thereby signify the common nature (τὴν κοινὴν φύσιν), and do not specify any human who is particularly known by that name (τινά ἄνθρωπον, τὸν ἰδίως ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄνοματος γνωριζόμενον). For Peter is no more human (Ὁ ... μᾶλλον ἄνθρωπος) than Andrew, John, or James. Therefore, the community of the thing signified, since it refers to all alike who are included under the same name, demands a further subdivision if we are to understand not merely human in general (τὸν καθόλου ἄνθρωπον), but "Peter" or "John."

The influence of Basil's Ep. 236, 6 on Gregory's Ad Petrum 2. 1-11 is obvious, but a common philosophical source of inspiration for both Cappadocians is not be excluded. The most likely influences on them are either the Aristotelian distinction between individual and species, or the Stoic distinction between individually qualified and commonly qualified, or both. To illustrate their point, both brothers use the example of "human versus this human". They only differ in their choice of the modifying pronoun: Basil uses δεῖνος while Gregory πίς.

Although I have alluded to it in Chapter Two when discussing possible Stoic influences on Nyssen, I shall summarize Hübner's argument about Basil's more Stoicizing view of substance here. In considering the two components of the Stoic category of

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1 Cf. Aristotle, Categories 2b25ff: "[O]f the primary substances one is no more a substance than another: the individual man is no more a substance than the individual ox."

2 Ad Petrum 2. 1-11.

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quality, Hübner proves that while Basil's distinction is influenced by the Stoics, Gregory's is Aristotelian. The Stoics held that οὐσία ἀποικός ὑλή πρώτον ὑποκείμενον, and "being" means "being material"; thus, in their view, the same οὐσία lies at the foundation of both God and the cosmos. By οὐσία Basil often means the "material substratum" (τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον—e.g., CEun. 2, 4, 11; 577C for the human οὐσία). He exhibits a rather materialistic understanding of οὐσία, influenced by Stoicism, which is rejected by his brother Gregory. Yet, unlike the Stoics, Basil distinguishes between God's οὐσία and the created οὐσία. Basil's concept of substance is thus influenced by the Stoic notion of "commonly qualified" (κοιμώς ποιών).

Thus it follows, according to Hübner, that Gregory of Nyssa's description of οὐσία is Aristotelian. The difference of perception between the two brothers enforces Hübner's conviction

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"Hübner, Verfasser, 480.

"Gregory of Nyssa, CE III, 5: "by οὐσία I do not mean the material substratum" (GNO 2:168, 2-3: οὐσίαιν δὲ λέγω νῦν οὐ τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον).

"Hübner, Verfasser, 480.


"Hübner, Verfasser, 469 f.
that Ep. 38 should be attributed to Gregory, since it displays an Aristotelian understanding of the ὀνήσια. Nevertheless, Hübner allows that Basil is not systematic, but that he also uses both Aristotelian and Plotinian concepts to deal with other issues. The concept of the "individual," is perhaps among these "other issues." Another German scholar, Grillmeier, also suggests that the understanding of the distinctions between substance and persons in both Basil and Gregory of Nyssa may be influenced by Stoicism. Unfortunately, Grillmeier does not fully elaborate.

2. Further Differences between ὀνήσια and ὑπόστασις

In the last sections of Ad Petrum (6-8) Gregory returns to differences between ὀνήσια and ὑπόστασις. For a more systematic presentation, I shall now examine this issue. He tells his brother Peter that even the Apostle Paul envisioned the distinction between the two terms when writing: "He [the Son] is the reflection of God's glory and the imprint of his ὑπόστασίς (χαρακτήρ ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ)" (Heb 1:3).

\[\text{Hübner, Verfasser, 482.}\]
\[\text{In the fourth century the Epistle to the Hebrews was attributed to Paul.}\]
Currently, it is generally acknowledged that ὑπόστασις was synonymous with οὐσία in the time of St. Paul and even later. Modern biblical and patristic scholars consider that Heb 1:3 refers to the Son as the "imprint of God's substance (or being)" and modern translations of the Bible also reflect this consensus. Gregory, however, does not accept this synonymy, but alleges that by using ὑπόστασις the Apostle wanted to indicate in fact "the continuity and intimacy of the relationship between the Son and the Father." To support his thesis Gregory plays on the meanings of the word "imprint" (χαρακτήρ). On a first level he equates "imprint" (χαρακτήρ) with "figure" or "exterior form" (σχήμα) and states that a body consists altogether in form. Nevertheless, even if the definition of the form (σχήμα) is different from the definition of the body (σώμα) and by reason one can separate form from body, "nature does not admit of the separation, but one is always thought of in connection with the other." Accordingly, if one sees the form of a body, one is likely to think of the body itself and if one sees the imprint of

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2a Ad Petrum 7. 8-10.

2b Ad Petrum 7. 27.

2c Ad Petrum 7. 31-33.
the ὑπόστασις of the Father, one is bound to think of the ὑπόστασις of the Father. On a second level, Gregory uses the same argument in regard to "imprint" now equated with "image" (εἰκών) and draws heavily on the fact that the Son is the image of the Father.°

Basil of Caesarea himself not only insists on the distinction between ὑσία and ὑπόστασις in Heb 1:3, but he also alleges that the Nicene Fathers distinguished between the two terms. It is in this way that he interprets the anathema accompanying the Nicene creed: "If anyone says that the Son is of another substance or ὑπόστασις (ἐξ ἐτέρας ὑσίας ἢ ὑπόστασεως), the catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes him."° In an article on ὑπαρξία and ὑπόστασις in the Cappadocians, Jean Pépin suggests that the Cappadocians "were actually anti-Nicene in their understanding of the meanings of ὑσία and ὑπόστασις."° In my view, even if the Cappadocians were anti-Nicene, they did not want to admit this, but tried to force the interpretation of the Nicene anathema, in order to accommodate it to their understanding of ὑσία and ὑπόστασις. Yet, whatever Gregory's and Basil's arguments

°"Ad Petrum 8.


°Jean Pépin, "Ὑπαρξία et ὑπόστασις en Cappadoce" in Hyparxis e Hypostasis nel Neoplatonismo. Atti del I Colloquio Internazionale del Centro di Ricerca sul Neoplatonismo (Università degli Studi di Catania, 1-3 ottobre 1992), eds. F. Romano and D. P. Taormina (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1994), 76.
in favor of a distinction between the two terms, even before their time, historical and exegetical testimony stands against their thesis.

First of all, the Cappadocians overlook the fact that ὑπόστασις was considered by many as synonymous with οὐσία at least until the synod held in 362 at Alexandria, and this synonymy caused endless trouble. For example, even Alexander himself, bishop of Alexandria, at the time of the synod of Nicaea (325), preferred ὑπόστασις or φύσις often in contexts where οὐσία would have been possible.\footnote{Christopher Stead, Divine Substance (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 225.} The synonymy was due to the meaning of ὑποστάναι (=to lie under) which made ὑπόστασις an equivalent of "substratum" and consequently of οὐσία. While Origen attempted to distinguish these terms, his opinion carried little influence. Hammerstaedt argues that the meaning of ὑπόστασις as used by Origen is different from the meaning imposed by the Cappadocians.\footnote{See Origen, in ComJn I,24,151-2; II,10,75-76 and CCels VIII, 12.} I am inclined to disagree with Hammerstaedt. I do acknowledge that in numerous Origenian texts ὑπόστασις is the exact equivalent of οὐσία. But this does not exclude the existence of the passages just indicated in which Origen uses the

two terms with different meanings.

Second, in his Against Eunomius 1.20.11 Basil himself makes use of the synonymy of the two words in order to affirm the consubstantiality of God the Father with his Son. Third, in Ep. 125, 1 Basil writes that οὐσία refers to the Son's common substance with the Father, whereas ὑπόστασις expresses the doctrine of salvation. In other words, the former refers to the theologia, whereas the latter to the σικονομία. Yet the context in which the Nicene Fathers anathematize whoever discriminates between the Son's and Father's οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, thus making the two words synonyms, is not "economic" as Basil insinuates. The Nicaenum deals here with the Son's generation from the Father and his immutability, as well as with the formula "there was a time when he was not"; no mention of the Son's incarnation is made in this particular passage.

Fourth, there was a tradition that could have allowed for the interpretation embraced by the Cappadocians. It goes back to Eusebius of Caesarea who, in writing to his diocese to justify his endorsement of the Nicaenum, explained that the Son "is not from some other ὑπόστασις or substance, but from the Father."

This interpretation indeed allows for the conclusion that the Son is another person (or hypostasis) than the Father, "so that there

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33Greek text in Opitz, Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites, 22: μὴ ἔχει άτερας πινός ὑποστάσεως τε καὶ οὐσίας. ἀλλ. ἕκ τοῦ πατρός (apud Stead, Divine Substance, 239).
are two, and indeed three, divine hypostases." Fifth, the two Cappadocian brothers might also have read the famous letter of Athanasius of Alexandria, known as the Tomus ad Antiochenos (the synodal letter of the council held in 362 in Alexandria), where a distinction is made between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις.

3. **Definitions of ὑπόστασις**

Having distinguished between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις in Ad Petrum 1-2, Gregory proceeds to give definitions of ὑπόστασις in sections 3-6. "That which is specifically referred to is indicated by the term ὑπόστασις." In Gregory's view "human" (ἀνθρώπος) is a rather indefinite term which leaves the listener with an almost vague, unqualified idea of what it is referring to. As he employs the term in the other trinitarian treatises, which will be studied in Chapters Four and Five, "human" indicates human nature, thus being the name of a species. That explains why it is rather unqualified. Of course, "human" is qualified in the sense that it is distinguished from other species, e.g. from horse, but as

3Stead, Divine Substance, 240.


3Ad Petrum 3. 1-2: τὸ ἰδίως λεγόμενον τῷ τῆς ὑποστάσεως δηλούσθαι ῥήματι.

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the name of a species it conveys little information. Gregory summarizes this by saying that, "although the nature is indicated by the name 'human,' the thing that subsists (Τὸ ὑφεστὸς) in that nature and is specifically (ἵδιως) indicated by the name is not made evident to us." On the contrary, "Paul" is the name of a ὑπόστασις, because it indicates "the nature subsisting in the thing indicated by this name." A ὑπόστασις, however, "is not the indefinite notion of substance, which by reason of the commonality of the term employed discloses no stability." It now becomes evident that for Gregory ὑπόστασις means "individual" and is opposed to species. In the human and divine cases, ὑπόστασις can also be rendered as "person."

To clarify the issue even further, Gregory adds that a ὑπόστασις is "the concept which, by means of the specific notes which it indicates, restricts and circumscribes in a particular thing what is common and uncircumscribed." If Gregory speaks of "circumscription" (περιγραφή) in the case of a ὑπόστασις, he only speaks of "description" (ὑπογραφή) in the case of ὑσία. In

1Ad Petrum 3. 4-6.
2Ad Petrum 3. 7-8.
3Ad Petrum 3. 8. "Stability" renders the Greek στάσις. Gregory etymologizes here using "stasis," the second part of the word "hypostasis."
4Ad Petrum 3. 10-12.
5Ad Petrum 3. 17.
doing so, Gregory characterizes a ἡποστάσις as "something that circumscribes" (περιγραφόωσα) or the "circumscription of a particular object" (πραγματος πυνος περιγραφή). 

Gregory then gives a concrete example borrowed from the Scripture of what he has said thus far on a rather theoretical level: the case of Job. The story of Job in Scripture starts in general terms describing what Job has in common with other humans; more precisely, the biblical author writes "human" (ἄνθρωπος). But then he immediately clarifies that he is indicating a particular human by adding the word "this" (τίς).

The Septuagint text which Gregory has in mind reads:

There was once this human ("Ἀνθρώπος τίς) in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that human (ἄνθρωπος ἑκεῖνος) was truthful, blameless, righteous, fearing God, and avoiding evil. There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yokes of oxen, five hundred donkeys, and very many servants" (Job 1:1-2, ET mine).

The account becomes more specific--"this human"--in order to characterize Job by means of his peculiar notes (γυνώσκω), designating the place (the land of Uz), the marks which reveal

\[ \text{Ad Petrum 2. 14. The issue of circumscribability played a major role in the fight over images in the iconoclastic period (see Christoph von Schönborn, "La 'lettre 39 de saint Basile' et le problème christologique de l'iconoclasme," Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques 60 [1976]: 446-450).} \]

\[ \text{Ad Petrum 3. 13-29.} \]

\[ \text{Ad Petrum 3. 13-17.} \]
his character (truthful, blameless, righteous, fearing God, and avoiding evil), and all such external adjuncts that differentiate him and set him apart from the common notion of human (with ten children, seven thousand sheep, etc). This description gives the reader a rather clear account of just who Job was. Gregory thinks that, if the biblical author were to give an account of the substance (that is, the human nature) of Job, he would not have referred to the characteristics just mentioned because the substance is the same for both Job and his friends Eliphaz the Themnite, Baldad the Saphite, and Sophar the Minean. Here Gregory makes a distinction between the species "human" and some of its individuals (Job, Eliphaz, Baldad, Sophar). Also the description of the person (ὑπόστασις) named Job suggests that this person is individualized by putting together some of his characteristic marks. Gregory confirms this supposition later in the treatise when saying: "α ὑπόστασις is also the concourse of the peculiar characteristics." The latter definition of ὑπόστασις is highly reminiscent of the Neoplatonic definition of an individual as a collection of properties. After giving the

\[\text{Ad Petrum} \ 3. 26-30; \text{cf. Job} \ 2:11.\]

\[\text{Ad Petrum} \ 6. 4-6: \text{τὴν συνάδρομην τῶν ἰδιωμάτων. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 33, 16: μὴ φύσις ἐν τρισὶν ἰδιότησιν. Cf. Drecoll, Entwicklung, 317.}\]

\[\text{See Plotinus, Enn. VI.3.8.20, VI.3.15.27 and Porphyry, Isag. 7, 21. See my discussion of this issue in Chapter Two.}\]
example of Job, Gregory states that one can apply the same reasoning to divine teachings in order to understand the three divine persons. Gregory seems to be aware that Plotinus and Porphyry had applied only to sensible substances the definition of an individual as a collection of properties. Therefore, when he passes from a sensible to an intelligible substance such as God, he warns that "it is of no avail to press upon a spiritual thing a definitely prescribed conception, because we are sure that it [i.e., the divine] is beyond all conception." Gregory seems to be aware that he extends to an intelligible substance the Neoplatonic definition of an individual, a conclusion Neoplatonists would have probably found unacceptable. But he does not pretend to provide an explanation of how one should understand the divine nature and the three persons in perfect agreement with a philosophical view. He claims to provide his readers with "an illustration merely and adumbration of the truth, not the very truth of the matter." I shall present his view of divine persons next.

\[\text{Ad Petrum 3. 30-33.}\]
\[\text{Ad Petrum 3. 35-36: αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν εἶναι νόημα.}\]
\[\text{Ad Petrum 5. 1-2.}\]
4. Divine Persons

The actual discussion of divine persons in Ad Petrum starts at 3.34. It is this long and beautiful passage (3.34-4.93) that I shall examine next. Gregory writes that the divine nature common to the three persons is uncreated, incomprehensible, infinite, uncircumscribed by space, life-giving. No divine person can be said to be more uncreated or less uncreated than the other two, because "uncreated" describes the substance, and there are no degrees within the same substance. The idea that there are no degrees of substance betrays an Aristotelian influence. Here Gregory applies, by way of analogy, to the divine persons the argument he developed in regard to human persons at Ad Petrum 2.6-7 ("Peter is no more human than Andrew, John, or James"). He repeats the argument in his Against Eunomius I, 172 ff.; I, 180 ff., emphasizing that there are no degrees of substance in God: if one believes that the three persons are divine, then one has to accept that none of them is more divine, or less divine, than the other two. Yet, let me return to Ad Petrum.

Gregory then proposes to investigate only those properties (ιδιαζωντα or γνωρίσματα ἰποστάσεως) by which the notion (ἐννοια) of

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2. See Chapter Two for a discussion of this Aristotelian influence on Gregory of Nyssa.
each person of the Trinity is conspicuously and sharply marked off from what is common. The investigation begins in the realm of divine economy, that is, God's relation to the world, or, to be more specific, God's relation to humans. He quotes 1 Cor 12:11: "All these [gifts] are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses." Gregory paraphrases this verse: "Every good thing that comes to us from the power divine we say is the working of the grace which works all things in all." Gregory's selection of 1 Cor 12:11 is highly appropriate for the argument he is about to make, because the whole of chapter 12 in 1 Corinthians deals with the spiritual gifts humans receive from the Holy Spirit and the way in which each human has to make use of these gifts for the common good of the Church which is the Body of Christ. This very chapter presents not only the relations established among humans in the Church (the image of members of the same body is used), but also the relations between humans and God (the spiritual gifts all come from God). The spiritual gifts Paul refers to in this chapter are the following: utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues. All of these come from the Spirit alone. Or do they? Gregory notices an apparent contradiction in Scripture:

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57 Ad Petrum 4. 2-4.
If we ask whether from (ἐκ) the Holy Spirit alone this supply of goods takes its origin and comes to those who are worthy, we are again guided by the Scriptures to the belief that the Only-begotten God is the source and cause of the supply of goods which are worked in us through (διὰ) the Spirit. For we have been taught by the Holy Scripture that all things came into being through (διὰ) him (cf. Jn 1:3) and in him hold together (cf. Col 1:17).\(^5\)

Of course, this is no contradiction, but the Scripture's way of teaching us in stages, lifting up our minds from what is simple to comprehend to that which is more complex. This is one of Gregory's methods of interpreting difficult or apparently contradictory scriptural passages. A proof for this divine pedagogy is the fact that, as soon as we are lifted up to the conception that all things come into being through the Logos, we are again led on by the divinely-inspired guidance and taught that through (διὰ) this power [i.e., the Only-begotten] all things are brought into being from not-being; not, however, even from (ἐκ) this power without a beginning; nay, there is a power which exists without generation or beginning, and this is the cause of the cause of all things that exist."\(^6\)

The ultimate cause of everything that exists is God the Father. All that exists, including the Holy Spirit, comes into being from the Father through the Son. The cause of the Spirit's being (τὸ εἶναί) is the Father, assures us Gregory. Indeed, the characteristic notes of the Spirit's person are to be known after

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\(^5\)Emphasis mine, Ad Petrum 4. 6-11.

\(^6\)Emphasis mine, Ad Petrum 4. 11-19. Gregory plays on the two prepositions, "from" (ἐκ) and "through" (διὰ).
the Son and with the Son, and to proceed (ἐκπορεύεσθαι) from the Father, that is, to have his subsistence (ὑφεστάναι) from the Father. From the Spirit the entire supply of goods gushes forth to creation although the other two divine persons are the supply of goods as well.

Gregory then shifts his focus to the Son and the Father. He already said something about the Son earlier, namely that all things come into being through him and in him are held together. He now speaks about the Son's own way of being. Thus, in accord with the Bible and the Nicaenum, the Son shines forth as "the only uniquely generated" from the ungenerated light. This is the Son's own characteristic mark that distinguishes him from both the Father and the Holy Spirit: the Son is the only begotten of the three. Unlike the Son and the Spirit, the Father is the "ungenerated light" and "has the subsistence from no other cause." Each of the three marks (ungenerated, begotten and proceeding forth) best characterizes one divine person and only one.

Karl Holl notes that, unlike Basil, Gregory of Nyssa does not use the terms "fatherhood" (πατρότης) and "sonship" (υἱότης) to

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5"Ad Petrum 4. 25-29.
6"Ad Petrum 4.31: μόνος μονογενός.
7"Ad Petrum 4.31: ἀγέννητος φῶς.
8"Ad Petrum 4.36-37: ἐκ μηδεμίας αἰτίας ὑποστήναι μόνος ἔχει.
express the peculiarities (ιδιωτητες) of the first two divine persons. Instead, Gregory prefers ἀγεννησία, γέννησις and ἐκτορενσις for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit respectively. Gregory also uses a biblical term such as μονογενής for the Son in order to emphasize against the Macedonians that the Son is the only-begotten. The latter ridiculed the orthodox by saying that the Son and the Spirit were brothers or that the Spirit was the grandson of the Father. Consequently, in respect to the peculiarities (ιδιωτητες) of the divine persons, Gregory abandons philosophical speculation and adheres to biblical revelation.

