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MONARCHIANISM AND ORIGEN'S EARLY TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

by

Stephen E. Waers, B.A., M.Div.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

MONARCHIANISM AND ORIGEN'S EARLY TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

Stephen E. Waers, B.A., M.Div.

Marquette University, 2016

This dissertation unfolds in two parts. In the first, I offer a reconstruction of the core of monarchian theology using four main primary texts: Hippolytus' *Contra Noetum*, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (often attributed to Hippolytus), and Novatian's *De Trinitate*. The monarchian controversy enters the historical record at the beginning of the third century, but we know little of its origins or motivations. The first part begins with a hypothesis about what might have prompted the rise of monarchianism. Following that, I give an account of the core of monarchian teaching using the sources listed above. My account gives specific attention to both major theological themes and exegetical trends in monarchian theology. Not only is such an account lacking in English-language scholarship, but I also use a different method than the methods used in those few non-English accounts that exist. The result of part one of the dissertation is a portrait of the monarchians who sought to preserve the unity and uniqueness of God by claiming things such as "the Father and the Son are one and the same." Such an overtly anti-Trinitarian theology, I argue, catalyzed the development of Trinitarian theology by creating a need to better articulate the unity and distinction of the Father and Son.

In part two of the dissertation, I offer a limited rereading of Origen's early Trinitarian theology in light of the monarchian controversy. I focus on books 1-2 of his *Commentary on John*. Against the trend of many contemporary scholars who use anachronistic categories to interpret Origen's Trinitarian theology, I seek to read him within his own context in the early third century. I argue that Origen's anti-monarchian polemics caused him to develop and utilize a rich Wisdom Christology. Finally, I approach the question of whether Origen was a "subordinationist" by reframing the question within the horizon of anti-monarchian polemics in the early third century. I conclude that Origen can be considered a "subordinationist" and that subordinationism was a commonly employed anti-monarchian polemical strategy. Origen used subordinationism to articulate and defend the distinction of the Father and Son.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stephen E. Waers, B.A., M.Div.

When I began my doctoral studies, I did not realize that writing a dissertation entailed entering a sort of isolating wilderness. My own wilderness was a library carrel whose wild temperature fluctuations could never be predicted. My completion of this dissertation was only possible because of the support and generosity of others.

I am thankful for the financial resources provided to me by the Theology Department at Marquette. The majority of this dissertation was written during the year they provided me with a dissertation fellowship. This fellowship allowed me to focus all of my attention on the dissertation. In this last year of writing, I have had the financial support of the department through an opportunity to teach. This teaching brought me out of the isolating wilderness of the library and began to prepare me for life after the dissertation.

I am extremely grateful for the support and direction offered by the members of my board: Dr. Michel René Barnes, Fr. Joseph Mueller, Dr. Marcus Plested, and Dr. Ronald Heine. Dr. Barnes helped me move from an ill-formed idea in an independent study to an interesting and, I think, important dissertation topic. His guidance has given shape not only to this dissertation, but also to a research program that will continue for many years. Although I still use them on occasion, his disdain for adverbs has improved my writing and thinking. I am thankful that Dr. Heine, my outside reader, agreed to be on my committee. His expertise on Origen and monarchianism make him uniquely qualified to help guide this project to completion. Conversations with Fr. Mueller and Dr. Plested have also helped me clarify my thoughts and fill gaps in my argument. For this work beyond what was required of them, I am thankful.

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Above all, I am thankful to my wife, Katie, for her support. In the first place, she agreed to leave both a good job and our native South to move to Wisconsin so I could pursue a Ph.D. at Marquette. In the second place, she has been supportive and patient with me through the whole process. On days when I have been alone in my carrel with my books and my thoughts, hers has often been the only human contact I have had. She has kept me grounded. During my time in coursework, studying for exams, and writing, she has both worked a demanding full-time job and borne two beautiful daughters. The

ability to do all of this while dealing with my stress and anxiety is truly a gift from God. Without her, the completion of this dissertation (or the maintenance of my sanity) would not have been possible. She forever has my love and gratitude.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
Monarchianism	4
Major Scholarship on Monarchianism.....	6
Origen	14
Subordinationism	20
Plan of the Dissertation	25
CHAPTER ONE: MODELS OF FATHER/SON RELATIONSHIP IN THE SECOND CENTURY	29
Introduction.....	29
Soft Distinction	35
<i>1 Clement</i>	35
<i>2 Clement</i>	36
Ignatius of Antioch	38
Polycarp	41
<i>Didache, Epistle of Barnabas, and Shepherd of Hermas</i>	42
<i>Epistle to Diognetus</i>	45
Melito.....	47
The Ambiguous Middle	52
Theophilus of Antioch	52
Irenaeus	58
Clement of Alexandria.....	61