If one adds to each divine person (υποστασις) other properties, besides the ones that uniquely characterize each of them, one describes each divine person as a unique collection of properties. For example, the Father can be described as, and is, a unique collection of the following: proceeding from no other cause, that is being ungenerated, and being Father. The Son is a collection of the following: "through himself and with himself makes known the Spirit who proceeds from the Father," shines forth as the unique Only-begotten from the Father; all

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7 Karl Holl, Amphiloctius von Ikonium in seinem Verhaltnis zu den groβen Kappadoziern (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1904), 211.

8 Cf. also Gregory of Nyssa, Ad Graecos (ex communibus notionibus) 25, 5-6.

9 These examples are taken from Ad Petrum 4. 19-37. See also Drecoll, Entwicklung, 313.
things (including the Holy Spirit) come into existence from the Father through the Son. The Spirit in turn can be described as a unique collection of the following properties: has his being from the Father, that is, proceeds from the Father, and he is known after the Son and with the Son. Gregory seems to imply here that the unique collection of properties is both that by which the person is known or identified and that by which the person is constituted as distinct. Moreover, the relation of these persons to the common nature is similar to the relation between the individual and the universal (or the particular and the common). Thus, biblical data, as well as philosophical concepts of individuals analyzed in Chapter Two, are present in Gregory's description of the divine persons.

The question arising now is, "What causes the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be divine persons and not mere 'collections of properties'?'" The answer to this question is difficult, especially since one cannot speak of the soul in the case of the divine persons, as I did in Chapter Two when dealing with this issue in the human case. Yet, I think Gregory was aware of this complex issue and tried to address it.

Having said that the divine nature is common and that the three divine persons have individual characteristics, Gregory gives the impression of returning to consider the divine nature in more detail, but he abruptly changes the subject and speaks of
regarding attributes denoted by the terms infinite, incomprehensible, uncreated, uncircumscribed by space, and all others of the same order, there is no variation in the life-giving nature—I speak of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—but a certain continuous and uninterrupted communion is observed in them (τιμα συνεχῆ καὶ ἀδιάσπαστον κοινωνίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς). ⁴¹

That Gregory intends to speak of a "communion" of persons here and not of a "community" of substance is first indicated by the reference to the three persons and not to the common nature. Second, after he has said that there is no difference in regard to the common attributes describing the nature, it does not follow that he could add in the same sentence that there is "a certain communion" (emphasis added), because it would mean that actually there is a difference in the common nature. Third, if Gregory intended to refer to the common nature, then there should have been a numerical accord between "nature" (a noun in the singular) and its object. In this case, the text should have read: "there is no variation in the life-giving nature, but a certain continuous and uninterrupted communion is observed in it." But our text actually reads: "... communion is observed in them." Consequently, the second part of the sentence should refer to the persons and their communion rather than to the nature.

Another argument in favor of Gregory's discussing the

⁴¹Ad Petrum 4. 45-50.
communion of divine persons is to be found in the use of the term κοινωνία itself. In this particular work, Gregory uses two terms to express the idea of something that is common: κοινότης and κοινωνία. Yet, whereas the former term is used in reference to substance or nature (see 2.7.13; 3.9; 4.39,86; 5.48,62), the latter is used in reference to the divine persons (see 2.15; 4.33,49,84). Therefore, I propose to render κοινότης by "community," and κοινωνία by "communion." The passage just quoted above envisages the "communion of persons."

Gregory then describes the strong relations and what would be called later the perichoresis existing among the divine persons. He says that, by contemplating the majesty of any one of the trinitarian persons, one arrives invariably at the other two persons, since "there is no interval (ωδεν διάλειμματι) between Father and Son and Holy Spirit in which the thought will walk in a void."* Although distinct, the divine persons are not separated from each other. Moreover, they imply one another: if one believes in any one of them, one has to accept and confess the other two also. He uses the image of a chain: one who grasps one end of a chain pulls along with it the other end also to oneself. Gregory wants to make his arguments sound as biblical as possible; therefore, he even quotes Rom 8:9 and Ps 119:131:

*Ad Petrum 4. 52-55.
Since the Spirit is of Christ and from God (the Father) (Rom 8:9)... he who draws the Spirit, as the prophet says, through the Spirit draws both the Son and the Father along with it. And if you truly lay hold of the Son, you will hold him on two sides, on the one where he draws his Father to himself, and on the other where he draws his own Spirit.... In like manner he who accepts the Father virtually accepts along with him the Son and the Spirit also. (Ad Petrum 4.69-81)

Yet, perhaps the most important expression of Gregory's teaching about the divine relations and communion in Ad Petrum is to be found in the following:

[T]here is apprehended among these three a certain ineffable and inconceivable communion (κοινωνία) and at the same time distinction (διάκρισις), with neither the difference between their persons (ὑποστάσεως) disintegrating the continuity of their nature, nor this community of substance (κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν κοινωτητος) confounding the individual character of their distinguishing notes.... [W]e devise a strange and paradoxical sort of united separation and separated union. (Ad Petrum 4.83-91)

In this passage κοινωνία is clearly distinguished from κοινωτης. It is exactly by this "communion" among the divine persons that Gregory manages to show that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not mere individual "collections of properties," but divine persons. In other words, in addition to the other properties already mentioned, it is the communion among these persons that

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63Greek: τού Χριστοῦ ἐστὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Note the clearly non-filioquist nuance.

65Ps 118:131 (LXX) : τὸ στόμα μου ἥρωσε καὶ εἴλκυσα πνεῦμα, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολὰς σου ἐπετόθουν (Ps 119:131). Deferrari says that Gregory perhaps intentionally misinterprets "I drew breath" from Ps. 119 (p. 211).
makes them persons. The dynamics of communion is expressed not only in relations of origin among the divine persons, but also in their love for each other, perfect knowledge of each other, perfect accord of will, and all other perichoretic activities. Since in Ad Petrum there is no comprehensive treatment of divine relationality, I shall pursue this topic in Chapter Five. The whole dynamics of inter-personal communion will become evident at that point.

Conclusions

Having presented and analyzed Gregory of Nyssa's Ad Petrum fratrem de differentia usiae et hypostaseos, I conclude that this treatise points to some factors that are essential for the understanding of the concept of divine persons: 1) the relation of the divine persons to the divine ousia is similar to the relation between the individual and the universal; 2) a divine person is understood as a unique collection of properties, 3) the divine persons are relational entities, 4) the main differences among the divine persons are that the Father is ungenerated, the Son is the Only-begotten from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds forth from the Father, and 5) the divine persons are in a permanent and perfect communion with one another and this last factor makes them be living persons, not merely unique
collections of properties. I should also add that, in contrast to a widespread, misinformed opinion of the twentieth century, the Cappadocians did not state a priority of the persons over the substance, but kept the two together in worshiping God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as in Basil's Ep. 236,6.
CHAPTER 4

THE LESSER TRINITARIAN TREATISES II: TO EUSTATHIUS, ON THE HOLY TRINITY, TO ABLABIUS, ON NOT THREE GODS AND TO THE GREEKS. BASED ON THE COMMON NOTIONS

In this chapter I continue the search for a concept of divine persons in Gregory's lesser trinitarian treatises. I consider the three treatises mentioned in the chapter title because of some similar arguments present in them. For example, one such argument is Gregory's contention that the divine nature is one because each divine activity is one, being common to all three divine persons. Another prevalent argument is the alleged etymological derivation of "God" (Θεός) and "Godhead" (Θεότης) from the verb "to behold" (θεάω) in the sense of providential oversight; accordingly, "God" and "Godhead" would express the divine activity of oversight, not the divine nature. Modern scholars have found such arguments unconvincing, but Gregory was confident that, by their use, he could prove rationally that the divine nature is one.

I commence the analysis of each treatise by considerations of the treatise's Sitz-im-Leben, mentioning the date and what possibly prompted Gregory to write them. Then I look for various elements relevant for the concept of divine persons. In the case of the last treatise, I also attempt to trace some of Gregory's
philosophical explanations.

1. To Eustathius. On the Holy Trinity

The treatise To Eustathius. On the Holy Trinity (Ad Eustat. hereafter), attributed to Basil of Caesarea by some manuscripts, has been justly restored to Gregory of Nyssa by its editor in the GNO 3.1, F. Müller. Gerhard May dated this treatise to shortly before the Council of Constantinople of 381. Daniélou initially dated Ad Eustat. to 389, because he surmized that a passage on Balaam (9, 18-19) was inspired by Gregory's Life of Moses, a late work usually dated to 388-389 or later. But several years later he changed his mind and proposed the year 375 for the composition of this small treatise. In the latter case Daniélou thought


J. Daniélou, "Chronologie," 162.
that the adversaries Gregory mentioned in Ad Eustat. were partisans of Eustathius of Sebaste who attacked Basil, Gregory and Meletius in 375 and against whom Basil wrote De Spiritu Sancto. May concluded that the adversaries were indeed supporters of Eustathius of Sebaste, but that they attacked Gregory during his stay in Sebaste in 360. Eustathius was himself dead by 360, and Gregory's brother Peter was the bishop of Sebaste at that time. Based on internal evidence -- Gregory strives to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit -- one can easily infer that this treatise was most likely written before the Council of Constantinople of 381, at which the status of the Holy Spirit was clarified.

Addressed to a physician Eustathius, this treatise deals with two charges brought against Gregory of Nyssa: 1) he distinguishes the hypostases (τὸ διαμεῖν τὰς ὑποστάσεις) when talking about God, yet 2) he does not employ any of the names that are worthy of God in the plural number, but speaks "of the goodness as one, and of the power, and of the godhead, and all such names in the singular." Gregory dismisses quite readily the first accusation, since those who formulate it "hold the doctrine of the diversity of substances (ἐπερότητα τῶν οὐσιῶν) in the divine

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1Hanson, Search, 716 f.
2Ad Eustat. 6, 11; cf. also 5, 18.
nature." "For it is not to be supposed that those who say that there are three substances do not also say that there are three hypostases (τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις)." I transliterated the word ὑποστάσεις, because in this case Gregory's accusers seem to use it as a synonym of οὐσία. One can conclude that Gregory's accusers are on the one hand Neo-Arians, who deny that the Son is of the same divine substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father, and on the other hand Macedonians, who deny that the Holy Spirit is of the same substance with the Father.

Gregory defends himself against the second accusation, by showing that it is not biblical to use in the plural names referring to God's unique substance. The name "God" indicates the substance; therefore it cannot be properly used in the plural. Those who do use such names in the plural are polytheists. Moreover, to refute the second accusation, Nyssen uses an argument that is present in all three treatises I analyze in this chapter: divine nature is one because each divine activity ad extra is common to all the persons. I shall deal with the logic of this argument later when analyzing Ad Ablabium. At this point, I confine myself to understanding a divine person by examining the meanings of the Greek words used to denote it.

Ad Eustat. 6, 11-13.

Ad Eustat. 6, 14-15: οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς ἐστι τοὺς τρεῖς λέγοντας οὐσίας μὴ καὶ τρεῖς πάντως ὑποστάσεις λέγειν.
In *Ad Eusirat*. Gregory uses the term ὑπόστασις six times. The term occurs four times in the plural (ὑπόστασεις), with reference to the three divine persons (*Ad Eusirat*. 5, 18; 6, 8; 6, 12; 6, 15); it can be translated as "person" in two of the cases, but it should be transliterated as "hypostasis" (and understood as a synonym of οὐσία) in the two other cases for the reasons I have indicated above. Then ὑπόστασις occurs twice in reference to God the Father alone (13, 13 and 15). The context for the latter two occurrences is important for my analysis:

For since it is said "the angels see the face (τὸ πρόσωπον) of my Father in heaven" (Mt 18:10), and it is not possible to see the person (τὸ πρόσωπον) of the Father otherwise than by fixing the sight upon it through his imprint (χαρακτὴρ); and the imprint of the person of the Father (ὅ νέ χαρακτήρ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπόστασεως) is the only-begotten. (Heb 1:3), and to him no one can draw near whose mind has not been illumined by the Holy Spirit. What else is shown from this but that the Holy Spirit is not separated from any activity (ἐνέργεια) which is wrought by the Father? Thus the identity of activity in Father, Son and Holy Spirit shows plainly the undistinguishable character of their nature.

Gregory uses ὑπόστασις here interchangeably with πρόσωπον to refer to the same reality: the "person" of God the Father. To do so, he plays on the meanings of πρόσωπον as both "face" and "person," combining them to support his argument. At the same time, he

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"Five out of nine manuscripts used to establish the critical text read "wrought by the Father and the Son" (*Ad Eusirat*. 13, 18-19). The editor, F. Müller, regards this as an interpolation due to dogmatic reasons. He may be wrong at this point.


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speculates on the famous text Heb 1:3, interpreting ὑπόστασις in this text in the sense of "person." A similar strategy used to advance his argument can be found in Ad Petrum 8, as I show in Chapter Three. In his works written after 365, Basil of Caesarea no longer allowed for the use of πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις as synonymous, because in his view πρόσωπον was compromised by Sabellius when the latter used it with the meaning of "mask." As seen here, Gregory of Nyssa does not share in his brother's parti pris, but continues to use the two terms interchangeably.

2. To Ablabium, On Not Three Gods

As for the dates of To Ablabium, On Not Three Gods (Ad Ablabium hereafter) and To the Greeks, Based on the Common Notions (Ad Graecos hereafter) May agrees with Daniélou in placing them toward the end of Gregory of Nyssa's life. May rejects the

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See also Basil, AP 2, 3, 5 (661a) and my "Prosōpon and Hypostasis in Basil of Caesarea's Against Eunomius and the Epistles," Vigiliae Christianae 51, no. 4 (1997): 384-95 for an explanation of the reasons for the deliberate Cappadocian misinterpretation of the meaning of ὑπόστασις in Heb 1:3.

proposal for the year 381 voiced by some scholars. He argues that these treatises make no mention of the important disputes taking place that very year. These treatises remind May of Gregory of Nazianzus' Ep. 202, written in 387.12 Daniélou dates Ad Ablabium and Ad Graecos to about 388. In his opinion, "they correspond to a period when Gregory is interested less in dogmatic controversies and more in spirituality and when he surely approaches them [these dogmatic controversies] by request from his friends and in a rapid manner."13 Both May and Daniélou may be right in dating Ad Ablabium to around 387-388, especially since in Ad Ablabium 37, 8 there is a reference to Gregory's old age. Their opinion has recently been confirmed by Stead.14

In this treatise Ablabius, a friend who does not know how to understand the formula "one substance, three hypostases," confronts Gregory with two equally extreme alternatives: either say "three gods" or speak of one God, excluding the Son and the Spirit from the divinity. The former alternative is Tritheism, whereas the latter is extreme Arianism and Macedonianism. Ablabius asks: If we can speak of Peter, James, and John as three

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12 G. May, "Chronologie," 58 f.
humans although they are one in nature, why not speak of three
gods also? In other words, if it is logical to refer to humans,
who are more than one, by the plural number of the name derived
from their nature, why then is this absurd in the divine case?

To begin with, Gregory replies that to speak of "many
humans" (πολλοὶ ἄνθρωποι) is a customary abuse of language, since we
do not call somebody by the name of his nature, but by that which
signifies the particular subject (ὑποκείμενον). In doing so, we
try to avoid the confusion that may result from the community
(κοινότης) of the name, "as it would happen if every one of those
who hear it were to think that he himself was the person
addressed.": "Human nature" (ἄνθρωπη φύσις) is common to all
human individuals and the word "human" (ἄνθρωπος) signifies this
nature. Consequently, to say "many humans" is roughly tantamount
to speaking of "many human natures" which is erroneous.:
Therefore, Gregory proposes that we correct our erroneous habit
of calling "many" what is actually one. This correction would
help us to avoid misunderstanding the divine nature which is one
and should be referred to as such. He means that from a logical
point of view we cannot refer to an individual by the name of its
species or to a species by the name of its genus. We have to
qualify them somehow. When referring to a human individual,

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\textsuperscript{1}\textsuperscript{6}Ad Ablabium 40, 10-14.

\textsuperscript{7}\textsuperscript{Ad Ablabium 40, 5 ff.}

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Aristotle himself says "this human" or "a certain human" (τὸς ἄνθρωπος, Cat. 2a15), not simply "human," and Gregory says "such and such human" (τοιὸσόε νὰ ἄνθρωπος, Ad Graecos 29-30).

Nevertheless, Gregory has to recognize that common language employs the phrase "many humans" and so does the Scripture. Hence he is constrained to say that we can actually tolerate this bad habit in the case of the "lower nature" (κάτω φύσις), "since no harm results from the mistaken use of the name." Yet, the same variation in the use of the term is not acceptable in the case of the divine nature. First of all, the habit of calling "many" that which is one is dangerous in referring to the divine, because it contravenes Scripture: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord" (Deut 6:4). Gregory insists that God is one, although, "the name of godhead extends through the Holy Trinity."*

Second, he proposes to analyze more closely the meaning of the word "godhead" in order to obtain additional help in proving his point. A long argument beginning at 42, 13 attempts to affirm that not even the word "godhead" (or divine nature, θεότης)

*Ad Ablabium 41, 18 ff.

*Ad Ablabium 42, 1-3.

*This Septuagint text differs quite dramatically from the Hebrew text which reads: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our Lord, the Lord alone."

*Ad Ablabium 42, 5-6.
is able to fully describe what the divine nature is, because θεότης is the name of an activity (or energy, ἐνέργεια). Gregory draws upon the alleged derivation of θεότης from the verb θεάω, which means "to behold" in the sense of providential oversight. θεότης thus refers to the activity of oversight, as does θεός itself. Yet any activity oriented from God to the creation is common to all three divine persons: "every activity which extends from God to the creation, and is named according to our variable conceptions of it, has its origin from the Father, and proceeds through the Son, and is perfected in the Holy Spirit." One example of activity common to the three divine persons is "seeing." God the Father is said to see: "Behold our shield, O God" (Ps 83:10 in the LXX; 84:9); the Son also sees the hidden thoughts of those who condemn him (Mt 9:4); the Spirit also is said to see when Peter says to Ananias, "Why had Satan filled your heart, to lie to the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 5:3), showing that the Spirit saw Ananias' hidden thoughts and revealed them to Peter.

Unlike divine nature, human nature does not have the same

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12Like the other two Cappadocians, Gregory refers to activities as "that which surrounds [the substance]" (τὰ περὶ αὐτῆς, Ad Ablabium 43, 14).

13See Ad Eustat. 14, 6 for a similar remark.

14Ad Ablabium 47, 24-48, 2; NPNF 2.5:334.

15Ad Ablabium 44, 17-46, 2.
oneness. The reason, according to Nyssen, is that no single human activity is common to all humans. Even if several humans are engaged in the same activity, they work separately each by himself at the task he has undertaken. "For instance, supposing the case of several orators, their pursuit, being one, has the same name in the numerous cases: but each of those who follow it works by himself, this one pleading on his own account, and that on his own account." Therefore, unlike God, humans are properly called "many."

The fact that every divine activity manifested ad extra is common to the three divine persons is a sufficient reason in Gregory's view to demonstrate that the divine nature is one in a way that is different from the way in which the human nature is one. Therefore, in the divine case one should not use the phrase "three gods" to refer to the divine persons. One is allowed, however, to refer to humans as "many humans."

I believe I have presented quite extensively Gregory's argument regarding the unity of nature and the "proper" use of names derived from nature. I shall return to some of these arguments later in this chapter when dealing with Ad Graecos, as Gregory adds additional explanations there. At this point, however, I should say, along with Stead, that Gregory's essay "On Not Three Gods" "resembles an accomplished conjuring trick more

\[\text{Ad Ablabium 47, 14-16.}\]

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nearly than a valid theological demonstration." The message Gregory wants to convey by the whole argument, despite this flawed and ultimately unconvincing demonstration, is that unlike individuals, substance is not an enumerative entity. He then moves on to show why individuals can be enumerated.