Athenagoras	73
Hard Distinction: Justin Martyr	79
One God	82
Theophanies: Visible Son	84
Conclusion	92
CHAPTER TWO: EUSEBIUS, <i>CONTRA NOETUM</i> , AND <i>ADVERSUS PRAXEAN</i>	95
Introduction: The Beginnings of Monarchianism.....	95
Eusebius	97
The Hippolytan Question.....	107
Hippolytus: <i>Contra Noetum</i>	117
Introduction.....	117
Textual Analysis	119
One God	120
Visible	123
Both Father and Son.....	126
Suffered and Died	129
Conclusion	131
Tertullian: <i>Adversus Praxean</i>	132
Introduction.....	132
Textual Analysis	136
One God	137
Father and Son	142
Visible	148
Became Incarnate, Suffered, and Died	151
Conclusion	155

CHAPTER THREE: THE <i>REFUTATIO OMNIUM HAERESIUM</i> AND NOVATIAN'S <i>DE TRINITATE</i>	156
The <i>Refutatio</i>	156
Introduction	156
Textual Analysis	159
Genealogy of Heresy	159
One God	167
Father and Son	171
Visible and Invisible	175
Suffered and Died	179
Novatian: <i>De Trinitate</i>	184
Introduction	184
One God	186
Excursus: Sabellius Outside of <i>De Trinitate</i>	189
Novatian Continued	193
Father and Son	194
Visible and Invisible	198
Suffered and Died	201
Scholarly Theories Reconsidered	202
Early Third Century Orthodoxy?	203
An Exegetically-Based Theology?	206
East vs. West?	207
Was Monarchianism the Privileging of Jewish Theology?	209
The Development of Monarchianism and Geographical Schools	211
Summary of Monarchianism	212

CHAPTER FOUR: MONARCHIANISM, ORIGEN'S <i>COMMENTARY ON JOHN</i> , AND WISDOM CHRISTOLOGY	215
Reading Origen <i>in Situ</i> : Origen and Monarchianism	215
Dating the <i>Commentary on John</i>	219
The Alexandrian Milieu of the <i>Commentary on John</i>	224
Ambrose and the Anti-Valentinian Context	225
Monarchianism and Book 1 of the <i>Commentary on John</i>	228
CHAPTER FIVE: ORIGEN THE SUBORDINATIONIST; SUBORDINATION AS A MEANS OF DISTINGUISHING THE FATHER AND SON	242
Introduction: Anti-Monarchian Subordination in the Early Third Century	242
Tertullian	245
Novatian	254
Subordination and Distinction: Origen's Schema of Participation	263
Two Origenes: Rufinus' Translation of <i>De principiis</i>	264
Test Case: <i>De principiis</i> 1.2.13	270
<i>Commentary on John</i> 2.13-32	280
CONCLUSION	300
BIBLIOGRAPHY	305
Primary Sources	305
Secondary Sources	310

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANF – Ante-Nicene Fathers

AP – Adversus Praxean (Tertullian)

CCSL – Corpus Christianorum series latina

ComJn – Commentary on John (Origen)

ComMatt – Commentary on Matthew (Origen)

CN – Contra Noetum (Hippolytus)

CSEL - Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum

De Prin. – De Principiis (Origen)

EH – Ecclesiastical History (Eusebius)

Exc. – Excerpta ex Theodoto (Clement)

FC – Fathers of the Church

GCS – Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller

LCL – Loeb Classical Library

Paed. – Paedagogus (Clement)

Refutatio – Refutatio omnium haeresium

SC – Sources chretiennes

Strom. – Stromata (Clement)