2.1 The concept of enumeration of individuals

The problem Gregory proposes to solve in Ad Ablabium is actually the same trinitarian problem confronting all the Cappadocians: how to conceive of God as three according to persons and one according to substance. A concept he uses in Ad Ablabium to enhance this distinction is that of "enumeration of individuals": unlike their common substance, individuals can be enumerated. After speaking of "Luke" and "Stephen," Gregory writes: "the notion of persons admits of that separation which is made by the peculiar attributes observed in each severally, and when they are combined is presented to us by means of number." He returns to this argument later, as he finds it very useful to support his case:

[N]either diminution nor increase attaches to any nature,

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"Stead, "Why Not Three Gods?," 149.

"Ad Ablabium" 40, 24 ff.: ὁ μὲν τῶν ὑποστάσεων λόγος διὰ τὰς ἐνθεωρουμένας ἴδιότητας ἐκάστω τῶν διαμερισμῶν εὑρέθηκε καὶ κατὰ συνθέσιν ἐν ἀριθμῷ θεωρεῖται."
when it is contemplated in a larger or smaller number. For it is only those things which are contemplated in their individual circumscription (κατ' ὁμοιότητας περιγραφής) which are enumerated by way of addition (κατὰ συνθέσιν ἀριθμεῖται). Now this circumscription is noted by bodily appearance, and size, and place, and difference in figure and colour; and that which is contemplated apart from these conditions is free from the circumscription which is formed by such [properties]. That which is not thus circumscribed is not enumerated, and that which is not enumerated cannot be contemplated in multitude (οὐ δὲ περιγράφεται οὐκ ἀριθμεῖται, τὸ δὲ μὴ ἀριθμοῦμενον ἐν πληθεὶς θεωρηθῆναι οὐ δύναται).

In this text Gregory states that no nature can be circumscribed; this holds true for the divine nature as well, which he previously described as infinite and incomprehensible. Unlike nature, individuals are circumscribed and enumerable. Nevertheless, the examples of individuals he provides in the passage are very material and therefore hardly relevant for divine persons. The divine persons are not material, although they are circumscribed. As such, they are also enumerable. Gregory does not explain it here, but elsewhere he distinguishes divine persons from one another by their relations of origin. I shall deal with this issue later when discussing causal language in Ad Ablabium.

Two things are worth noting in the above-quoted passage.

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1Ad Ablabium 53, 7-15; NPNF 2.5:335.


5See Gregory of Nyssa, Ad Petrum 3. 10-12: ὑπόστασις is "the concept which, by means of the specific notes which it indicates, restricts and circumscribes in a particular thing what is common and uncircumscribed."
First, the definition of the individual as a "circumscription" (περιγραφή) formed by some properties reminds us of the Platonic definition of an individual as a collection of properties. Origen too, as Michel Barnes noted, used the term περιγραφή to indicate the separate reality of the many δύναμις of God, in particular, the real and separate existence of God's Word, which—unlike the human word inherent in our minds—possesses substance (υπόστασις). Περιγραφή in this case can perhaps be rendered by "individuality," as Heine does when translating Origen.

Second, individuals are characterized by means of the concept of enumeration. To make this theoretical explanation more accessible to Ablabius, Gregory puts forward some concrete examples. He says that we do not speak of "many golds" but of "much gold." Yet, we do speak of many "gold pieces" or "gold coins," or "staters," without finding any multiplication of the

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"See Commentary on John I, 292. Ronald Heine translates this passage as follows: "As, therefore, there are many powers of God, each of which has its own individuality (περιγραφή)... so also the Christ... will be understood to be the 'Word'—although the reason which is in us has no individuality (περιγραφή) apart from us—possessing substance (υπόστασις)" (Origen: Commentary on the Gospel according to John Books 1-10 [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989], 94).
nature of gold by the number of staters; but after making this statement, he emends it by saying that "properly, we should not call them 'gold [coins]' but 'golden [coins]'". Similarly, continues Gregory, one can think of Peter and James, and John as many, "yet the human (ἀνθρώπος) in them is one." Elsewhere, Gregory writes that "Numerical order does not bring about diversity of the natures, but the numbered items, whatever their nature is, remain what they are, whether they are numbered or not. The number is a sign to make it known how many things are." Basil of Caesarea also uses the concept of enumeration of hypostases (by hypostasis he means person at this time), but he insists that the divine hypostases have to be "enumerated piously" (ἐνεργεῖ ἀριθμεῖ) not materially and adds that divinity is above number."

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14 Ad Ablabium 53, 16 ff.
15 Ad Ablabium 53, 25-54, 1.
16 Ad Ablabium 54, 2 f.
17 Gregory of Nyssa, CE I, 201-201.
Gregory’s goal is to prove that there are not three gods. I am interested in understanding his concept of the divine persons. Therefore, I conclude the analysis of the concept of enumeration of individuals by noting that this concept can and should be added to the notion of persons: more exactly, persons are enumerable entities. Troiano reaches a similar conclusion for Basil, namely that the concept of enumeration of hypostases is closely connected to the distinction of hypostases.¹

2.2 Causal differences among the divine persons

Some of his opponents accused Gregory of not recognizing the difference of nature in the Godhead. His argument, therefore, would allegedly lead to a confusion of persons. To these calumniators (συνοδάντα) Gregory answers that he does not confuse the persons, because he admits of their difference in respect of cause and that which is caused (τὴν κατὰ τὸ αἴτιον καὶ αἰτιατῶν διαφορὰν).¹² He distinguishes the person who is "the cause" (τὸ αἴτιον), i.e., the Father, from the person who is "from the cause" (ἐκ τοῦ αἰτίου) or "directly from the first" (προσεχῶς ἐκ τοῦ πρώτου),


¹¹ Ad Ablabium 55, 24 ff.
i.e., the Son, and from that who is "by that which is directly from the first" (διὰ τοῦ προσεχῶς ἐκ τοῦ πρώτου), i.e., the Holy Spirit. "The mediation of the Son preserves his being the only-begotten and does not sever the Spirit's relation by way of nature to the Father." These causal relations in which one person is the source of the other two persons are relations of origin. They thus help Gregory to distinguish the persons from each other.

This conception, however, must not be identified with the western filioque, since the Father and the Son do not form one principle; the proper cause of the Spirit is the Father (τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς εἶναι τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ ἀμφιβάλλειν). Phrases found in Gregory's writings which would allegedly imply he favors the filioque have proved to be interpolations. In stating that the Spirit comes from the Father through the Son, Gregory and his brother Basil

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1"Ad Ablabium" 56, 3-6. Note that the English translation in the NPNF 2.5: 336 is mistaken in rendering ἐκ τοῦ πρώτου by "from the first Cause"; consequently, the Spirit is mistakenly said to be "by that which is from the first Cause" (p. 336). Gregory did not speak here of the "first" and "second cause," but of the Father as merely "the first" in the Trinity, because he is the cause of the other two persons.

2"Ad Ablabium" 56, 8-9: τῆς τοῦ νιῶ μεσίτειας καὶ αὐτῷ τὸ μονογενὲς φυλαττούσης καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς φυσικῆς πρὸς τοῖς πατέρα σχέσεως μὴ ἀπειργούσης.

3"Ad Ablabium" 56, 7 f.

4See K. Holl, Amphilochius von Ikonium, 215 n. 1. Simonetti agrees with Holl that neither Gregory, nor the other two Cappadocians spoke of the filioque (see Manlio Simonetti, La crisi ariana nel IV secolo [Rome: Augustinianum, 1975], 449 ff.).
actually manifest themselves as followers of Origen. It was Origen who interpreted Jn 1:3 ("All things came into being through him [i.e., the Word], and without him not one thing came into being") as all things come into existence through the Word, including the Holy Spirit.

Gregory then proceeds with his causal argument and says that, in using this language, we do not actually state what the persons are, but how they are. Causal language indicates only "the difference in manner of existence" (τὴν κατὰ τὸ πῶς εἶναι διαφορὰν) among the persons; the divine persons are distinct from each other by the way in which they obtain their existence. It is worth noting that, like the divine names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, causal language is relational language expressing relations of origin.

To sum up, differences among the divine persons are also indicated by causal language. Consequently, the description of the divine persons by means of this language should be added to the concept of divine persons.

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46 Ad Ablabium 56, 13 f.

"See also Brian E. Daley, "'A Richer Union': Leontius of Byzantium and the Relationship of Human and Divine in Christ," Studia patristica 24 (1993), 264. For a discussion of the phrase "mode of existence" in the Cappadocians, see Chapter Five below.

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3. To the Greeks, Based on the Common Notions

As I mentioned at the beginning of the section dealing with Ad Ablabium, May and Daniélou considered Ad Graecos to be a late work by Gregory, probably from the late 380s. Stramara, the English translator of Ad Graecos, recently argued that this tract was written shortly after the Council of Constantinople which ended in July 381. The lack of any reference to the great Council in the tract was due to the Eunomians' renunciation of the Council which had explicitly condemned them in its first canon. "Gregory's argument would have to be linguistic and metaphysical, rather than ecclesiological and doctrinaire, if it were to convince such philosophically hellenized Christians."

The complete title of this work in Müller's critical edition is the following: "By stating 'three persons' in the Godhead, we do not say 'three gods'. To the Greeks, based on common notions." In Ad Graecos, Gregory wants to prove that, even if

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"References to the Greek text will be to Ad Graecos (ex communibus notionibus) in Gregorii Nysseni Opera, vol. 3, part 1, ed. Friedrich Müller (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 17-34. ET of the passages quoted is mine. A long-overdue English translation of
one bases one's understanding of God on the "common notions" and not on revelation, one cannot infer that there are three gods from the fact that Christians speak of three persons in the Godhead. By "common notions" (κοιναὶ ἐννοιαὶ) Gregory means "general principles" or "universally accepted opinions." Basil of Caesarea, too, in a polemical context against Eunomius says that the κοιναὶ ἐννοιαὶ tell us that God exists, not what he is.

The doctrine of the "common notions" (κοιναὶ ἐννοιαὶ) was widespread in ancient philosophy and was used to establish a ground of common agreement as a support for a given theory. In being a

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this text was eventually published as Gregory of Nyssa, "Ad Graecos: How It Is that We Say There Are Three Persons in the Divinity but Do Not Say that There Are Three Gods" (To the Greeks: Concerning the Commonality of Concepts), tr. Daniel F. Stramara, jr. The Greek Orthodox Theological Review 41, no. 4 (1996): 381-391. I find this translation highly problematic though, especially when it renders into English important theological terms such as: ἀνθρώπος, ὑπόστασις, ὑπάρχεις, οὐσία. Here are some examples: 1) The Greek ἀνθρώπος is an inclusive word which I usually translate as "human"; Stramara prefers to render it as the non-inclusive "man" which he then twists to "mans" (as in the next example) 2) Gregory says that one cannot properly say πολλοὶ ἀνθρώποι (I render it as "many humans") because ἀνθρώπος stands for human nature; Stramara renders the phrase as "many Mans" (sic), a highly misleading phrase in my view; 3) Stramara translates ὑπόστασις, ὑπάρχεις, and οὐσία as "subsistence," "substance," and "essence" respectively, when there is a certain scholarly consensus that they should actually be rendered as "person" (or "hypostasis"), "existence," and "substance" (or "essence") respectively.

1. AE 1, 12.8 (SC 299:212). Cf. Hanson, Search, 689 f.

mixture of logic and ontology, Ad Graecos reminds us very much of Aristotle's *Categories* or *Metaphysics*. Nevertheless, it is an Aristotle probably learned from an intermediary. Given the fact that Gregory addresses this treatise to "the Greeks," i.e., perhaps contemporaries who were trained in Greek philosophy and could not accept that God is triune, we should not be terrified about the language of genus and species or substance and accidents used or hinted at throughout this work.

The style of this treatise is circumlocutory and rather difficult to follow. Gregory starts by assuming that the name "God" is not indicative of the persons (πρόσωπα) but of the substance (ὑπόστασις) of divinity; otherwise, when speaking of three persons, we should necessarily affirm three gods. Then, he says that, when speaking of God, we say "Father and Son and Holy Spirit" or "God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit." We do not say "God and God and God," because, according to the "{commonly accepted notion} (κατ' ἐμνοιαν), the conjunction "and" (καί) binds different realities, not one and the same reality.

Most of the time Gregory uses πρόσωπαν and ὑπόστασις

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Orthodox Theological Review 41, no. 4 (1996): 375-391; Stramara shows that he is unaware of the existence of the rhetorical device of "common notions" in antiquity. His choice of title also betrays Stramara's failure to understand Gregory's logic.

\(^{93}\) Ad Graecos. 19,1-7.
synonymously in this treatise when referring to divine or human persons; but whereas the former term occurs sixty times, the later occurs only thirty-six times. To express the notion of the person, however, he also uses other terms, such as: "individual or indivisible" (ἄτομον), "partial substance" (μερική οὐσία), and "particular substance" (ἰδική οὐσία). Gregory tries to be rather careful in his use of the latter terms, since one could infer that God's οὐσία is divided among the divine persons. The division of the substance into three because of the persons would imply the division of God into three gods (Ad Graecos. 22, 22).

In my view, Gregory seems to be somewhat inconsistent, because almost immediately after stating that the substance should not be divided among the persons, he speaks of "partial" or "particular substances." His only excuse possibly is that he does so in reference to human persons and swiftly qualifies his statements.

The text runs:

If somebody says that we call Peter and Paul and Barnabas three partial substances (οὐσίας μερικὰς) (it is clear that this means particular (ιδικὰς) [substances]) -- for this is more accurate to say -- he should recognize that [by that] we do not mean anything else but the individual, which is the person (ἄτομον, ὑπερέστι προσώπων). 5

The question that immediately arises about "partial" and "particular substances" is whether or not, when using these phrases, Gregory has in mind Aristotle's "primary substance."

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5 Ad Graecos 23, 4-8.
Christopher Stead answers this question in the negative.\(^5\) Another scholar, Hermann Vogt, the translator of Ad Graecos into German, is inclined to see Aristotle lurking behind Gregory's expressions.\(^6\) Yet, Vogt goes even further and regards the entire treatise as a "Christian use of Porphyry's introduction to the Aristotelian teaching of the categories."\(^7\) I shall return to Vogt's statement later. In Chapter Two, section 3, I argued that Gregory's view of substance, especially in the case of such phrases as "partial substance" or "particular substance," is likely to be an amalgam of the Aristotelian "primary substance" and the Stoic "peculiarly qualified entity," or to betray an influence of Porphyry's commentaries on Aristotle's Categories.

Gregory then invokes the same argument mentioned in Ad Ablabium that we cannot speak of "many humans," since the noun "human" signifies human nature. Consequently, to say "many humans" is tantamount to speaking of "many human natures" which is erroneous.\(^8\) As I argued when analyzing Ad Ablabium, Gregory means that we cannot refer to an individual by the name of its species or to a species by the name of its genus alone. It is

\(^5\)Stead, Philosophy in Christian Antiquity, 182 f.


\(^7\)"Die Schrift Ex communibus notionibus," 204 n. 1.

\(^8\)Ad Ablabium 40, 5 ff.
necessary to qualify them in some manner. Yet, he recognizes that people and even Scripture do speak of "many humans." Nonetheless, in the case of Holy Scripture, Gregory distinguishes between a manner of speaking "habitually" (διὰ συνηθείας) which Scripture uses by condescension (συγκατάβασιν) and another, more accurate manner corresponding to the nature of things.

Concerning our use of the phrase "many humans" Gregory says that actually, because of some "constraining causes" (ἐξ ἀναγκαίων αἰτιῶν, 23,22-23), we have to speak in this way about human beings. The same causes are not present in the Holy Trinity. The two constraining causes Gregory mentions in Ad Graecos are: 1) the total number of humans is not constant, owing to deaths and births (24,1-14), while this cannot be the case with the Holy Trinity where one can never speak of a duality or quaternity (24, 15-25); 2) humans have different origins, that is parents, whereas the Trinity has only one origin, the person of God the Father (24,26-25,4). In Ad Ablabium, Gregory adds one more cause: 3) we speak of "many orators" because each of them works

59Ad Graecos 28, 1.
60Ad Graecos 28, 5.
independently (47,11 ff). In his "Why Not Three Gods?" Stead claims that Gregory mentions one more such cause: 4) that, more generally, only spatial and material things are numbered. Nevertheless, as I showed earlier when treating this issue in _Ad Ablabium_, Gregory's text does not support the latter inference at the exclusion of the divine persons who clearly are aspatial and immaterial. Stead, however, dismisses as "quite unconvincing" all of these causes Gregory presents to explain our differences of language usage in reference to the divine and human natures. I agree with Stead in this case and acknowledge that Gregory has become confused because of too much trust in speculative thinking and false etymologies.

In leaving aside the "constraining causes" because they are unconvincing and do not add much to the discussion of the persons, I shall now return to the logical explanation of the difference between substance and persons which constitutes Gregory's next argument. The explanation "based on common notions" that Gregory adduces in order to exonerate himself from the accusation of tritheism sheds more light on the differences between substance and persons. In what follows, I will simply transliterate ὑπόστασις as "hypostasis" for reasons that will

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"Cf. _Ad Ablabium_ 47, 11 ff.

become clear as I advance in my presentation. He writes: "A substance differs from a substance not insofar as it is substance, but as 'such and such' (τοιάδε) a substance, and a hypostasis from a hypostasis as 'such and such' a hypostasis." To this Gregory adds another rather theoretical explanation a little later on the next page:

Therefore, "such and such" (τοιώσδε) is said when someone wishes to distinguish a particular from the general proper to that designation, to which "such and such" is applied (προστιθεται). Thus we say that a human is "such and such" an animal, having in mind to distinguish him from a horse, for example -- a horse which has in common with him the name of animal, by which is differentiated from him with regard to rationality-irrationality. Something is distinguished from something else either by substance or by hypostasis or by both substance and hypostasis. Human is distinguished from horse by substance, Paul is distinguished from Peter by hypostasis, whereas this hypostasis of the human is distinguished from this hypostasis of the horse by both substance and hypostasis."

He then explicates each of these distinctions. One can distinguish among various substances by indicating "such and such" (τοιώσδε) a characteristic--what we would call a differentia specifica--of each substance. In Gregory's examples "human" (ἀνθρώπος), "horse" and "dog" are nouns indicative of human, equine and canine nature, respectively. Thus, "human" is rational (λογικός) in contradistinction to "horse" which is

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^2 Ad Graecos 28, 24-25.

^3 Ad Graecos 29, 16-20: διακρίνεται δὲ τί τινος ἡ οὐσία ἡ ὑποστάσει ἡ οὐσία καὶ ὑποστάσεις καὶ οὐσία μὲν διακέρτει ὁ ἀνθρώπος τοῦ ἵππου. ὑποστάσεις δὲ Παύλος Πέτρου, οὐσία δὲ καὶ ὑποστάσεις ἢδε ἡ ὑποστάσις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῆς ὑποστάσεως τοῦ ἵππου.
irrational (ἀλογος); "horse" in turn is characterized by neighing (χρεμεπιστικός) in contradistinction to "dog" which is characterized by barking (ὑλατικός) or whatever other quality one wants to consider. Gregory insists that these characteristics just mentioned belong to the substances per se. The same cannot be said of persons, as we will see immediately: their characteristics do not belong to them per se but accidentally.

When making distinctions "by hypostasis," Gregory again says that differentiae should be added to the common term "hypostasis" in order to obtain "such and such a hypostasis," e.g. Peter or Paul. Such differentiae in his view are baldness, height, fatherhood, sonship, and the like, and they "constitute the hypostasis not the substance" (ὑπόστασιν καὶ οὐκ ὡσαιν συνιστάν) of Peter or Paul. In this sense I think the differentiae can be said to be accidental. Gregory uses the term "accidents" (συμβεβηκότες, Ad Graecos 31,20) in reference to πρύσωπον not to υπόστασις. From these explanations it becomes evident that hypostasis no longer designates an individual understood as something indivisible; hypostasis is rather a new species to which "such and such" can be attached in order to obtain Peter or Paul. This observation, however, will be contradicted by what

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*Ad Graecos* 30,10-11.