INTRODUCTION

The opening books of Origen's *Commentary on John* (*ComJn*) are some of the most important for the study of his early theology.¹ Origen's commentary on the "spiritual Gospel" in these books is preserved in Greek that Rufinus has not emended. Within these two books that focus on the prologue to the Gospel of John, one particular passage stands out for the vivid way in which it discusses the relationship between the Father, Son, and the created order: *ComJn* 2.13-33. As I argue in the last two chapters of the dissertation, the first two books of *ComJn* and especially this passage are an important touchstone for reconstructing Origen's early Trinitarian theology.²

Near the beginning of *ComJn* 2.13ff, Origen informs his readers that he is attempting to resolve the problem of some God-loving, but misguided Christians.³ There are some Christians, Origen observes, who are afraid that they could be understood to be proclaiming two gods. To avoid this misunderstanding, some of these Christians affirmed that the Son is divine but denied that he is distinct from the Father; others affirmed that

¹ I discuss the reasons for the importance of *ComJn* 1-2 in much greater detail at the beginning of chapter four. Briefly stated, however, it is important for the following reasons: (1) it survives in Greek; (2) the vast majority of Origen's theological writing occurs in biblical commentaries; (3) Origen thinks the Gospel of John has pride of place among the Gospels; (4) the Gospel of John was important for a number of divergent theological streams in the early-third century, like Valentinianism. See Ronald Heine's discussion of *ComJn*'s importance: Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*, Christian Theology in Context (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 86–103.

² My judgment about the importance of this passage is shared by other notable scholars. Jean Daniélou notes that "this passage expresses the very heart of Origen's vision of the Godhead." See his *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, trans. John Austin Baker, History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea 2 (London: Longman & Todd, 1973), 382. Henri Crouzel also observes the importance of this passage and notes that it has caused a good deal of controversy. See Henri Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 181.

³ Origen, *ComJn* 2.16.

the Son is distinct from the Father but denied the Son's divinity.⁴ Origen does not identify the proponents of this theology by name or tell us much about their background. A survey of Christian writings roughly contemporary with the beginning of Origen's *ComJn* reveals that the theology Origen was attempting to correct was not an isolated phenomenon. In these writings, we encounter Christians who were so concerned to protect the uniqueness of God that they accused their opponents of proclaiming two gods or being ditheists.⁵ In order to avoid what they viewed as ditheism, these theologians often professed that the Father and the Son are "one and the same," thus denying any distinction between them.⁶ These theologians, attested outside of Origen's *ComJn*, propounded a theology that seems very similar to what Origen is dealing with in *ComJn* 2.16. Scholars refer to this theological position as monarchianism, among other titles.⁷

If in *ComJn* 2.13ff Origen was addressing monarchian theology, then a proper historical understanding of Origen's argument requires knowledge of the state of monarchian theology at the beginning of the third century. Many scholarly accounts of

⁴ The two attempts to avoid proclaiming two gods here roughly line up with what I label "monarchianism" and "psilanthropism." The former dealt with the problem of proclaiming both that there is only one God and that the Son is divine by arguing that the Son is the same as the Father. The latter dealt with the problem by denying that the Son was divine. Although they answered the question differently, each position was concerned to protect the claim that there is only one God. As I make clear in my later discussion of monarchianism, it is often linked to psilanthropism—probably because they shared the concern to protect the uniqueness of God.

⁵ For the concern to avoid proclaiming two gods, see: Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 11.1, 14.2-3; Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.1; and *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.12.16. As I discuss in much detail later, questions about the authorship of the *Refutatio* are so debated that I treat it as an anonymous text.

⁶ For the explicit claim that the Father and Son are "one and the same," see: Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3; *Refutatio* 9.10.11-2. Again, I examine these texts very closely in the following chapters.

⁷ As I discuss below, there is no consensus among scholars about what to call this theological position. Other names used to denote the position are "patripassianism," "modalism," and "Sabellianism." Beyond the issue of what to call this theology, there is no universally agreed upon definition of what made up the core of this theology. Therefore, I continue to use the title "monarchian;" but I define it clearly so as to delineate the core of the theological position.

Origen's Trinitarian theology are inadequate because they are deficient in two respects. First, scholars frequently fail to read Origen as engaging with monarchianism.⁸ Second, when scholars do include attention to Origen's engagement with monarchianism, they typically work with an anemic understanding of monarchianism as some vague, generic form of modalism, which itself functions as an ill-defined buzzword.⁹ These two specific deficiencies are the result of a broader trend in scholarship on Origen's Trinitarian theology. A number of scholars are more concerned with the role of Origen's theology in the development of later Nicene and post-Nicene Trinitarian theologies than they are with how it functioned in its contemporary context. The unfortunate byproduct of this way of reading Origen is that scholars give his contemporary context—especially his engagement with monarchianism—too little attention.