*Ad Graecos* 30,20-23.

*Ad Graecos* 30, 23.
Gregory himself says next, but reconfirmed only a few lines below in a passage (Ad Graecos 31, 16-20) which I shall discuss at the end of this section. Let us first see how Gregory contradicts what he has just said.

He writes: "it is clear that species (εἶδος) and individual (ἄτομον) are not the same thing, that is, substance [is not the same] as hypostasis." This statement apparently contradicts the previous assertion that "hypostasis" is a sort of new species to which "such and such" can be added to obtain Peter or Paul or this horse. "Individual," continues Gregory, that is hypostasis, makes one think of someone with curly hair, grey eyes, a father, a son and the like, whereas the term "species," that is substance, makes one think of "a rational animal, mortal, capable of understanding and knowledge" or of "an irrational animal, mortal, capable of neighing and the like."

He then applies the same reasoning by analogy to God. We can now connect these arguments with the introductory part of Ad Graecos where Gregory says that the name "God" refers to the divine nature distinguishing it from the mortal nature. At the same time, the reader of Gregory's explanations should not refer to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as merely "such and such God" or "God and God and God," since he or she is supposed

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3Ad Graecos 31,1-2.

4Ad Graecos 31,2-7.
to have understood by now that the three divine persons have the same common substance and that the relation between the substance and the persons is the same as that between a species and its individuals. His triumphal conclusion in regard to the Trinity is that if one discriminates among the divine persons, one should not divide the substance of God according to these persons.

Nevertheless, before the triumphal end there is Ad Graecos 31, 16-20, a passage hard to interpret. Here Gregory asserts beyond any reasonable doubt that ὑπόστασις is a species for πρόσωπον, thus confirming what he says in Ad Graecos 30, 20-21. The statement is astounding, because it causes one to think that ὑπόστασις is actually synonymous with οὐσία, after Gregory himself has assured the reader that ὑπόστασις is in fact the individual. It can also mean that ὑπόστασις is a subspecies of οὐσία, something between οὐσία and πρόσωπον. If this is the case, then Gregory can be credited with making a distinction between individuals and persons, thus being a personalist avant la lettre, which is perhaps unlikely. The text reads:

[W]e attach the phrase "such and such" to hypostasis in order to differentiate the persons (πρόσωπα) from one

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another, even though they have in common this name, that of hypostasis, and thus differ from one another not in peculiarities proper to substance, but rather according to so-called accidents."

In commenting on Ad Graecos 31,16-20, Vogt asks himself whether a rupture of logic is not unavoidable when Gregory tries to speak of the Trinity in the same way in which he speaks of humans and other created beings. According to Vogt, Ad Graecos 31, 16-20 might suggest the idea that the concept of "hypostasis," just as "person" but unlike "individual" (δώμου), can be used in regard to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In other words, Vogt intimates that the concept of "individual" cannot be applied to God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit cannot be individuals under any circumstances whatsoever. The difficulty with Vogt's explanation is that Gregory's text does not support such a clear conclusion.

Another German scholar, Jürgen Hammerstaedt, author of the entry on "Hypostasis" in the Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, in a letter to me suggested that he did not

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believe that Gregory wanted to qualify ἂπόστασις as a species for πρόσωπον. Hammerstaedt has been rather inclined to see a "capital error" occurring in Gregory's whole argumentation starting on p. 29 which then becomes evident only on p. 30, lines 16 ff and which leads him to the statement contained in the passage under investigation (p. 31, lines 14 ff). In Hammerstaedt's view, the error consists in an indiscriminate use of the demonstrative adjective "such and such" (τάκισκος) with both concrete qualifying terms such as "animal" and abstract qualifying terms such as "genus," "ousia,” or "hypostasis." Accordingly, if you say "such animal," you point to "human" or "horse," but if you say "such ούσια" you point to other ούσια, not to species subsumed under the same ούσια (ὑπ’ αὐτήν κατ’ ούσιαν, p. 31, line 15), as Gregory suggests.

In considering the passages in question, Stead himself notices that the discussion in Ad Graecos "takes a surprising form." Gregory says that we attach the phrase "such and such" to a word denoting a genus, thereby picking out a particular species. He argues that at this point one would expect Gregory to continue on the same principle and say "we attach the word 'such-and-such' to a word denoting a species, so as to pick out a particular individual; saying for instance, 'Paul is a grey-eyed man'." Then Stead justly remarks:


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But this is not what Gregory says; he argues that since the particularizing characteristics belong to the individual, the particularizing description must be attached to the word ὑπόστασις, 'individual', and not to the class-name 'man'. We can thus describe Paul as a grey-eyed individual, but not as a grey-eyed man. On this ground he claims that his critics' case collapses."

I conclude this analysis by noting that the main contention of Ad Graecos is that each of the three divine persons can be referred to as God, because the name "God" indicates their common nature, but nobody should speak of "three gods," since this would (obviously!) contradict the commonly accepted principles. The first part of his demonstration is correct. The difficult part, as just mentioned, is that Gregory makes ὑπόστασις a species for πρόσωπα and we have to acknowledge it as a mistake in judgement.

4. Eustathius of Antioch, Gregory of Nyssa and Their Possible Philosophical Sources

I shall now consider another trinitarian writing, Eustathius of Antioch's Against Photinus, as it can shed more light on Gregory of Nyssa's Ad Graecos. Given the striking similarities between these two works, Rudolf Lorenz argued a few years ago that Ad Graecos was heavily influenced by Against Photinus." Eustathius


was a bishop of Antioch and played a prominent part at the Council of Nicaea (325). His writing Against Photinus was considered spurious until recently, at one time being even attributed to Gregory of Nyssa. Yet new fragments from the treatise of Peter of Callinicus against Damian of Alexandria preserved in the Codex Vaticanus Syriacus 108 have caused Lorenz to believe that Eustathius is the author of Against Photinus which can thus be dated to around 340 AD. Eustathius' writing is important, since it uses concepts from the school logic, sheds some light on the early history of the trinitarian dispute and is used by Gregory of Nyssa in his Ad Graecos.

The treatise entitled Against Damian is the principal literary achievement of Peter of Callinicus, Monophysite patriarch of Antioch from 581 to 591. He wrote it in Syriac against his co-religionist Pope Damian of Alexandria (557/8-606/7), who seemed to have embraced some trinitarian errors. To date, Books II and III have been published of the critical edition of Peter's Against Damian, but other volumes are being prepared. Unfortunately, none of the three volumes published


\[\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\text{Petri Callinicensis Patriarchae Antiocheni Tractatus contra Damianum, Books II and III, eds. Rifaat Y. Ebied, Albert}\]
thus far reproduces pp. 267-268 of the Vatican manuscript Syr. 108 containing the above-mentioned quotation from Eustathius of Antioch. Dr. Lionel R. Wickham, however, kindly provided me with the English translation of the passage in question before it goes to the press and I also rely on R. Lorenz's German translation in his article mentioned above. I shall show immediately how Eustathius' Against Photinus influenced Gregory of Nyssa's Ad Graecos, assuming that Against Photinus is indeed written by Eustathius. The following is Eustathius of Antioch's text as quoted by Peter of Calliniclus:

Murinus or Photinus, with his associates, will criticize us, then, as calling Father, Son and Holy Ghost 'three Gods', and he and they will be very foolish. For if we were simply saying 'God and God and God', they would have been justified in censuring us for saying 'three Gods'; but seeing that it is true and apposite that we should call the Father 'God', the Son 'God' and the Holy Ghost 'God', nevertheless it is not because we call God three by division (even though each hypostatic prosōpon is professed as God, because they belong to one and the same divine nature) but because we recognize the Father's, Son's and Holy Ghost's kinship, property and natural mutual unity. If the name 'God', then, were significant of prosōpon, by saying 'three prosōpa' we should certainly have been saying 'three Gods'; but because it is significant of nature, being apprehended from some property which is in the nature (as laughter in man, and barking in dog) whereas the properties said to belong to natures indicate natures, we do not say 'three Gods' because we do not say 'three natures'. But if we call each of the prosōpa of the divine nature 'God', because it belongs to the nature, it will be recognized as having the name 'God' in the full sense, not because 'God' is significant of

prosopon, but because it is significant of the one nature. The prosopon too is capable of being called by this title, because it belongs also to that nature. For prosopon is one thing but nature another. If, then, 'God' belonged to prosopon, by saying 'three prosopa' we should certainly be saying 'three Gods', but because we say that the prosopa have one nature, of necessity we say that there is only one God. But if there is one nature and 'God' belongs to that nature, it follows that if we say 'one nature' we also say there is only one God.

A comparison between this text and Gregory's Ad Graecos, which I discussed earlier in this chapter, makes one recognize the astounding similarities between the two texts. The argument about "God and God and God," the fact that in both authors' the noun "God" refers to God's nature, and the distinction between prosopon and nature are just three telling examples.

Moreover, when reading the two texts, one has the feeling that both authors are familiar with Porphyry's Isagogae or On Aristotle's Categories. Both Gregory and Porphyry state that rationality, neighing and barking characterize the species human, horse and dog respectively (Isaq. 7,5; In Categ. 32,18ff; Ad Graecos 30,10-11); that rationality is also a specific difference distinguishing human from horse (Isaq. 8,17; 11,20; Ad Graecos 30,7-10); that rational and mortal belong to human per se, while snub-nosedness (in Porphyry) or baldness (in Gregory) belong to him accidentally (Isaq. 9,9-13; 11,11ff; Ad Graecos 31,20).

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-Peter of Calliniclus, Against Damian, Book 40. I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Lionel R. Wickham for providing me with the English translation of this passage.
Eustathius also speaks of properties which are in the nature of a species, such as laughter in man, and barking in dog.

It is important to note that Gregory uses more explanations than Eustathius in the remaining fragment from Against Photinus. For example, rationality, as a property of the human substance appears in Porphyry and Gregory but not in Eustathius; rationality is not only a property but can be counted also as a specific difference distinguishing human from horse, and this does not occur in Eustathius. However, we do not know what the rest of Against Photinus might have contained. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that Gregory's brother, Basil of Caesarea, provides similar explanations about various natures in his Homilies on the Hexaemeron IV.4.1-5, but like Gregory's editors, Basil's editors indicate no source for these explanations."

Consequently, I tried to discover the first occurrences of the explanations we know mainly from Porphyry. I used the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. I ran a search for the pair "rational-neighing," that is λογικ- χρηστικ- within four

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lines of each other throughout the whole corpus contained on the TLG CD-Rom. Surprisingly, the two words do not occur within four lines of each other in Aristotle himself but in later authors. What does occur in Aristotle is the pair "human-horse" (ἀνθρωπ-ιος) (sometimes along with "dog" or "god") within four lines of each other (e.g., Met. 1016a25, 1018b5, 1020a30, 1023b30, 1058a1-1058b15; Nic. Eth. 1176a5 to mention only a few relevant passages), but never accompanied by the pair "rational-neighing." As a matter of fact, χρηματιστικ- never occurs in Aristotle. In the passages I have just mentioned, Aristotle usually speaks of "human" and "horse" (and "dog" and "god") as having one genus, namely animal or living thing. The post-Aristotle but pre-Porphyry authors whom I found to have used the pair "rational-neighing" are the following: Alexander of Aphrodisias, Sextus Empiricus, Clement of Alexandria, and Pseudo-Plutarch. The first three were contemporaneous (2nd-3rd centuries CE), whereas the last one, if he is to be identified with the Greek doxographer Aetius, lived somewhat earlier (around 100 AD).

Alexander of Aphrodisias, a renowned commentator on Aristotle and a Peripatetic philosopher himself, in dealing with combinations and figures in his mentor's Prior Analytics, writes:

[T]he middle term may be predicated of both the terms in the problem, as in the following combination. Suppose we are investigating whether men are neighers or not. We take a third term, rational, and predicate it of both the others--both of man and of neigher (affirmatively of man and negatively of neigher). This makes the following
combination: Every man is rational. No neither is rational."

Clement of Alexandria, in addressing the restraint we should impose on our laughter (human is the only animal capable of laughter, according to Aristotle, De anim. membr. III,673a8), writes:

Because human is an animal capable of laughter, he should not laugh at everything and because horse is capable of neighing, he should not neigh on every occasion; as rational animals we should govern ourselves with measure, harmoniously relaxing the austerity and over-tension of our serious pursuits."

The third work in which the pair in question occurs is Pseudo-Plutarch's Placita philosophorum, a collection of opinions of the philosophers and a work usually attributed to Aetius today. Thus, in a context presenting what various philosophers think of principles one can read:

[I]f one considers the multitude of humans taken one by one, they cannot be perceived, their infinite number cannot be apprehended, and we cannot conceive but a unique human with whom no one else is identical; likewise the horse we conceive cannot be but unique, but there is an infinite number of horses considered one by one. Indeed, all these species and genera are envisaged from the point of view of the monad; that is why we apply to each of them a definition


speaking of rational animal or neighing animal.'"

I left to the end the text from Sextus Empiricus, because in my view it is the most interesting and closest explanation to what we encounter in Porphyry and the Cappadocians. In a context dealing with the usefulness of definitions, Sextus writes:

For example—if we may indulge in a little ridicule—suppose someone wanted to ask you if you had met a human on horseback leading a dog, and were to pose the question like this: 'O mortal rational animal receptive of thought and knowledge, have you met a broad-nailed animal capable of laughter and receptive of political knowledge, resting his buttocks on a neighing mortal animal, leading a barking quadruped animal?'—wouldn't he be mocked for casting such a familiar subject into obscurity because of his definitions? As far as these considerations go, then, we should say that definitions are useless."

However, in a footnote to this passage from Sextus' Outlines of Scepticism the English translators mention that the example which Sextus has in mind is from an anonymous commentary on Plato's Theaetetus that reads: "Epicurus says that names are clearer than definitions, and that indeed it would be absurd if instead of saying 'Hello Socrates' one were to say 'hello rational mortal animal'."

But the reference to Epicurus (341-271 BC) takes us

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"Greek text in Anon, In Plat. Theaet., eds. H. Diels and W. Schubart, Berliner Klassikertexte 2 (Berlin, 1905). ET and
almost as far back as Aristotle who, as we saw, does not speak of horse as a "neighing animal."

Therefore, at this time we can trace with certainty the pair "rational-neighing" only as far back as Aetius, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Sextus Empiricus, that is, to the second or third century CE. It is very likely that the Cappadocians knew some of these authors' writings or knew of their ideas from textbooks of philosophy. Aetius' _Placita philosophorum_ is an excellent example of such a collection of philosophical opinions grouped under various headings. It is also possible that Clement of Alexandria or Eustathius of Antioch were intermediary for these ideas. At the same time, I would not exclude the hypothesis that the Cappadocians--Gregory of Nyssa in particular--might have read at least Porphyry's _Isagoge_. This is a small, introductory work to Aristotle's famous _Categories_ and, like today, some people back then might have wanted to be introduced to a major work by a commentator who could make the subject matter more accessible.

Furthermore, as today, many readers most likely would never read the major work after reading the introduction to it.

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reprint of the Greek text in Long & Sedley, _The Hellenistic Philosophers_ 1.99 and 2.102.
CHAPTER 5
AGAINST EUNOMIUS AND THE REFUTATION OF THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF EUNOMIUS

In this chapter I propose to analyze additional aspects of the concept of divine persons in two major dogmatic writings by Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius and the Refutation of the Confession of Faith of Eunomius. Specifically, the bulk of the chapter deals with the issue of divine relationality. As corollaries to this, I will also study what I call Gregory's theology of exile and homecoming with special attention to Gregory's view of divine freedom, and the issue of gender language in reference to the Holy Trinity.

In the late 370s the Arian bishop Eunomius of Cyzicus had published the Apology for an Apology (or Second Apology). In this work he attempted to defend himself against accusations raised by Basil of Caesarea's Against Eunomius (AE), which in turn was a response to Eunomius' First Apology. Unfortunately, Basil himself was too ill to answer this second writing by Eunomius. After Basil's death on January 1, 379, this challenge was left to his brother, Gregory of Nyssa. Gregory composed his

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'For an account of Eunomius' career, see R. P. C. Hanson, The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 611-617.
own Against Eunomius (CE hereafter), in this way preventing Eunomius from having the final say. Later, Eunomius wrote a Confession of Faith which was preserved by Gregory. This was written expressly for the gathering of various parties in the Church called by Emperor Theodosius in 383 as a last effort to achieve unity. Gregory responded to the latter as well by writing the Refutation of the Confession of Faith of Eunomius (Ref hereafter).

There is a greater degree of agreement among scholars than in the case of other Gregorian works over the composition dates of Gregory of Nyssa’s Against Eunomius and the Refutation of the Confession of Faith of Eunomius. May places the writing of CE I-II between the summer of 380 and the spring of 381, and, following Diekamp,’ dates CE III between 381 and 383. As for the Ref, Jan van Parys thinks that it occupies a special place in the ensemble of Gregory’s anti-Eunomian polemics. It is not only chronologically the last in the series of writings against

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1 Hanson, Search, 613.


3 May, "Chronologie," 57, 60. Hanson agrees to these dates (Search, 717-18)


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Eunomius (written perhaps shortly after May 383), but unlike CE which does not deal with pneumatology, Ref refutes the totality of Eunomius' trinitarian and christological heresies. Van Parys thinks that the convocation at Constantinople of an "interconfessional colloquium" in May 383 was an additional occasion for Gregory of Nyssa to refute Eunomius. The homily Gregory also delivered at that colloquium, De deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti, mainly refutes Eunomius' theological opinions and reveals a number of points in common with the Ref. Hanson agrees with the dating of the Ref. to 383 and believes that it is possible De deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti was written for the council of 383.  

1. Patristic Antecedents of Divine Relationality

The argument from correlativity was used long before the Cappadocians to prove that the Son is to be distinguished from the Father, that the Son is eternally generated by the Father and even that he is of the same divine nature as the Father. Basically, this argument sets forth the idea that correlative terms imply one another: a father implies the existence of a son, a lord implies the existence of a slave, and vice versa.

In Against Praxeas (Adv. Prax. hereafter) 9-10 Tertullian

"Hanson, Search, 716."
argues against the Monarchian Praxeas who confuses the three divine persons. Tertullian says that the very names "father" and "son" prove the personal distinction of the two, since "a father makes a son and a son makes a father and they become what they are by relationship with one another (ex alterutro)." Each one of them needs the other one in order to be what he is. One can never be a son to oneself, nor can one ever be one's own father. Another example of relation in the same chapter 10 of his Adv. Prax. is that of husband and wife. As for the Holy Spirit, Tertullian writes:

It suits my case also that when our Lord used this word [alius] regarding the person of the Paraclete, he signified not division but disposition (dispositionem): for he says, I will pray the Father and he will send you another (alium) advocate, the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:16). Thus [he calls] the Paraclete other than himself, as we say the Son is other than the Father.

It is worth noting that, to express the idea of correlativity, Tertullian does not use the word relatio, but disposition and the phrase qui ex alterutro fiunt (those whose existence depends on each other).

In a recent book, Peter Widdicombe gives a comprehensive treatment of divine relationality from Origen to Athanasius of

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Alexandria, considering also Dionysius of Alexandria, Methodius of Olympus, Alexander of Alexandria and Arius. More than half a century before Widdicombe Chevalier made a similar attempt to present divine relations when he tried to compare the Greek and Augustinian views. Chevalier's treatment is less comprehensive and less compelling than Widdicombe's, but, in addition to Arius and Athanasius, covers a number of authors not examined by Widdicombe, such as Basil of Ancyra, Epiphanius of Salamis, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Didymus the Blind. Since it is very likely that Gregory of Nyssa was familiar at least with some works of his Christian predecessors, a summary of these predecessors' views on divine relationality is certainly in order.