The work of this dissertation is to remedy both of the deficiencies in scholarly readings of Origen's Trinitarian theology. First, it argues that Origen's engagement with monarchianism as he wrote the opening books of his *ComJn* shaped the way he articulated his Trinitarian theology. Second, it provides a clear and detailed reconstruction of monarchianism as it had developed by the beginning of the third century. The first part of the dissertation reconstructs the main contours of monarchian theology using primary sources written in the first half of the third century. The dissertation then rereads key passages from *ComJn* 1-2 where Origen engages with

⁸ As I note later, some scholars note that Origen's polemic against modalism shaped his theology; but they do not elaborate on how it did. There are also a few notable exceptions to this trend, which I discuss later.

⁹ Such is the case with the recent work of Christoph Bruns. For him, monarchianism or modalism is the bugaboo Origen is attempting to avoid and refute, but Bruns provides no detail or texture about the position Origen is opposing. See Christoph Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos: Zur Gotteslehre des Origenes*, Adamantiana 3 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2013).

monarchian theology. Not only does the dissertation focus on the fact that Origen was engaged with monarchians early in his career, but it also offers a clearer picture of what the monarchians taught than is common in scholarship. The result is a deep, contextual rereading of Origen's early Trinitarian theology as expressed in one small part of his expansive corpus.¹⁰ It is not an attempt at a grand pan-oeuvre reconstruction of Origen's Trinitarian theology and, thus, does not attempt to address the question of development within Origen's thought.¹¹

Monarchianism

Questions about monotheism and the position of Jesus in relation to the one God remained active and disputed well into the third century of the Common Era.¹² These questions were raised with exceptional intensity in the so-called monarchian controversy, which erupted in Rome at the beginning of the third century. Despite and because of the

¹⁰ This dissertation is a long-form version of what Michel R. Barnes calls a "dense reading." Barnes has laid out the criteria that are needed to judge the credibility of a reading of any given historical text. See Michel R. Barnes, "Rereading Augustine's Theology of the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 150–4. I will summarize the main points he makes instead of reproducing his seven criteria here. A "Barnesian dense reading" requires that a text be read with careful attention to its contemporary context. Attention to both the immediate context in which a text was produced and the antecedent tradition that shaped that context is necessary for a credible reading of the text. Barnes gives more detail about this methodology in the essay cited above, but the main point is that we best understand a text by reading it in its original context and with attention to the forces that shaped that context. In the case of my dissertation, my reading of Origen required that I first reconstruct monarchianism. Had I not reconstructed this primary context for the key passage from *ComJn* 2.13ff, my reading of Origen would have lacked credibility.

¹¹ Such an ambitious project will be able to build on of the work I do here. My hope is that dense and textured accounts such as the one I give will enable more nuanced portraits of Origen's Trinitarian theology as a whole and over the whole course of his career..

¹² See, among others, the work of Larry Hurtado, who has traced the question of the divinity of Jesus and monotheism well into the second century. Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 2nd ed (London: T&T Clark, 1998); idem, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2003).

strident opposition to monarchianism that arose in the early third century, it is difficult to develop a clear account of monarchian theology. The reconstruction of the main contours of monarchian theology is the focus of the first part of this dissertation.

Monarchian theology is difficult to reconstruct for two main reasons. The first is that we possess no texts from the monarchians themselves. Whereas the study of the varieties of Gnosticism has been aided by the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts, scholars have not been so fortunate as to discover a cache of monarchian primary sources. The second difficulty arises from the fact that any portrait of monarchian theology at the beginning of the third century must be built upon four main texts, all of which are hostile witnesses to monarchianism.¹³ Their hostility to monarchianism means that their accounts can be tendentious and offer polemical caricatures.¹⁴

The four main texts that attest to monarchianism are Hippolytus' *Contra Noetum*, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (often attributed to Hippolytus), and Novatian's *De Trinitate*. There is general agreement among scholars about the authorship and dating of *Adversus Praxean* and *De Trinitate*, but the same cannot be said of *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio*.¹⁵ These texts were produced during

¹³ By hostile witnesses, I mean that each of these texts seeks to refute monarchian positions. Because of their anti-monarchian orientation, these texts are often prone to distort the positions of those whom they oppose. As I discuss later, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* can be of some use for reconstructing the situation of the church at Rome during the time the monarchian controversy broke out; but he is oddly silent on the details of the controversy itself.