In \textit{De Principiis} (DP hereafter) I.2.2 and 3, Origen makes clear the disastrous consequence entailed in the denial of the Son's eternal existence: God would not always be a Father.\footnote{Cf. also Origen, \textit{Dialogue with Heraclides} 4.} In DP I.2.10, he also says that "one cannot be a father apart from having a son." Widdicombe suggests that Origen's assumption of the correlative argument may reflect the influence of Aristotle's category of relation, πρόστατο, but he also draws attention to the parallel between the father-son and lord-slave relationship in DP I.2.10 and Malachi 1:6, a text Origen quotes in the context of his discussion of the movement from the knowledge of God as Lord to that of God as Father.\footnote{Widdicombe, \textit{Fatherhood}, 69 n. 21. Cf. also the influence of Jn 15:15 on Origen (ibid., 95).} Origen connects the idea of the correlativeity of the Father and the Son with that of God's goodness.\footnote{\textit{Cat.} 7b15, \textit{Met.} 5.15.} Widdicombe thinks that the Father-Son relationship is paramount in Origen's thought. It is characterized by continuous activity. Here are some of the images Origen uses to express it: unceasing generation of the Son by the Father (\textit{Hom. on Jer.} IX.4); the Son unceasingly turns toward the Father (\textit{Com. Jn.} II.2.18); the Father's life is an eternal rejoicing in the \footnote{E.g., DP I.2.9 and \textit{Commentary on Genesis} (in Eusebius, \textit{Contra Marcellum} I.4, GCS 14, p. 22, 11-18): \textit{καλὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι πατέρα τοιοῦτον υἱὸν.}}
presence of the Son who is Wisdom (DP I.4.4 and IV.4.1; Com. Jn. I.9.55); knowledge and love of the Father are the characteristics of sonship (Com. Jn. XX.34.305-309); the Logos is Son, glorifying and being glorified by the Father (Com. Jn. XX.11.28 and 29).

These images are derived from Scripture.

Dionysius of Alexandria's writings also provide evidence for the argument from correlativity, but his language, as reported by Athanasius, seems to be more inclusive than that used by theologians both before and after him: "when there is a parent, there is also a child." Ever since the beginning of the Arian controversy, the argument from correlativity was used by the non-Arian party against their enemies. Bishop Alexander of Alexandria used it but Arius rejected it. In a credal letter to his bishop (written ca. 320), Arius wrote:

For [the Son] is not eternal, or coeternal or equally ingenerate with the Father, nor does he have his being simultaneously (ἀμα) with the Father, [in virtue] some say [of] his relation with him (τὸ πρὸς τιν), thus postulating two ingenerate first principles. But as monad and first

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³ For the chronology, see Williams, *Arius*, 58-9.
principle of all things, God thus is before all things.\footnote{Opitz, Urkunden 6.13, 10-13; ET in P. Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 143.}

To Arius' letter, Alexander of Alexandria replied with a letter known as ἡ ἀρνία (ca. 321/2). Both were preserved by Athanasius in his De Synodis. In his letter, Alexander uses the argument from correlativity:

[The Father] is Father because of the eternal presence of the Son, on account of whom he is called Father . . . . To say that the brightness of the Father's glory did not exist destroys (συμπαθεία) the original light of which it is the brightness. And if also the image of God was not eternal, it is clear that neither is that of which it is the image (εἰκών) eternal.\footnote{Urkunden 14.24.3-6. ET in Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 132 ff.} 

In a letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia written shortly after receiving Alexander's letter, Arius summarized Alexander's teaching about the correlativity of Father and Son thus: "God eternal, Son eternal, Father and Son always together" (ἀιθέος ἀεὶ υἱός, ἀμα πατὴρ ἀμα υἱός).\footnote{Urkunden, 1.2.1-2, ET in Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 133.} Both Arnou\footnote{Arnou, "Relations trinitaires," 270} and Widdicombe\footnote{Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 131 ff.} notice that some terms (ἀμα, συμπαθεία) used by both Arius and Alexander are reminiscent of Aristotle's discussion of the category of relation in Cat 7b15\footnote{Presented in Chapter Two.}: "Relatives seem to be simultaneous (ἀμα) by nature

\footnote{Opitz, Urkunden 6.13, 10-13; ET in P. Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 143.}
and in most cases this is true .... Also, one carries the other to destruction (συναναφέ)." Widdicombe, however, adds that Alexander also uses Origen's argument that the denial of the eternal generation of the Son imperils the eternity of God's fatherhood.\(^2\) Like Origen, Alexander employs various biblical images to express the Father-Son relationship: Prov. 8:30 ("I was daily his delight") confirms in his view the eternal presence of Wisdom (identified with the Son) with the Father\(^3\); the Son is the brightness and image of the Father.\(^4\)

Both Arius and Eusebius of Caesarea reject the argument from correlativity. As Williams noticed, "Arius treats the words Father and Son as names identifying distinct and unique subsistences who do not share substantial attributes."\(^5\) Eusebius says that the coeternity of Father and Son would eliminate their individual identities as father and son.\(^6\) As I show later in this chapter, Eunomius repeats some of the earlier Arian arguments against correlativity.

For Athanasius of Alexandria the fact that the Father and


\(^3\)Urkunden, 14.23.32-42.1.


\(^6\)Urkunden 3.4.4-6.
the Son are correlatives means that to defend the divinity of the Son is to defend the fatherhood of God.\textsuperscript{3} However, he caricatures Arius' position in order to discredit him: for example, he implies a change in God when quoting Arius, which actually presents a position intolerable to the latter.\textsuperscript{3} Athanasius' fundamental belief in the eternal correlativity of Father and Son is perhaps best expressed by the formula οὐκ ἀεὶ πατήρ, οὐκ ἀεὶ νός ([if] no eternal Father, no eternal Son).\textsuperscript{3} Widdicombe notices that Athanasius recasts Origen's presentation of the argument from relations in the language of a post-Methodian conception of God and the world.\textsuperscript{3} Athanasius does this by positing two sets of correlatives against Arius: Father and Son, on the one hand; unoriginate and originate, on the other hand. In Contra Arianos I.33 Athanasius writes:

And just as 'unoriginate' is indicated with reference to originated things, so also 'Father' is indicative of the Son. The one who names God 'maker', 'fashioner', and 'unoriginate' sees and discovers the creatures and originated things, while the one who calls God 'Father' immediately knows and contemplates the Son.\textsuperscript{3}


\textsuperscript{3}Williams, Arius, 104.

\textsuperscript{3}De decretis 6; Opitz 5.23-24. See Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 163 f.

\textsuperscript{3}Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 167.

\textsuperscript{3}PG 26:80B. ET in Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 167.
Nevertheless, Athanasius distinguishes between the correlativity of maker and thing made on one hand, and the correlativity of father and son on the other: the former belongs to the realm of will, the latter to the realm of substance.\

Like Origen, Athanasius links the eternity of God's fatherhood with the attributes of immutability and perfection. He then contrasts divine and human generation, stating that in man, fatherhood and sonship do not "properly" (κυρίως) exist since they do not reside in their respective "characters," whereas in the godhead alone "the Father is properly (κυρίως) father and the Son properly (κυρίως) son, and in them and them only, is it the case that the Father is always Father and the Son always Son." God is "eternally Father, and the character of Father is not adventitious (οὐκ ἐπιγέγονε) to him, lest he be thought mutable." Again like Origen, Athanasius connects the eternity of God's fatherhood with the attribute of God's goodness. Athanasius is probably unaware of the Platonic origin of the idea that for God to be the way he is is good. Some of the images Athanasius uses

\[\text{See Contra Arianos I.29; PG 26:72B.}\]
\[\text{Contra Arianos I.21; PG 26:56C.}\]
\[\text{Contra Arianos I.21: PG 26:57A.}\]
\[\text{Contra Arianos I.28; PG 26:72A.}\]
\[\text{Contra Arianos I.28 and III.59-67. Cf. Origen, DP 2.9 and Com Gen. (the fragment preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea mentioned above).}\]
to illustrate the Father-Son relationship are the following: the characteristic and determinate quality of this relation is that of love; the Father takes "pleasure" (εὐδοκία) in the Son whom he has generated "by nature"; the Father and the Son delight in one another (based on Prov 8:30: "I was by him, daily his delight, rejoicing always before him").

Yet perhaps the one who influenced Gregory of Nyssa the most in his view of the divine relationality was his own brother, Basil, whom he sometimes called "teacher and father." In his polemics against Eunomius Basil cautioned against the use of the name "ungenerated" (ἄγεννητος); because Eunomius alleged that it referred to divine substance. According to Eunomius' logic, if God is ungenerated, his substance is ungenerated; the Son, who is referred to as generated, should have a generated substance, and accordingly should differ from God. Briefly, the Son is not God

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"Cf Mk 1:11: "This is the Son in whom I am pleased" (*PG* 26:461B).

"*Contra Arianos* I.20; I.38; II.56: II.82.

"Although Chevalier's thesis that Augustine knew the Greek Fathers very well is less compelling, his analysis of Basil of Caesarea's theory of relations is still useful to map out one's route through the Basilian texts (see Irénée Chevalier, *S. Augustin et la pensée grecque. Les relations trinitaires*, 129-140). Nevertheless, some of Chevalier's quotations from Basil are unreliable.
according to the young generation of Arians represented by Eunomius. Even if Basil considers "ungenerated" quite appropriate to refer to God the Father, he says that, unlike "Father," "ungenerated" is not biblical; therefore, the latter should rather not be spoken of (σωμάτως). The name "Father" has the same power as "ungenerated," contends Basil, "for the one who is truly Father and only [Father] is from no other." Moreover, "father" introduces the notion of the son because of the relation (διὰ τῆς σχέσεως). Eunomius will pick up on this synonymy and try to turn it on its head in his Apologia Apologiae, as my analysis of Nyssen's handling of relationality later in this chapter will demonstrate.

Basil's statement that the name "Father has the same power as ungenerated" (τῆς Πατρὸς φωνῆς ἵσσων δυναμεῖς τῷ ἀγενενητῷ) is not easy to understand. Basil is careful not to say that the two words have the same meaning just because they refer to the same

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Wrongly translated by B. Sesboüé as "Le vocable Père a le même sens que celui d'ingénéré" (SC 299:177) and S. G. Hall as "Father and unbegotten have the same meaning" (CE I, 553) (emphases mine).
reality; instead, he says that they have the "same power." To this he adds another qualification: the statement holds true for God alone, because unlike human fathers, God is the absolute Father, coming from no other. To say that "father" and "ungenerated" are synonymous in all cases (including the human case) is wrong, for two reasons: on the one hand, all human fathers are generated; on the other hand, it is as if "unemployed" and "man" are synonymous just because they refer to e.g. George. Eunomius clearly does not grasp Basil's fine explanation, as one can see from his Apologia Apologiae where he refers to the two terms with no qualifications whatsoever, and pushes Basil's statement in a direction which the latter would have found unacceptable: "names with the same power also mean the same thing." Gregory of Nyssa will be very cautious too, saying that "father" and "ungenerated" can be said to be synonymous "in one sense." Gregory provides additional explanations which I deal with later.

Turning again to relationship, "Father" is not only more suitable than "ungenerated," but it also introduces the notion of "son" because of the relation. One can also add that because of its correlative power, by the time of Basil, the word "father"

\[\text{Eunomius, Apologia Apologiae quoted by Gregory of Nyssa, CE I, 552: τὰ δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν έχοντα δύναμιν τῶν ονομάτων ταῦτων πάντως καὶ σημαίνειν πέφυκε.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{4} CE I, 553.}\]
had quite a history of use in defeating Arians such as Eunomius, as we saw. Basil elaborates what he means by relation at AE II, 9 (588c-589a) where he presents his theory of absolute and relative names. Some names are said absolutely and refer to themselves, indicating the realities which are their substrate; others are said relatively, indicating the relation to the realities in regard to which they are said. He exemplifies with "human" (ἄνθρωπος), "horse," and "ox" for the former, and "son," "slave," and "friend" for the latter. The influence of Aristotle's Categories is obvious here. Basil attempts to show that "offspring (or product of generation)" (γένημα) does not refer to the Son's substance but to his relation to the Father. "Offspring" is a relative not an absolute name. Therefore, it does not refer to the substance, but indicates the attachment of the reality designated as "offspring" to another reality. Then Basil hurries to add that actually neither do absolute names refer to the substance, but at the most to the substratum (ὑποκείμενον), that is, the properties considered in the substance.

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1 Stead notices that Plato's unwritten doctrines seem to have contained a primitive categorial theory: realities are divided into Absolutes, Opposites, and Relatives (Simplicius, in Phys. 247.30 ff; Sextus Empiricus, adv. Math. x. 263-5). Stead suggests that, even if Aristotle's theory of categories is quite different from Plato's, the latter may shed some light on the origin of Aristotle's own theory (Stead, Divine Substance, 53).

2 See Chapter Two above and B. Sesboûe, "Introduction" to AE (SC 299:81 ff).
A little later, however, Basil refers to relation in terms as the πρὸς τι πῶς ἔχειν and understands it as the equivalent of σχέσις. This may betray the influence of the Stoic category of relation.

From other texts one learns that for Basil, "father" and "son" express only the relation of one to the other (πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσις). "Father is the one who provides to the other the principle of his being in a similar nature; son is the one who has received from the other through generation the principle of his being." Divine generation, however, is an eternal mystery inaccessible to human comprehension. If divinity is common, fatherhood and sonship are properties (ιδιώματα), and the role of properties is to show alterity within the identity of substance. The combination of common and particular distinguishes the persons of the Father and the Son from one another.

In a later work such as On the Holy Spirit (DSS hereafter), written ca. 375, Basil uses a relational argument reminiscent of Origen's DP to establish the coeternity of Father and Son: "It certainly is not the human concept [of son] that compels [Eunomius] to say that the Son is posterior to the Father: [first because Father and Son] are perceived simultaneously due to the

\textsuperscript{1}AE II, 10; 589c.
\textsuperscript{2}AE II, 22; 621b.
\textsuperscript{3}AE I, 12; 540.
\textsuperscript{4}AE II, 28; 637b-c.
relationality, and [second because the term] 'posterior' is applied to something which is temporally closer to the present and, conversely, [the term] 'prior' to what is more remote from the present."

2. Gregory of Nyssa's view of divine relationality

Nyssen's view of divine relations is quite similar to his predecessors' views, as I shall demonstrate next. In *Contra Eunomium* I, 155 ff. Gregory deals with an issue against which the Arians fought bitterly, namely calling God "Father." The Arians knew that their acceptance of the argument from relations would

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Perhaps the handiest referencing format will be the following: CE II, 145, where "II" indicates the second book of *Contra Eunomium* and "145" the passage number in that particular book, according to the Jaeger edition. In the case of the third book of CE, the a reference will have the format CE III, 2, 57, where "2" indicates the second tome of the third book, and "57" the passage number in that particular tome, according to the Jaeger edition. As for the Refutation: Ref 55, where "55" represents the passage number in the Jaeger edition.
result in their defeat, because it would imply that God the Father had a divine Son. Gregory summarizes Eunomius' doctrine of the Trinity, by stating that Eunomius replaces the revealed biblical names Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19) with other titles and, instead of "the Father," he speaks of "the highest and most authentic being," instead of "the Son," of "the one which exists because of that [highest] being," and instead of "the Holy Spirit," of "a third which is in no way aligned with them but subject [to the other two]." Like Athanasius and Basil before him, Gregory believes that the reason why Eunomius invents new titles is that "father" and "son" are correlative which imply each other; their use would compel Eunomius to recognize that father and son have the same nature. It is exactly this implication that Eunomius wants to avoid at any cost: "all humans," says Gregory, "when they hear the titles 'father' and 'son', immediately recognize from the very names their intimate and natural relation to each other (φυσικής πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν). Community of nature (φύσεως συγγενείς) is inevitably suggested by these titles." The natural relation that the names "father" and "son" indicate is a proof for the divinity of the Son which Eunomius endeavors to deny.

Eunomius and other Arians and Anomoeans before him also

\[\text{\textsuperscript{15} CE I, 156.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{17} CE I, 159.}\]

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preferred to use "ungenerated-generated" instead of "father-son."
They argued that "ungenerated" and "generated" referred to the
nature of the Father and the Son respectively. Thus they
believed they could prove that the Father's and the Son's natures
were "unlike" (ἀνόμως) one another: the Father was surely God
and his nature was ungenerated; since the Son's nature was
generated, this implied that the Son was not God. I mentioned
above Basil's reaction to this attitude when he wrote that
"ungenerated" is unbiblical and advised his brother Gregory and
their supporters to preserve the pious meaning of "ungenerated"
in their soul, but not to favor the actual word, as the word
"father" would sufficiently express the sense of "ungenerated" in
God and would introduce the notion of Son because of the relation
(διὰ τῆς σχέσεως).

Eunomius devised another counter-argument trying to turn on
its head the Cappadocian case that "Father" and "Ungenerated"
were used in reference to the first divine person. According to
Gregory, Eunomius wrote: "If 'Father' and 'Ungenerated' are the

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Eὐσέβεια is a polysemantic word in Gregory's writings,
meaning "piety," "right faith" (hence "orthodoxy"), "faithfulness
to the tradition," and even "truth" (see J. Ibañez and F.
Mendoza, "Naturaleza de la 'eusebeia' en Gregorio de Nisa," in
Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie: Zweites Internationales
Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa (Freckenhorst bei Münster, 18.-
23 September 1972), eds. Heinrich Dörrie et al. (Leiden: Brill,
1976), 261-277).

Basil, AE I, 5, 63--75 (516d-517a) quoted by Gregory at
CE I, 548; cf. CE I, 558.
same in power, and if names with the same power also mean the same thing, and 'Ungenerated' on their own showing means to be God from no other, it necessarily follows that 'Father' also means to be God from no other, and not that he has generated the Son." Eunomius either caricatures or does not fully comprehend Basil's argument here. Basil did not say that names with the same power would mean the same thing. Gregory counters Eunomius' assertion with an extensive argument of the meaning of the name "Father." Among other things, he interweaves in this argument a theory of absolute and relative names similar to, but less sophisticated than, the one Basil proposed in his Against Eunomius II, 9, 11-27 (588c-589a). Gregory begins his argument by saying that "ungenerated" and "father" refer to the same reality, the person of God the Father; therefore, "in one sense" (κατά τις διάνυσμα) the two words can be said to be synonymous. However, he continues, both words have other connotations as well; their being synonymous in one sense does not imply their being synonymous in all:

We call the Emperor both Sovereign and Absolute, and also Chief of his subjects, and it is not false to say of him that the word 'Emperor' also means 'Absolute'; nor do we say that it is logically necessary, if sovereignty and absence...

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45 The allusion is to the passage quoted earlier from Basil, AE I, 5 (516D-517A).
46 Apud Gregory of Nyssa, CE I, 552.
47 CE I, 553.
of a superior are indicated by this word, that his authority over his subjects is no longer signified by his being Emperor."

Similarly, since God the Father is not the son of any other father before him, he is also ungenerated." One can say that God the Father is an absolute father, "the Father." This, however, does not imply that we must "wrench the meaning of 'Father' away from his relation to the Son (προς των ιδιων συγγενεσιων)." Gregory turns his attention to this relation next.

In another example used to refute Eunomius, Gregory says that Eunomius' own father was both a "father" and a "human." But neither title excludes the other: being a father does not exclude being a human or vice versa. One should note that in the above examples, Gregory utilizes both absolute names (sovereign, human) and relative names (chief, father). He therefore explains his theory of names: "Who does not know that some nouns are absolute and unrelated (ἀπόλυτα και ἀναφερόμενα), others are used to express a relation (προς των συγγενεσιων)?" He exemplifies directly

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"CE I, 554.

"CE I, 555.

"CE I, 556.

"CE I, 563 ff.

"CE I, 568. At CE II, 130; 145-148; 283 Gregory exposes his understanding of religious language and the hermeneutical principles undergirding his exegesis. He believes that the "names" revealed in Scripture about God complement the dim and imperfect comprehension of the divine nature that reason supplies.
with names attributed to God in Scripture. Absolute names, or names said absolutely, are those which "describe by themselves some complete idea about God," such as "'imperishable', 'eternal', 'immortal', and the like." Relative names "refer only to some beneficial relationship, like 'help', 'shield', 'succour'... If you remove the need for help, the significant force of the name is lost." In this context mention has to be made of another text (Ref 124-125) where Gregory deals with relative names attributed to God such as "almighty," "lord," "physician," "shepherd." Here Gregory speaks of relation in Stoic terms (τὸ πρὸς τὴν ἐξελέ)

Those then who enquire precisely into the meaning of the term 'almighty' find that it declares nothing else concerning the divine power than that that activity (or energy) which controls created things and is indicated by the word 'almighty' stands in a certain relation to something (τὸ πρὸς τὴν ἐξελέ). For as he would not be called a physician, save on account of the sick... so neither would he be styled almighty, did not all creation stand in

us with (CE II, 130). For a recent discussion of Gregory's understanding of religious language, see Frances M. Young, Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 140-143. Nevertheless, I disagree with her statement that "The terms used 'relatively' are invariably those that relate to the oikonomia, to God's relationship with the world" (p. 143). As one can see here, Gregory endeavors to convince Eunomius that names such as "Father" and "Son," which refer to the theologia, that is, God's intra-trinitarian life, are relative names also.

62CE I, 570.
63CE I, 571.
need of one to regulate it and keep it in being."

Nevertheless, Gregory does not seem to favor the Stoic category of relation. The phrase πρόστιμως ἔχειν occurs only two more times in all of his works, at CE II, 116 (NPNF 2.5:262) and CE II, 392 (NPNF 2.5:289). In both places the Stoic category of relation is used to express the relation of a body to other objects and the relation between created things, respectively. Gregory does not attach any special significance to this phrase.

However, he envisions a third kind of names, "which are used both independently and with their relatedness, such as 'God' and 'good' and others like them."

One transforms such names from absolute into relative by attaching possessive adjectives to them, e. g. "my God" or "your good." In the example of absolute names which can be turned into relative names by merely attaching to them possessive adjectives, Gregory shows that he is either unaware of, or does not care about, Aristotle's argument that no substances can be called relatives (expressed clearly at Cat. 8b15-2). Thus:

The universal God often becomes personal to the one who calls upon him, in the way we may hear the holy ones making the supreme nature personal to them. "Holy is the Lord God" (Rev 4:8) is as far as it goes unrelated (ἄρρητον). But if someone adds "our" (Rev 4:11), he no longer allows the name

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Ref 125; NPNF 2.5:120.

CE I, 571.

See my discussion of the issue in Chapter Two.
to be understood by itself; he has made the meaning personal in relating it to himself. Again, the Spirit cries, "Abba, Father!" (Rom 8:15); here the word is independent of the particular relationship. But we are also commanded to call the Father in heaven "our Father" (Mt 6:9); this again is the relational meaning (η σχετική σημασία). So just as the person who makes the universal God his own in no way obscures his position as supreme over all, so there is no reason why the Father, having appointed the one originating from himself as the Firstborn of all creation, should not simultaneously indicate by the title "Father" that he has generated the Son, and by the same word explain that he exists from no superior cause.

There is in this passage the beginning of a theology of adoption: the Son of God--who is son by nature--calls on us, who are different in nature from God, to become sons of God by adoption. God the Father becomes our Father. One is reminded of Origen's theology of adoption. But was Gregory's view of adoption really influenced by Origen? I shall deal with this issue later in this chapter.

In the *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* (Ref) Gregory again takes issue with Eunomius' unwillingness to call the three divine persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He tells us that Eunomius calls the Father "creator" and "demiurge" of the Son, the Son "work, creature and product," and the Spirit "creature of the creature, work of the work." Gregory is of the opinion that we


"Ref 4."
have to pay greater attention to the titles Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, since they were revealed by the Lord himself. This is another way of saying that, although Scripture uses other titles in regard to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit describe the triune God more appropriately. For, "if understood in its natural sense (διὰ τῆς προσφυγὸς σημασίας), each of these titles is for Christians a canon of truth and a law of piety." Then, Gregory elaborates: "the name 'Father' is not understood with reference to itself alone, but also by its proper signification indicates the relation to the Son (πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν σχέσιν)." The name "Father" tells us that God is not only one person, but at least two, and indeed three, because of the relationality these names express. The faith in the triune God forms the canon of truth for Christians. At this point Gregory uses in reference to God a paradoxical phrase which he seems to like and which we also encountered in Ad Petrum 4. 87-88 namely that God, because of the one nature and three persons, can be described as "divided without separation and united without confusion."

Yet what does this relationality of the divine persons mean for Gregory? First of all, it means (as it meant from Origen onwards) that, since God the Father is immutable and eternally

"Ref 5.
"Ref 6, NPNF 2.5:102.
"Ref 6, NPNF 2.5:102.
identical to himself, he has always had a Son. Conversely, the Son has always had an eternal and divine Father. The Son too is immutable and divine precisely because of the relationality with the Father. Otherwise, change from the better to the worse or from the worse to the better would have been implied; but change and alteration in God are unacceptable.

Second, relationality means that the Son, "who is in the bosom of the Father" (Jn 1:18), is from all eternity to be contemplated in the Father. The present tense of the verb "to be" used by the evangelist suggests, in Gregory's view, that the Son has always been in the bosom of the Father, not that he came to be there. The Son being contemplated in the bosom of the Father means that he is contemplated as "power and wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), "truth, light, and sanctification" (1 Cor 1:30), "peace" (Eph 2:14), "life" and other similar names. Accordingly, denial of the Son's existence implies denial of all these goods in the bosom of the Father, that is to say that God did not always possess them.

The Spirit is also a correlative term of both the Father and

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7 Ref 7.
8 Ref 8.
8 Ref 8.
9 Ref 9.
9 Ref 9.
the Son. In using biblical phrases, Gregory refers to the Spirit as good and holy, princely, principal, quickening, governing and sanctifying of all creation. He conceives "no gap between Christ and his anointing, between the king and his kingdom, between wisdom and the Spirit of wisdom, between truth and the Spirit of truth, between power and the Spirit of power." Therefore, he concludes that, since the Son is eternally contemplated in the Father and the Spirit is the Son's Spirit, the Spirit too is eternally contemplated in the Father. All these reflections about relationality enable us to understand that the three divine persons are strongly united with each other, but at the same time they are to be distinguished from each other.

Then, Gregory interprets Mt 28:19, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." He

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"Ref 11."
"Ref 11."
"Ref 12."
"Ref 13."

thinks that Christ stops short of telling us what the name is, because it refers to the divine substance which for us is ineffable and incomprehensible. These reflections persuade Gregory to return to the issue of relationality. He thus says that "it is plain that the title of Father does not present to us the substance, but only indicates the relation to the Son." Let us also remember what Gregory stated just previously: "the name 'Father' is not understood with reference to itself alone, but also by its proper signification indicates the relation to the Son (πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν σχέσιν)." His conclusion is twofold: on the one hand, the name "Father" refers to the first divine person; on

"Ref 14 ff.

"Ref 16, NPNF 2.5:103: φανερῶν γάρ ὅτι ἦ τοῦ πατρὸς κλήσις εἰς υἱός εἰσιν παραστατικά, ἀλλὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν σχέσιν ἀποστημαίνει. This should not make us label the Cappadocian notion of relation as either non-subsistent or subsistent relation, because this was not the case. Stead himself thinks that questions related to distinctions between God's substance and his properties were not clearly formulated by the Christian writers of the fourth century (cf. his Divine Substance, 164 ff). Although arguing that God is completely simple, has no "accidents," and needs nothing to complete his substance, which is incomprehensible (De decretis. 22), Athanasius still suggests a variety of terms which enable us to "signify" his substance, such as "God and Father and Lord." On the other hand, the Anomoeans contend that "ungeneratedness" is completely adequate to express the divine nature. Another Arian argument was that, since God has no accidents, everything that can be said about him belongs to his substance, and "Son" is excluded from it. The Cappadocians reply that "ungeneratedness" and "generatedness" are not internal to the substance of God, but are distinguishing properties (ἴδιώματα). In Aristotelian terms, they are not properties but differentiae, marking off individuals within a genus (Stead, Divine Substance, 165 n. 14).

"Ref 6, NPNF 2.5:102.
the other hand, it points to another person, the Son. This is a reason to conclude that, when using correlatives such as "Father," "Son," and "Spirit," Gregory does not have in mind non-subsistent relations.

This whole discussion is placed in the context (Ref 14-17) of what is sufficient for us to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (1 Tim 2:4). In view of this objective, God has not considered it necessary for us to know the divine substance. It is sufficient for us to know that God is "the absolutely existent (τὸ ὄντως ὄν), together with whom, by the notion of relation (διὰ τῆς σχέσις ἐνοίας), the majesty of the Son is also manifested, whereas the Son, as said previously, shows himself inseparably united with the Spirit of life and truth, inasmuch as he is himself life and truth." In Gregory's view this is the most perfect teaching of piety, and beyond it, nothing else is necessary for our salvation."

Like Basil and Origen before him, Gregory connects the idea of correlativity between the Father and the Son with that of God's goodness. He says that for God to be the Father of such a Son is good." If Eunomius and his supporters deny that God is a

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35Ref 17, NPNF 2.5:103.

36Ref 17.

37CE I, 584: καλὸν ἔστι νῦν καὶ τῇ μεγαλειώτητι τοῦ θεοῦ πρέπον τὸ ταὐτότου γενέσθαι πατέρα. Gregory's language is highly similar to Basil's (AE II, p. 593 A-B quoted by Gregory at CE III, 6, 56: 200
Father, they imply that God's goodness did not always exist in its fullness, but was only acquired after he begot the Son. An even more dramatic implication would be that before begetting the Son, God would have had "neither wisdom nor power nor truth nor life nor any of those things by which in his various aspects the Only-begotten Son has both his being and his titles." As Widdicombe noticed in his comments on Origen, "it is fundamental to his [Origen's] thought that since the attribute of goodness is central to God's nature, God acts eternally to realize that which is good." The same holds true for the Cappadocian view of God.

It is possible that, when writing CE I, 584 ff, Gregory recalled Origen's argument from the Commentary on Genesis of which only a fragment has come down to us in Eusebius' Contra Marcellurn. The Com. on Gen. fragment is the only text known to us in which Origen makes an explicit comparison between the fatherhood of God and the fatherhood of men. Origen says that unlike men who become fathers, but are at one time unable to be fathers, God has always been Father. Gregory argues in a more comprehensive manner, speaking of the fact that for humans "it is

kalôn δὲ τὸ ταυτότου παιδὸς εἶναι πατέρα] and Origen's (De principiis, I.2.9 and Commentary on Genesis : kalôn autōn eīnai patēρa tōkōtou mēν).
impracticable for anyone to acquire the habit of a number of functions at the same time, but [they] must take up each of the interests in order and one at a time."\'' Unlike humans, God does not have at one time ungeneratedness, then acquires the power, then imperishability, then wisdom, then fatherhood, then eternity, but has all of these and many other attributes always and at the same time."\'' Therefore, the Father is always Father and with him the Son is also always implied because of the correlative nature of the two terms.\''\''

Another place where Gregory compares divine and human fatherhood is CE III, 2, 161 ff. This time he explicitly mentions that the view originates with his brother Basil. The latter spoke of two meanings of the word "son": a) the being formed by passion (ἡ παθητικὴ γένεσις) and b) the true relationship to the begetter (ἡ πρὸς τὸν γεγενημένον γενεσίτης). In discourses upon things divine Basil did not admit the former sense because it was "unseemly and carnal," but did admit the latter sense as it bore witness to the glory of the Only-begotten.\''\'' Eunomius, contends Gregory, dishonors the Son by the novelties which he tries to introduce in theology. At this point Gregory calls Basil

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\(^{26}\text{CE I, 585.}\)

\(^{27}\text{CE I, 586 ff.}\)

\(^{28}\text{CE I, 593.}\)

\(^{29}\text{CE III, 2, 161; NPNF 2.5:171.}\)
admiringly "a follower of Apostle Paul" and Eunomius derogatorily "the new Stoic and Epicurean," borrowing an image from Acts 17:21 which describes Paul's visit to Athens. There, in the Areopagus, Paul met "Stoics and Epicureans" who, like all the Athenians of this account, "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." From this point of view, Eunomius is "the new Stoic and Epicurean" because, asks Gregory rhetorically, "what could be found newer than this--a Son of an energy, and a Father of a creature, and a new god springing up from nothing, and good at variance with good?" These are the consequences of Eunomius' teaching about God and they are indeed disastrous not only for the Son, whom Eunomius disparages, but also for the Father and the entire godhead.


Chapters 14-15 and 20 of the Gospel according to John contain important statements about the relationship among the three divine persons, as well as between God and humans. Gregory refers to them in a number of passages in CE and Ref when explaining the divine relationality. I will consider these places next. John 14:9-10 reads: "9. Jesus said to him [i.e., to Philip], Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know

 CE III, 2, 164; NPNF 2.5:171.
me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, Show us the Father? 10. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"

In refuting Eunomius' view that all the names given to God, except "ungenerated," are mere human conceptions (ἐπίνοια), Gregory has recourse to Jn 14:10:

No one, I imagine, can be so densely stupid as to be ignorant that God the Only-begotten, who is in the Father (Jn 14:10), and who sees the Father in himself, is in no need of any name or title to make him known, nor is the mystery of the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of God (1 Cor 2:10), brought to our knowledge by a nominal appellation, nor can the incorporeal nature of supramundane powers name God by voice and tongue.

This is indeed apophatic theology at its peak. The two biblical verses (Jn 14:10 and 1 Cor 2:10) Gregory quotes together both in this context and elsewhere are important for his view of divine relations. The former refers to the relationship between the Father and the Son as we saw, the latter to the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the other two persons ("the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God"). Both verses express the deep intimacy existing among the divine persons. Each person dwells in the other two and knows them perfectly.

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\footnote{Eunomius, \textit{Apol.} 8, 1-6. Cf. also Basil's refutation of the same argument at \textit{AE} 1, 5.133-137 and my discussion in "Prosōpon and Hypostasis in Basil of Caesarea's Against Eunomius and the Epistles," \textit{Vigiliae Christianae} 51 (1997): 378.}

\footnote{\textit{CF} II, 390; \textit{NPNF} 2.5:289.}

\footnote{\textit{CF} II, 216-218, \textit{NPNF} 2.5:272.}
This is the supreme degree of relationality and communion, and Gregory contends that because they are spiritual, the divine persons need not express their knowledge or feelings about each other, that is, they do not communicate with each other in the way we humans do. Nor do the "supramundane powers" need to name God "by voice and tongue."

The two verses also occur together at CE II, 216-218, and this passage is also very telling. Gregory deals here with the way in which the divine persons communicate with each other. His argument can be summarized as follows. We humans communicate with one another in the following manner: one utters one's thoughts by means of voice or writing or other gestures (such as an expression of the eye or a movement of the hand), and the other one hears or reads them. A medium (μέσον) is necessary, "for voice to be produced," continues Gregory, "unless it takes consistence in the air." The air is the medium in this case. Yet what is the medium between the Father and the Son? If there is such a medium between them at all, then it should be either created or uncreated. It cannot be created, since the Father and the Son communicated with each other even before the creation of the world. If it is uncreated, then it should perhaps be either generated or ungenerated; but we know that the Only-begotten alone is generated and the Father alone is ungenerated.

CE II, 209.
Therefore, Gregory concludes that such a medium does not exist in the divine case. Hence, "where separation is not conceived of, the closest connection (τὸ συνήμενον) is confessed. And what is so connected needs no medium for voice or speech." Now by "connection" he means "what is in all respects inseparable (ἐν πάσιν ἀχώρίστοις)," and in the case of a spiritual nature connection does not mean corporeal connection, but "the union and blending of spiritual with spiritual through identity of wills."

Accordingly, there is no divergence of will between the Father and the Son. "If the Father wills anything, the Son who is in the Father (Jn 14:10) knows the Father's will." Because of this coinherence (περιχωρήσις, as it was called later), the Son has everything that belongs to the Father and, most importantly, has the Father himself and the whole of the Father's will. Therefore, "the Son is himself the Father's will" and needs no words to learn what the Father's will is. He himself is also the Word of the Father.

An equally strong relation exists between the Holy Spirit

\[\text{CE II, 214; NPNF 2.5:271.}\]

\[\text{CE II, 214; NPNF 2.5:272: τὴν τοῦ νοητοῦ πρὸς τὸ νοητὸν διὰ τῆς ταυτότητος τῶν θελημάτων ἐνώσιν τε καὶ ἀνάκρασιν.}\]

\[\text{CE II, 216; NPNF 2.5:272.}\]

\[\text{CE II, 216; NPNF 2.5:272: τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλον τὸ θέλημα ἐν ἑαυτῷ.}\]

\[\text{CE II, 216; NPNF 2.5:272.}\]

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and the other two divine persons. Basing himself on 1 Cor 2:10, Gregory says that the Holy Spirit requires no instruction to know what God wills, as he is the one who searches the deep things of God. Gregory does not elaborate on what he means exactly, but he probably refers to the fact that the Spirit knows everything, including the Father's will, as perfectly as the Son does.

Sometimes Gregory associates Jn 14:10 with Jn 14:9 ("who has seen me has seen the Father"). These two verses complement each other in expressing the strong relationship between the Father and the Son, and Gregory uses this complementarity against Eunomius. In CE III, 2, 136-150 he argues against Eunomius that there is no variance in the substance of the Father and the Son, "for what mutual relation is so closely and concordantly engrafted and fitted together as that meaning of relation to the Father expressed by the word 'Son'?" He then repeats the idea that the two terms are correlatives and brings in some biblical quotes to clarify what this correlativity means.

Thus, Phil 2:6 tells us that the Son is "in the form of God." Gregory explains this phrase using the analogy of a piece of wax stamped by a signet: when the figure engraved is fitted again to the signet, it accords with that which surrounds it. The one who is "in the form of God" has been formed by the impression of the Father on it and accordingly is "the imprint of

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CE III, 2, 143; NPNF 2.5:168 f.
the Father's substance" (Heb 1:3). Gregory also argues that the "form (μορφή) of God" means the substance (οὐσία) of God, because when it is said that Christ "took the form of a servant" (Phil 2:7), the substance of a servant was also involved, not only the form." He concludes that "in the form of God" (Phil 2:6), and "in the Father" (Jn 14:10), and he "on [whom] the Father set his seal" (Jn 6:26) (whence "he who has seen me has seen the Father," Jn 14:9), as well as "the image of goodness" (2 Cor 4:4) and "the brightness of glory" (Heb 1:3), and all other similar titles given to the Son testify that the Son's substance is not out of harmony with the Father's substance." I would also add that these phrases allow us to gaze into the relationship between the two divine persons.

Later in the same third book of CE, Gregory gives additional details about relationality. The Son has all the attributes of the Father (cf. Jn 16:15), except for being ungenerated. The Son is God, eternal, existent at all times, incorruptible, has no beginning and no end, is in the Father altogether and so is the Father in him." Gregory then mentions again Jn 14:10, a verse he much cherishes, in order to explain his understanding of it. In his view, this verse expresses "the complete absence of

"CE III, 2, 147; NPNF 2.5:169.
"CE III, 2, 149 f.; NPNF 2.5:169.
"CE III, 6, 9-11; NPNF 2.5: 201.
divergence in the image, as compared with him whose image he is." Moreover, Jn 14:9 should best be understood, according to Gregory, in the sense of Heb 1:3. The application which Gregory suggests yields a new image of biblical inspiration of the relationship I have been analyzing: the Son glorifies the Father and is being glorified by the Father.

The majesty of the Father is expressly imaged in the greatness of the power of the Son, that one may be believed to be as great as the other is known to be. ...[A]ll that glory which the Father is sheds its brilliancy from its whole extent by means of the brightness that comes from it, that is, by the true light.