¹⁴ This is especially the case with the *Refutatio*, whose well-known polemical distortions I discuss in more length in a later chapter.

¹⁵ I discuss the many issues surrounding these texts and questions about the identity of Hippolytus in the later chapters. For the time being, suffice it to say that there is little scholarly agreement about the authorship, dating, and geographical provenance of these texts. Most scholars think the *Refutatio* was produced in Rome or the surrounding regions, but they are divided about the geographical provenance of *Contra Noetum*. As I detail later, most think it is either from Rome or somewhere in Asia Minor.

the first half of the third century, and they offer different views of monarchianism.¹⁶ The first part of my dissertation uses these four texts to build a picture of monarchian theology. My primary interest in these texts is not what they can tell us about the theology of their authors; it is what they can tell us about the theology of their opponents, the monarchians. Specifically, I am interested in establishing the monarchians' core theological commitments and the theological themes to which they give the most attention. Furthermore, my account of monarchianism focuses on which biblical texts they used and how they exegeted scripture; for in the minds of the disputants, the debate was fundamentally about the proper interpretation of scripture.¹⁷

Major Scholarship on Monarchianism

Such a detailed account of monarchian theology is necessary because it has been neglected in much recent scholarship. Furthermore, most of the serious treatments of monarchianism have focused on something other than a reconstruction of the core of monarchian theology and exegesis. A brief survey of the major accounts of

¹⁶ By suggesting that these texts were produced in the first half of the third century, I am rejecting the claims of Josef Frickel's later work, where he argues that *Contra Noetum*, at least in its final form, is a product of the fourth century at the earliest. See Josef Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift Contra Noetum: ein Pseudo-Hippolyt," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski*, ed. Hans Christof Brennecke, Ernst Ludwig Grasmück, and Christoph Marksches, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 67 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 87–123. In addition, as I note in later chapters, most scholars think there is some sort of dependence between *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*.

¹⁷ Note especially Hippolytus' repeated remarks about Monarchian misuse of scripture in *Contra Noetum*. He accuses the Noetians of interpreting individual verses outside of the context of whole passages (3.1). He complains that they "hack the scriptures to pieces" (περικόπτουσι τὰς γραφάς) (4.2). Later in the work, he implies that the Noetian exegesis is the result of a misuse of προαίρεσις (9.3). See also Mark DelCogliano's article on anti-Monarchian exegetical strategies: Mark DelCogliano, "The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 117–38.

monarchianism will help demonstrate the need for my work.¹⁸ Following Hagemann's seminal study of the church in Rome,¹⁹ Harnack produced a number of accounts of monarchianism that shaped discourse for much of the twentieth century.²⁰ Harnack's division of monarchianism into two main streams, modalistic and dynamistic, has become a scholarly commonplace.²¹ Harnack's account is colored by his overarching assumption that the speculative theology of the learned *Logos* theologians was at odds with the simple faith of the uneducated masses.²² He proposed that it was this opposition between the learned theologians and the simple laity that gave rise to the monarchian controversy and that monarchianism was an attempt to protect the pure faith against the intrusion of speculation which derived from Hellenistic philosophy.²³

¹⁸ My account here is highly selective. I am only discussing the most substantial and influential treatments of monarchianism, especially those that address monarchianism as their main topic.

¹⁹ Hermann Hagemann, *Die römische Kirche und ihr Einfluss auf Disciplin und Dogma in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1864). Note also La Piana's oft-cited article on the Church in Rome in the late second century: George La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century: The Episcopate of Victor, the Latinization of the Roman Church, the Easter Controversy, Consolidation of Power and Doctrinal Development, the Catacomb of Callistus," *Harvard Theological Review* 18, no. 3 (1925): 201–77.

²⁰ Harnack's most comprehensive treatment is found in Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der dogmengeschichte*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Mohr, 1886), 556–662. I will quote from and cite the following English translation: Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 1–118. Note also Harnack's influential encyclopedia entry: "Monarchianismus," in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, ed. J. J. Herzog and Albert Hauck, 3rd ed., vol. 13, 24 vols. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1903), 303–36. An abridged English translation of this article can be found in "Monarchianism," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and George William Gilmore, 13 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1963), 7:453–61.