Gregory mentions Jn 14:9 and 14:10 in yet another context. He says that a large number of expressions found in Scripture in reference to the Son are not used for the created world: "For the creation was not in the beginning, and was not with God, and was not God, nor life, nor light, nor resurrection, nor the rest of the divine names, as truth, righteousness, sanctification, etc..." Neither are "the more exalted words" contained in Jn 14:9-10 used in reference to the creation. The use of these expressions in reference to the Son alone testifies, according to Gregory, that the Son is not created. Therefore, it follows that

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 CE III, 6, 11; NPNF 2.5:201.
 CE III, 6, 12; NPNF 2.5:201.
 CE III, 6, 13-14; NPNF 2.5:202.
 CE III, 6, 64; NPNF 2.5:208.
the relationship between the Father and the Son is clearly
distinct from the relationship between God the Father and
creation. Widdicombe notices something similar in Origen, namely
that "[Origen] does not use the idea of the eternal existence of
the rational creation to prove the eternity of God's
fatherhood," although he does use the idea of the Son's eternal
existence to the same end.

"I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (Jn 14:10),
according to Gregory, is also equivalent to saying that the Son
is in the bosom of the Father. This gives Gregory the
opportunity to produce another syllogism against Eunomius. When
the Son, as Eunomius says, "was not," what did the bosom contain?
One should assume that the bosom was either full or empty. If it
was full, it should have been filled by the Son; so, the Son
existed. If it was empty when the Son was not (οὐκ ὄντως), and
then became full when the Son began to exist, then God the Father
underwent a change, in the sense that "he passed from the state
of void and deficiency to the state of fullness and
perfection." But this conclusion is unacceptable; therefore,
Eunomius and the whole Arian tradition is mistaken in its claim
there was a point in time when the Son did not exist.

---Widdicombe, Fatherhood, 76.

---CE III, 8, 41; NPNF 2.5:225 f.

---CE III, 8, 42; NPNF 2.5:226.
The *Refutation of Eunomius' Confession* brings additional clarifications of Jn 14:10 and other relational texts. One learns that Jn 14:10 also means that "the one is in his entirety in the other in his entirety (ο λος εν ο λω), the Father not superabounding in the Son, the Son not being deficient in the Father." There are other similar verses which Gregory quotes at this point: "The Son should be honored as the Father is honored" (cf. Jn 5:23), "he who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9), "no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son" (Mt 11:27). He insists that those who accept these verses as genuine should accept that there is no hint in them of any variation of glory, or of substance, or anything else, between the Father and the Son.

The relationship between the Father and the Son is thus expressed in equal glory, sameness of substance, and perfect knowledge of each by the other. A little later, Gregory adds that the Son does not divide the glory with the Father, but each has the whole glory of divinity. The fact that the whole passage presently under scrutiny refers to relationship is proved by Gregory's earlier statement in the same writing: "For without the Son the Father has neither existence nor name, any more than the powerful

\[\text{Ref 28; NPNF 2.5:105.}\]
\[\text{Ref 28; NPNF 2.5:105.}\]
\[\text{Ref 41; NPNF 2.5:107.}\]
without power, or the wise without wisdom."  
It is also worth noting that for Gregory, identity of glory indicates community of nature. 
The latter statement is not difficult to understand, given the date of Ref's composition after the Council of Constantinople (AD 381) which proclaimed that the Holy Spirit, "along with the Father and the Son, is worshiped and glorified," thus avoiding the use of an unbiblical word such as the homoousios to state the community of nature between the divine persons.

Thus far I have dealt rather strictly with intra-trinitarian relations. Nevertheless, both the Gospels and Gregory of Nyssa also consider the relationship between God and humans. I shall now turn my attention to the latter type of relationship, because it will provide a clear understand of Gregory's concepts of divine persons. The next two sections are corollaries to the issue of divine relationality.

4. Homecoming vs. Adoption and the Will of God

Scriptural texts bearing witness to the second type of relationship, between God and humans, are both prior to and after

\[\text{Ref 26; NPNF 2.5:105.}\]

\[\text{Ref 42; NPNF 2.5:107: ἐδείξε διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν δόξαν ταυτότητος τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς φύσεως.}\]
the resurrection and they occur in Jn 14-15 and 20 (and parallels). The *Biblia patristica* sees an allusion to Jn 14:6 ("I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me") in CE I, 335. Here, Gregory combines Jn 14:6 with Jn 1:3 ("all things came to be through him") and writes that, on the one hand, the cause of our life is "the true life which descended to our nature"; on the other hand, in the ascending direction, it is Christ, "the true light, by whom we were made foreigners to darkness." The latter shows that Gregory has in mind Jn 14:6 b, where Jesus tells his disciples that it is only through him that anyone can come to the Father. Jesus is the only mediator between humans and God the Father. Jn 14:6 b contains a whole theology of humanity's return to God from whom it strayed through sin. Next I would like to analyze Gregory's understanding of what I prefer to call "a theology of humanity's exile and homecoming to God." This theology is important inasmuch as it sheds light on divine relationality.

Between bondage and our adoption as children, an intermediary station on humanity's way back to God is friendship with God. Christ addresses his disciples in this way: "I do not

\[\text{125}\text{There are numerous places where Gregory quotes Jn 14:6, but in CE almost all of them refer to the first part of it. I am interested in the second part.}\]

\[\text{126}\text{CE I, 335.}\]

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call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (Jn 15:15). In interpreting this verse, Gregory endeavors to show against Eunomius that the Son of God who redeemed us from bondage is not under the dominion of the Father, nor in a state of slavery. Otherwise, not the Son alone, but also the Father, who is in the Son and is one with him, must be a servant. Through incarnation he took all that was ours in order to give us in return what is his: "As he took disease, death, curse, and sin, so he took our slavery also, not in such a way as himself to have what he took, but so as to purge our nature of such evils, our [defects] being swallowed up and done away with in his stainless nature." Gregory then returns to the Son's knowledge of the Father, yet another characteristic of relationship, expressed clearly in Jn 15:15. He reemphasizes that the Son's knowledge of the Father is perfect, as the Son has everything that pertains to the Father, and even more, has the Father himself in himself.

It is worth noting here that, on the one hand, Gregory uses the pair of correlative terms "father-son" to prove that the Father and the Son have the same nature; on the other hand, he

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\[12^a\] CE III, 8, 52-53; NPNF 2.5:227.

\[13^a\] CE III, 8, 54; NPNF 2.5:227.
uses another pair of correlatives, "lord-slave," to prove that a lord and a slave have different natures (like God and creation). Eunomius thought that the two pairs may work against each other and thus he tried to use the latter against the former to prove his point that the Son is not divine. I shall turn to this issue shortly.

Another biblical pericope dealing with the relationship between God and humans is John 20:17: "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." The text figured prominently in the Arian controversy, because the Arians interpreted it as proclaiming the transcendence of the Ungenerated over the Only-begotten. These words were addressed by the resurrected Christ to Mary Magdalene, the woman who was the first human being to see him. According to this verse, after the Lord's resurrection, humans are brought in the closest relationship possible with God. They become the Son's brothers and the Father's children. Humans are thus taken beyond slavery, beyond even friendship, and are adopted as children by God. But Eunomius, too, had noticed Jn

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12 For a strictly christological interpretation of this verse in Gregory, see Mariette Canévet, Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique: Étude des rapports entre le langage et la connaissance de Dieu (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1983), 243.

13 See Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 29, 18 and Or. 30, 7-8.
20:17 and tried to turn the new argument from relationship on its head. He wrote:

Either by the relative meaning (διὰ τῆς σχετικῆς σημασίας) employed there is expressed what is common to the substance also between the disciples and the Father, or else we must not by this phrase bring even the Lord into communion in the Father's nature, and, even as the fact that God over all is named as their God implies that the disciples are his servants, so by parity of reasoning, it is acknowledged, by the words in question, that the Son also is the servant of God.  

The conclusion Eunomius wants to impose is that, according to Jn 20:17, the Son is a servant by nature. Therefore, the Son is not God. Gregory's first reaction to Eunomius is to say that, first of all, the words addressed to Mary ("I have not yet ascended to my Father") do not refer to the divinity of the Only-begotten, but to his humanity. Then, "following the guidance of the fathers," he proceeds to explain the meaning of Jn. 20:17. The authentic interpretation of this verse can only be retrieved if the verse is placed within the scope of the history of salvation. He first quotes 1 Cor 8:6: "there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things." As such, God the Father is

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13 Apud CE III, 10, 8; NPNF 2.5:241.

15 When presenting Gregory's interpretation of Jn 20:17 in CE, van Parys fails to notice the main point of the whole argument, namely the meaning of the name "father" (pp. 173-175). But he endeavors to trace the history of the interpretation of this verse in "the fathers" from Origen to Gregory of Nazianzus (see M. J. van Parys, "Exégèse et théologie," 171-179).

16 In Ref 82-83 and In Res. I (GNO 9.1, p. 304, 10-306, 1) Gregory associates Jn 20:17 with Rom 8:29 (Christ is the "first-
by nature (τὴ φύσει) Father of existent things, in the sense that it is he who has given them existence: "human nature (ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις) ... had for the author (ποιήτης) of its own constitution none other than the Father of all." This is to say that in one sense "Father" means "author." But then Gregory speculates that there is yet another sense, a relational one, in which God can be regarded as Father of humanity: he says that "the name of Godhead (θεότης) itself, whether it indicates the authority of oversight or of foresight (ἐποπτικὴν ἢ προοπτικὴν ἐξουσίαν), imports a certain relation to humanity." This is another allusion to the supposed etymological derivation of θεός from θαδόμασ (= to gaze at, to see); consequently, θεός would also be related to other verbs expressing the idea of sight or seeing, such as "foresight" and "oversight". Thus, God and the human race are in a relation of overseer to the object overseen.

Yet humans moved from being in this divine Father's image to being in the image of the "father of sin." It is "in virtue of the similarity of will (διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν προαιρέσιν ὁμοιότητος)" that humans become sons of the father of sin, and honor those who

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137 CE III, 10, 10; NPNF 2.5:241.
138 CE III, 10, 10; NPNF 2.5:241.
139 CE III, 10, 10; NPNF 2.5:241: πατήρ τῆς ἀμαρτίας.
140 CE III, 10, 10; NPNF 2.5:241.

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"by nature were no gods" (Gal 4:8). Gregory regards this whole departure of the humanity from the good Father as an exile (τὸ ἐξοικειωθῆναι, Cf III, 10, 11). It is an exile of cosmic proportions to which God reacted accordingly: "The Good Shepherd of the whole rational creation left in the heights of heaven his unsinning and supramundane flock and, moved by love, went after the sheep which had gone astray, even our human nature." In comparing what God left behind, the ninety-nine other sheep, to come after the lost one, Gregory believes that humanity is an insignificant and infinitesimal part of the whole rational creation. Yet it seemed important to God to do this, because it was impossible for estranged humanity to return by itself to the heavenly place. The good tidings Christ proclaimed to the human race is precisely that he came down to earth to take it back to heaven. At this point Gregory has recourse to an image of adoption suggested by Is 8:18: "For behold, I and the children whom God has given me." 

But Gregory recalls that his discussion started from Jr 20:17. He, therefore, turns to the paramount role women played

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"The argument about the similarity of will with the father of sin is based on the explanations Gregory provides at Cf III, 1, 114 ff. which I present in the section dealing with adoption in Cf.

Cf III, 10, 11; NPNF 2.5:241.

Cf III, 10, 14; NPNF 2.5:241.
in the history of salvation, as Mary Magdalene was the first human being to witness to the resurrected Christ. In agreement with the author of 1 Tim, Gregory says "the woman, being deceived, was in transgression." God chose a woman to be the first witness of the resurrection,

that she might retrieve by her faith in the resurrection the overthrow caused by her disobedience, and that as, by making herself at the beginning a minister (διακομίσασα) and advocate to her husband of the counsels of the serpent, she brought into human life the beginning of evil, and its train of consequences, so, by conveying to his disciples the words of him who slew the dragon, she might become to humans the guide to faith, whereby with good reason the first proclamation of death is annulled.\(^{14}\)

Given the fact that I will discuss gender language in Gregory of Nyssa later, it is interesting to note that he underscores the role of Mary Magdalene as a minister to the rest of the humanity of the good news about Christ's resurrection. This, too, is an important part of the humanity's homecoming.

In sum, the image of humanity's exile and homecoming to God is one of Gregory's favorite images in salvation history. He develops a whole theology around this image, and one cannot but notice his enthusiasm when he unfolds it before his readers. As

\(^{14}\) Jaeger gives διακομίσασα (conveying) and no variants in the apparatus criticus. The English translator in the NPNF 2.5:242 prefers to read διακομίσασα (ministering). His argument that διακομίσασα is a misprint of διακομίσασα is quite persuasive, given that Gregory uses "minister" in reference to Mary on the same page.

\(^{15}\) CE III, 10, 16; NPNF 2.5:242.
I shall demonstrate below, this image is more elaborate than another image expressive of salvation history--our adoption as children of God--which Origen so powerfully had developed.

The important issue of the will of God appears in a context in which Gregory compares human and divine sonship, thus speaking of our adoption as children of God. The noun "adoption" (υἱοθεσία) and its cognates are very infrequent in CE. An important passage where Gregory deals with our adoption as children of God is CE III, 1, 111 ff. The context is yet another refutation of Eunomius' view that the correlative term "son" does not imply a common nature between the father and the son. Gregory uses an argumentum ad hominem, first strengthening the adversary's point so that he can then crush it more forcefully. Gregory himself says, on behalf of Eunomius and the Eunomians, that in Scripture the phrase "child of wrath" (Eph 2:3) is used as well as "son of perdition (Jn 17:12; Mt 3:7), "product of a viper" (Mt 3:7), "sons of light" (Jn 12:36) and "sons of the day" (1 Thes 5:5). But in such phrases no community of nature is apparent.\footnote{CE III, 1, 114 ff; NPNF 2.5:148.}

Now comes the explanation. Gregory says that he is aware that divine Scripture uses "son" in two senses: a) in one sense this appellation is derived "from nature" (ἐκ φύσεως), b) in other senses, it is "adventitious and artificial" (ἐποκευματικήν καί
épikhtov) or the "result of choice" (ék proairesewōs). For the first sense of the word, he exemplifies with the phrases "sons of humans" and "sons of rams," for the second with "sons of power" and "children of God." Gregory says:

For when they are called 'sons of Eli', they are declared to have a natural relationship (kata tēn phusin syngevenēs), but in being called 'sons of Belial', they are reproved for the wickedness of their choice (tēs proairesewōs) as no longer emulating their father in their life, by addicting their own purpose to sin."

Gregory clarifies at this point that whichever way we choose to be, we do so freely, but our human nature remains within its natural confines: "It is in our power (éphēmin) to become sons either of night or of day, while our nature yet remains, so far as the chief part of it is concerned, within its proper limits.""

Gregory warns that the explanation he has just produced holds true for the "lower nature" (kathwous), but he adds that our nature (or perhaps "substance") remains what it is. Therefore, in the case of human beings, the word "son" is applied metaphorically (ékmetafodoras) when we are referred to as sons of

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14 CE III, 1, 116; NPNF 2.5:148.
15 CE III, 1, 117; NPNF 2.5:148.
16 CE III, 1, 118; NPNF 2.5:148.
17 He produces a similar argument about lower and higher natures in Ad Ablabium 41, 18 ff.
anything else other than humans; because our nature is a border-land (μεθόριον, CE III, 1, 121) between virtue and vice.

We can become children of either light or darkness by affinity to the good or to its opposite. We can choose to change from children of darkness to children of light by "casting off the works of darkness [and] by decent life." In other words, it is through moral effort that we can attain a superior state. However, since the status of "sons of God" is the supreme state that we can reach, it is not only through our own efforts that we achieve this. It is the Son of God proper who helps us in this by joining us to him by spiritual generation. Thus, Christ bestows upon us the adoption (υἱοθεσία) as children of God.

Elsewhere, Gregory calls humans "disinherited sons" and shows

CE III, 1, 122; NPNF 2.5:149.


CE III, 1, 122; NPNF 2.5:149.

VIA CE III, 1, 123: διὰ τῆς πνευματικῆς γεννήσεως.

CE III, 1, 123; NPNF 2.5:149.
what Christ has done for us: "this is what the 'mediator' between the Father and the disinherited sons means, he who has reconciled through himself the enemies with God, through his true and unique divinity."  

Unlike humans, the Only-begotten does not change from an inferior to a superior state. Nor does he need another Son to bestow adoption upon him. Accordingly, Gregory maintains that the Only-begotten is properly called the Son of God, as he is the Son of God by nature. The distinction between "by nature" and "by choice" is very important in Gregory's view and he emphasizes it several times. Yet the case of the Son of God is very different from the case of human sons:

God, being one good, in a simple and uncompounded nature, looks ever the same way, and is never changed by the impulses of choice (ταῖς τῆς προαιρέσεως ὀρμαῖς), but always wishes what he is, and is, assuredly, what he wishes (dae καὶ βουλεῖται ὅπερ έστιν και ἐστι πάντως ὃ καὶ βουλεῖται). So that he is in both respects properly and truly called Son of God, since his nature contains the good, and his choice (προαιρέσεις) also is never severed from that which is more excellent, so that this word is employed without inexactness, as his name.

These statements are both powerful and in the Plotinian tradition. They are powerful because in the divine case, sonship-by-nature and sonship-by-will converge in the same direction of the good. There is no contradiction between the

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156 De perfectione, GNO 8.1:205, 14-21.
157 CE III, 1, 123 f.; NPNF 2.5:149.
158 CE III, 1, 125; NPNF 2.5:149.

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goodness of the divine nature and the good (or rather supremely good) choice the Son makes. The affirmation is also Plotinian because Plotinus, in referring to the One about a hundred years before Gregory, made an almost identical statement: the One is "all power, really master of itself, being what it wills to be." The Son is thus presented as a willing subject. But his will appears as both the will to choose \( \pi\rho\alpha\iota\rho\epsilon\sigma\iota \), which is always directed toward choosing the good, and the will to be what he wishes \( \beta\omega\lambda\epsilon\sigma\iota \) to be, which is an ontological will.

Gregory also deals with adoption in CE III, 5, 3. Here he explains Rom 8:16: "it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Gregory says that the meaning of this verse is that the Holy Spirit comes to be "in the mind of the faithful" \( \tau\eta\delta\acute{a}i\nu\iota\a\iota\tau\iota\nu\tau\omega\nu \), because in many other passages the Apostle Paul uses "spirit" \( \pi\nu\epsilon\mu\alpha \) for "mind" \( \nu\omega\zeta \). Nonetheless, an important statement follows shedding greater light on the meaning of adoption: "when [the mind] receives the communion of the [Holy] Spirit the recipients attain the dignity of adoption." The latter statement is not only beautiful, but also gives a more complete picture of what Gregory means by adoption: the Holy Spirit too (not only the Son)

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1\(^{2}\)Plotinus, Ennead VI.8.9.45-46. I deal with the Plotinian will of the One and its influence on Gregory of Nyssa in Chapter Two.

1\(^{2}\)CE III, 5, 3; NPNF 2.5:191.
contributes to our adoption as children of God. Unfortunately, Gregory does not elaborate further.

Yet we find a brief indication elsewhere. In Ref 55 Gregory writes that our adoption as children of God is a grace of God. We become children "by grace not by nature" (χάριτι καὶ οὐ φύσει). This means that God offers adoption freely, but also that humans remain created beings unlike the Only-begotten who is uncreated and Son by nature. In reflecting on the Seventh Beatitude, Gregory also says that the peacemakers will be crowned with the grace of adoption (τὴν νίκησιν χάριτι στεφανώθησαι). Becoming "children of God" in his view is to be treasured above any good fortune (εὐκληρία). The children of God imitate the authentic Son of God, the son by nature, chasing evil out of human nature to introduce in its stead the communion of the good. They show in their lives God's love for humans, that is, the proper character of divine action.

To summarize Gregory's theology of adoption, I should say that it contains two elements. In order for humans to become

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Ref 55; NPNF 2.5:109.


Beatit. 7; GNO 7.2:149, 15-16.

Beatit. 7; GNO 7.2:159, 12-15.

Beatit. 7; GNO 7.2:149, 16-19.
adopted children of God: a) they should be joined to Christ by spiritual generation: and b) their mind should receive the communion of the Holy Spirit. The issue of our adoption as children of God, as I hinted at the beginning of this section, is not one of Gregory's favorite images of humanity's return to God. To be more accurate, I should say that Gregory does not have as elaborate a theology of adoption as Origen. He does not, for example, expand the idea of the three stages in salvation history: bondage, friendship with God, adoption as children of God. Rather, he prefers to conceive of the return of the human race to God more in terms of what I call a "theology of exile and homecoming." Gregory's favorite image seems to be that of the Good Shepherd who goes after the lost sheep to bring her back to the fold where she belongs. Of course, the theology of adoption should not be completely overlooked, since, as I have shown, exists but is underdeveloped.

Interwoven with the theology of adoption, a few brief thoughts can be found of Gregory's notion of the will of God. He conceives of God as a willing subject who always chooses the good and wishes to be what he is. The latter view is not present in Basil's thought but betrays a Plotinian influence.

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166 CE III, 1, 123.
167 CE III, 5, 3.
5. A Note on Gregory of Nyssa's Use of Gender Language in Reference to God

Like the previous section, this section is a corollary to the issue of divine relationality. It allows me to glimpse even closer at the divine persons. In an earlier work such as CE, Gregory hints at the fact that some might be tempted to introduce gender in God because of such language as "father" and "son." John the Evangelist himself, in his Gospel, says "In the beginning was the Word" (Jn 1:1) rather than "In the Father was the Son," because some "more carnally minded," learning of the Father, may be led by its understanding to imagine also by consequence a mother.167 The allusion to Eunomius' "carnal mind" is quite transparent here, especially since Gregory adds that, upon hearing the word "son" applied to God, someone like Eunomius cannot conceive of impassible generation. In the second book of CE, Gregory himself uses feminine imagery to refer to God, and he does not find this inappropriate. Thus, he compares the all-powerful God condescending to commune with humans to a tender mother who joins in the inarticulate utterances of her baby.168

As Verna Harrison accurately noticed in two recent articles, Gregory used more explicit feminine language in reference to God

167CE III, 2, 19; NPNF 2.5:154.
168CE II, 419; NPNF 2.5:292.
in later works. Thus, in the seventh homily of the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, he explains that the bridegroom's mother in the Canticle allegorically indicates God the Father. According to Gregory, both "mother" and "father" mean the same thing here, because there is neither male nor female in God (Gal 3:28).

Elsewhere in the same *Commentary on the Song* Gregory refers to God as the mother of all creation, that is, the cause of its existence. As Harrison notes, because God's activities *ad extra* are regarded as common to all three persons, the term "mother" in these two contexts may refer to God in general.

Yet in *On Perfectione* Gregory speaks clearly of God the Father as the "lifegiving mother" of humanity, to whom Christ as mediator reconciles us following the fall. To this one should add the feminine references to the Son and the Holy Spirit in the same *Commentary on the Song*. The Son is identified with Sophia, the female personification of Wisdom found in the Old Testament book

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*GNO* 6:56 and 183.

Harrison, "Gender," 40.

"De perfectione," GNO 8.1:205.
of Proverbs. The Holy Spirit who descends as a dove upon
Christ from heaven at the baptism in the Jordan River is referred
to as a "mother," whereas Christ himself is presented here as the
daughter dove "born of the Spirit."

Feminine language can be used to refer to each member of the
Holy Trinity, as long as one keeps in mind that God is neither
male nor female. In Gregory's view, so were humans in the
original state, and so will they be in the eschaton. In Ref 5
Gregory contends that the names Father, Son and Holy Spirit are
better than other scriptural names referring to God because they
were revealed by the Lord himself: these names are "better able
to lead us to the faith about the existent [and Christ declares]
that it is enough for us to hold to the title 'Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit' in order to apprehend the absolutely existent, who
is one and yet not one" (emphasis mine). This statement does
not support the categorical conclusion which Harrison reaches
that "the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in their obvious
meanings constitute the indispensable foundation of Christian

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\(^{17}\) GNO 6:20-23; McCambley, 46 f.
\(^{17}\) GNO 6:468-469; McCambley, 276.

\(^{17}\) For a recent discussion of the paradisiac state of Adam
and the division of sexes in Gregory of Nyssa, see Peter Brown,
The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early

\(^{17}\) Ref 5; NPNF 2.5:102.
faith and further theological reflection" (emphasis mine). "It is enough" (ἀρκεῖν) in Gregory's statement means "sufficient," whereas "indispensable" in Harrison's statement means "necessary." The difference between the two statements is the difference between what is sufficient and what is necessary. The context should also be considered: from Ref 5 one learns that Eunomius refused to call God the Father Father, because he wanted to avoid the implications from relationality. Gregory combats him by saying that it would be better for us to stick to those names which lead us to the right faith, but he does not exclude the possibility that other names could serve the same purpose if understood correctly. The Cappadocian Fathers used even a non-biblical name such as ἀγέννητος for the Father, but because Eunomius tried to misinterpret it, they recommended the use of "Father" instead, as being less open to misinterpretation. It is in this context that one can also use feminine language in regard to God.

6. A Note on τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως in the Cappadocian Fathers

In modern languages τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως has been rendered as "mode of existence" or "mode of subsistence." As we saw, the Cappadocians thought that it is through their modes of existence

19Harrison, "Gender," 41.
that the divine persons differ from each other. Louth thinks that the τρόπος τῆς υπάρξεως was used by the Cappadocians and the whole Greek theological tradition after them to refer to a person (especially a divine person). The purpose of this excursus is to demonstrate that the Cappadocians never use the phrase under consideration to indicate a person; the phrase itself only as a rhetorical device--a pars pro toto--can be used to designate a person. τρόπος τῆς υπάρξεως occurs three times in Gregory of Nyssa’s writings (all in CE). Therefore, I think it is important to discuss it at this point. The Cappadocians believe that the Father’s mode of existence is to be ungenerated and generator, the Son’s to be generated (or begotten), and the Spirit’s to proceed forth from the Father.

As Prestige already noted, the phrase τρόπος τῆς υπάρξεως "seems to have been rescued by Basil [of Caesarea] from the schools of logic, and subsequently adopted generally into the theological tradition." Unfortunately, Prestige was not more specific about which "schools of logic" he had in mind. The Thesaurus Linguae Graecae could bring some help in this direction, although only in the case of extant texts. Before the

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"E.g. Andrew Louth, "They Speak to Us across the Centuries. 4. St Maximos the Confessor," The Expository Times 109, no. 4 (January 1998): 103.

Cappadocians, the phrase τροπ-υπαρξεως (with or without the article τῆς) occurs in Alexander of Aphrodisias\(^1\)\(^2\) and Themistius.\(^3\) It does not occur at all in the extant works of Plato, Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, Plutarch, Pseudo-Plutarch, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Plotinus, Porphyry, Dexippus, Athanasius of Alexandria, and Gregory of Nazianzus. It occurs five times in Basil of Caesarea's works (twice in the spurious work *Adversus Eunomium* 5, PG 29:680A and 681C) and three times in Gregory of Nyssa's. I shall present the occurrences in the Cappadocians below. The fact that Alexander of Aphrodisias used the above-mentioned phrase before the Cappadocians does not necessarily mean that the latter had access to Alexander's commentaries. It is more plausible that the commentaries made their way into handbooks of logic and philosophy used in various schools at that time. Basil might have come across such a


handbook during his student years. Themistius (ca. 317-388) was a famous rhetorician and statesman residing in Constantinople. As we saw, he too uses the phrase \( \tau \rho \omicron \mu \omicron \varsigma \ \upsilon \pi \alpha \rho \delta \varepsilon \omega \varsigma \) in his paraphrases of Aristotle. Basil, like other Christians, may have studied under him, especially since Themistius seems to have had the respect of Christians.

Prestige understood correctly that the "mode of existence" was part of the definition of a person not the person itself.

As I showed in Chapter Two, the Cappadocians understood a person in the Neoplatonic sense of a collection of properties. In their view, a person is substance and mode of existence and power and so on and so forth. Each of these properties makes the person known to us in part, but no property can be called a person apart from the other properties.

\(^{124}\) Risch enforces my suggestion, by asserting that, at least terminologically, the phrase under consideration may come from Alexander of Aphrodisias (e.g. *in top.* 295.6f., ed. Wallies) and Dexippus (*in cat.* 40.28-41.3, ed. A. Busse, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 4.2 [Berlin: Reimer, 1888]) (Franz X. Risch, "Kommentar," in Pseudo-Basil, *Adversus Eunomium IV-V*, introduction, tr. and comm. Franz Xaver Risch [Leiden: Brill, 1992], 129f.). The text from Dexippus does not contain the phrase under scrutiny.


\(^{126}\) Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 245-249.
In Epistle 235 addressed to his spiritual son Amphilochius of Iconium, Basil writes: "a thing (τι) is knowable with respect to number, and size, and power, and mode of existence, and time of generation, and substance" (emphasis added). In the Contra Sabellianos, et Arium, et Anomoeos, Basil speaks of the "mode of existence" of the Holy Spirit which should not be mistaken for that of the creatures, and in De Spiritu sancto the "mode of existence" of the Holy Spirit is said to be ineffable. In an earlier writing such as AE 1, 15 Basil uses the term ὑποστάσεως as a synonym of ὑπάρξεως in the phrase τρόπος τῆς ὑποστάσεως. He says that the latter phrase shows how God is, not what he is; therefore, the τρόπος τῆς ὑποστάσεως does not indicate God's nature or substance. The context of the discussion in AE 1, 15 is roughly Aristotelian, and Basil pretends to be embarrassed because he is "constrained" to use such language. The τρόπος τῆς ὑποστάσεως refers here to God the Father's ungeneratedness, because the ungeneratedness shows how [God] is (ὡς ἐστι) not what [he] is (τι ἐστι).

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2 PG 31:613a-b.

3 De Spiritu sancto 18, 46.8 (SC 17:195).

4 AE 1, 15; 548a-b.

5 AE 1, 15; 545b. See also my discussion of AE 1, 15 in my "Prosopon and Hypostasis in Basil of Caesarea," 378. A
I now turn to Gregory of Nyssa. At CE I, 216 Gregory of Nyssa writes:

It is in order to demonstrate the diminished and in natural rank inferior status of the Son and the Spirit that [Eunomius] says that one originates from the other; and, so that those who learn from the way things originate from each other may never reach the thought of their intimate connection as a result of such a mode of existence (ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου τρόπου τῆς ὑπάρξεως), he resists the principle of nature, both by saying that one originates from another and asserting that the one generated is illegitimate as far as concerns the nature of the one who generated him [emphasis added].

The second occurrence of the τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως in Gregory of Nyssa's CE is even more illuminating. It refers to the different "modes of existence" of Adam and Abel as an analogy of what happens in the godhead, thus showing three things: 1) no alteration of the definition of humanity is produced because of Adam's and Abel's different modes of existence, 2) similarly, no alteration is produced in the divine nature either because of the existence of three different modes of existence there, and 3) except for this example, humans cannot be said to have different modes of existence, because biologically they come into existence in the same way, namely by conception and birth. Humans, therefore, cannot be distinguished from each other by their modes of existence. Nyssen's text reads:

The first man and the one sprung from him, though they get their being in a different way from each other, the one by the coupling of parents, the other by shaping from the dust, are both believed to be two and in terms of substance are not split from each other.... Both former and latter are human, and the word for their being is the same for them both: each is mortal, and rational too, and similarly capable of thought and knowledge. If then the word for humanity is not altered in the case of Adam and Abel by the change in the way they are generated, since neither the order nor the mode of their existence (τρόπος τῆς ύπάρχεως) imports any change in nature, but by the common consent of sober men their state is the same, and no one would deny this unless he is badly in need of hellebore, what necessity is there to argue this unreasonable conclusion in the case of the divine nature?''''[emphasis added]

The third and last occurrence of τρόπος τῆς ύπάρχεως in Gregory of Nyssa is in a context where Eunomius' assertion is refuted that the Son obtained his existence from the mere will of the generator, not from his substance. Gregory contends that the "mode of existence" of the Son definitely differs from the mode of existence of the created world:"

To sum up, the scarcity of the phrase τρόπος τῆς ύπάρχεως in the Cappadocian writings demonstrates that, although having a certain importance, this phrase is far from being a prominent or preferred expression of the Cappadocians:'"'

132CE I, 496-497.
132CE III, 2, 42; NPNF 2.5:157.
134For later occurrences of τρόπος τῆς ύπάρχεως in the Greek theology, see the entry on ύπαρξις in the Patristic Greek Lexicon, ed. Lampe, which was obviously written by G. L. Prestige and reflects his treatment of the topic in God in Patristic Thought, 245-249.
Conclusions

In this chapter I have presented Gregory of Nyssa's view of divine relations as it emerges mainly from his CE and Ref. References to other works dealing with relations have also been made. The patristic antecedents of the divine relations have been dealt with, as was the connection between the patristic concept of relations and the Aristotelian category of relation.

In his concept of divine relations, Gregory of Nyssa does not differ significantly from such patristic predecessors as the Alexandrian theologians (Origen, Dionysius, Alexander, Athanasius) or his brother Basil of Caesarea. Moreover, all of them seem to be influenced by Aristotle's category of relation which they apply to God. Thus, a father is both the name of a person and also points to a son—a reality that is different from the Father, but has the same nature. Patristic authors developed this view of relation in opposition to those who denied the eternity or the divinity of the second divine person, the Son. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is in relation with the other two persons.

The relation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is not manifested only by the Father's eternal generation of the Son and gushing forth of the Spirit, or the last two persons' receiving their existence from the Father. It has numerous other
dynamic aspects of biblical inspiration, such as: love, eternal rejoicing of each person in the presence of the other two, glorification of each by the other two, perfect knowledge of one another, and perfect communion.

Gregory also has a very elaborate theology of the humanity's exile and homecoming as an image of the relationship between God and humans. If compared to Origen's, Gregory's theology of the humans' adoption as children of God is underdeveloped although still quite beautiful. As part of the discussion on adoption, I have presented a possible Plotinian influence on Nyssen's view of God's will. God thus appears as a willing subject.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I began this dissertation by asking whether it is necessary to study the concept of divine persons in Gregory of Nyssa's works. My affirmative answer to this question has been determined by both the numerous concepts of person existing today and the lack of an adequate study dealing specifically with Gregory of Nyssa despite several attempts to recover a fourth-century C.E. concept of person. In spite of some rudimentary concepts of individual which I presented extensively in Chapter Two, a notion of person did not exist in antiquity prior to the Cappadocian Fathers (Chapter One).

Chapter One also dealt with the status quaestionis and the methodology used in this dissertation. By analyzing the six most relevant studies dealing with person in antiquity or in the thought of the Cappadocian Fathers, I concluded that they were either too short or unsatisfactory. Stramara's "Unmasking the Meaning of Πρόσωπον" was the most challenging study for me. Yet, Stramara acknowledged about himself: "I am clearly rejecting the research of numerous scholars concerning the meaning of person in the third and fourth centuries A.D., [but] I choose to accept the research of scholars as found in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament and the philological studies concerning both
Stoic and Neoplatonic anthropology" (p. 675). In turn I chose to consider seriously his psychological point of view, disregarding its anachronism. Despite my most honest intentions, however, I had to conclude that Stramara's arguments did not actually support his contention that Gregory promoted a psychological view of the person understood as a center of consciousness.

Chapter Two considered some philosophical concepts which contributed to a pre-history of the concept of person: individuals and relations in Aristotle, individuals in Stoicism, the individual as a collection of properties in Platonism, and the Plotinian will of the One. I contended that Gregory may have used these concepts to shape his own concept of person. So far it has not been possible for scholars to measure with certainty Gregory's knowledge of philosophy, because he almost never mentioned his sources. Besides philosophical sources, however, Gregory used extensively the Bible and the writings of his Christian predecessors. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that he was a convinced Platonist or Aristotelian disguised as a Christian to avoid accusations of heresy. He was a Christian who considered it necessary to use the language and philosophical concepts of his time to speak to his educated contemporaries, most of whom were recent converts to Christianity.

In Chapters Three to Five I analyzed the most relevant works in which Gregory of Nyssa dealt with divine persons. Here is a
summary of the concept of divine persons emerging from these writings. First, to refer to a person in general, Gregory uses Greek terms such as: ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον, περιγραφῶσα (or περιγραφή), μερικὴ ὀὐσία, ἰδικὴ ὀψια and even ἄτομον. Second, to distinguish a divine person from the nature which that person owns in common with two other persons, Gregory uses the analogy of the individual and the universal. This betrays an influence coming from either Aristotle, or the Stoics, although I suggest that it may well be an amalgam of the two schools; it may also be a Porphyrian influence. Also, to distinguish between nature and persons, Gregory uses the explanation that, unlike nature, persons are enumerable entities. The concept of individuals admits of a separation due to the particularizing properties observed in each. When individuals are taken together, we can count them. Third, having distinguished between persons and nature, Gregory moves to establish the identity of each divine person and why each is unique. To do this, he adapts for Christian usage the Platonic view of an individual as a unique collection of properties. According to this adapted view, each divine person can be described as a unique collection of the following characteristics: the Father proceeds from no other cause, i.e., he is ungenerated, and is generator; the Son is generated from the Father as the Only-begotten, and through himself and with himself makes known the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father;
moreover, all things (including the Holy Spirit) come into existence from the Father through the Son; the Holy Spirit in turn has his being from the Father, and is known after the Son and with the Son. To express the particularizing notes of each divine person, Gregory also speaks of relations of origin or causal relations: the Father is the cause, the Son is from the cause or directly from the first, and the Spirit is from the cause (i.e. from the Father) through that which is directly from the first (i.e. through the Son). These causal relations are briefly expressed by the now classical formula (which Gregory does use) according to which the Father is ungenerated, the Son generated (or Only-begotten), and the Spirit proceeds forth from the Father. Under the influence of Aristotle's category of relation, Gregory, like his Christian predecessors from Origen onward, paid a lot of attention to the relations among the divine persons. He emphasized that the term "father" indicates the relation to a son because the two terms are correlatives implying one another. At the same time, Gregory added that "father" is the name of a person. The Spirit is also a correlative term of both the Father and the Son, although the Spirit's correlativity to the other two persons is not as obvious as that between the Father and the Son. Indeed the fact that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son expresses the relationality among the three.
Yet, relations in Gregory's theology are more than simple ontological causality. They are manifested in the perfect communion among the three divine persons. Communion (κοινωνία) is the solution Gregory proposes to the question, "What causes the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be persons and not mere collections of properties a person?" Relationality as communion means that the Son, "who is in the bosom of the Father" (Jn 1:18), is from all eternity to be contemplated in the Father. The Son being contemplated in the bosom of the Father means that he is contemplated as "power and wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), "truth, light, and sanctification" (1 Cor 1:30), "peace" (Eph 2:14), "life" and the like. As for the Spirit, Gregory refers to him in biblical terms as good and holy, princely, principal, quickening, governing and sanctifying of all creation. This allows him to present the Spirit as a correlative of both the first and the second person: there is "no gap between Christ and his anointing, between the king and his kingdom, between wisdom and the Spirit of wisdom, between truth and the Spirit of truth, between power and the Spirit of power." Since the Son is eternally contemplated in the Father and the Spirit is the Son's Spirit, the Spirit too is eternally contemplated in the Father. All three persons rejoice eternally in the presence of each other and know each other perfectly. This is communion and it allows for both the distinction of each person and the perfect unity.
among them.

Last but not least, God is a willing subject. Gregory conceives of God as a willing subject who always chooses the good and wishes to be what he is. The ontological view of the will of God is not present in Basil's thought but betrays a Plotinian influence.
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