²¹ See, for example, Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3:13; Harnack, "Monarchianism," 454. Although the referents of Harnack's terms are fairly clear, I later propose a more restrictive definition of monarchianism that aims to highlight their central concern. I will discuss the difficulties that accompany naming the controversy shortly.

²² He gives this position at length at the beginning of the third volume of his *History of Dogma*.

²³ There are a whole host of factors that influenced his thinking in this regard, but they are beyond the scope of this current dissertation. For an exploration of some of the motivations behind Harnack's thought, see Claudia Rapp, "Adolf Harnack and the Paleontological Layer of Church History," in *Ascetic*

Harnack's theory about the divide between the scholars and the laity quickly found a proponent in the work of Jules Lebreton, who produced a series of essays that were influential for years to come.²⁴ His essays in turn influenced the authors of major encyclopedia entries on monarchianism during the first half of the twentieth century.²⁵ In the middle of the twentieth century, Ernest Evans gave a condensed account of the monarchian controversy in the introduction to his translation of *Adversus Praxean*.²⁶ His is a good general overview, although its brevity still leaves a need for a fuller account.

In the 1980s, Michael Decker completed a dissertation on monarchianism.²⁷ One of the chief goals of the dissertation was a source-critical study of monarchianism. From this source-critical study, he concludes that nearly all of the biblical exegesis attributed to the Noetians in *Contra Noetum* is the polemical invention of Hippolytus; he does not

Culture: Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau, ed. Blake Leyerle and Robin Darling Young (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 295–314.

²⁴ Jules Lebreton, “Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l’Église chrétienne du III^e siècle (à suivre),” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 19, no. 4 (1923): 481–506; “Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l’Église chrétienne du III^e siècle (suite et fin),” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 20, no. 1 (1924): 5–37. These essays have since been criticized. See Marguerite Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice du verbe incarné*, *Patristica Sorbonensia* 2 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958), 46. She writes, “Ces deux articles sont typiques d’une conception encore fort répandue dans les dictionnaires et encyclopédies, mais qui semble dépassée.” See also a similar thesis to that of Lebreton advanced in the 1960s: Harry James Carpenter, “Popular Christianity and the Theologians in the Early Centuries,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 14, no. 2 (1963): 294–310.

²⁵ Gustave Bardy, “Monarchianisme,” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, contenant l’exposé des doctrines de la théologie catholique, leurs preuves et leur histoire*, ed. Alfred Vacant, E. Mangenot, and Emile Amann, 15 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1929), 10.2:2193–2209; Henri Leclercq, “Monarchianisme,” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, 15 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1934), 11.2:1947–64. The structure, content, and wording of these two articles is strikingly similar. Leclercq seems to have been almost solely reliant on the prior work of Bardy, to the point that his own work lacks much original material.

²⁶ Tertullian, *Tertullian’s Treatise against Praxeas*, ed. Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 6–18.

²⁷ Michael Decker, “Die Monarchianer: Frühchristliche Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und Kleinasien” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1987). This dissertation is rarely cited in English language scholarship, and I first discovered it in Uríbarri Bilbao’s book.

think that Noetian theology relied heavily on biblical exegesis.²⁸ Throughout the course of his dissertation, Decker casts the monarchian controversy as a clash between different theological systems developed in Asia Minor and Rome.²⁹ Despite its novel approach to the monarchian controversy, Decker's work still does not leave us with a coherent picture of the core of monarchian thought.³⁰

Shortly after Decker's work, two scholars produced major studies of monarchianism. Starting in the late 1980s, Reinhard Hübner developed a series of arguments that radically reinterpreted a number of the primary texts related to monarchianism.³¹ One of Hübner's main contentions is that monarchiansim arose as a reaction against Gnosticism and that it appeared early in the second century.³² Perhaps the most idiosyncratic feature of Hübner's arguments is that he reasons that Noetus was

²⁸ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 156–7. As I note in my chapter on *Contra Noetum* and my conclusions about Monarchianism, I find Decker's conclusion problematic. Biblical exegesis was deeply interwoven into the thought of the Noetians and all of the other monarchians. If Hippolytus invented this Noetian exegesis, he is a skillful literary craftsman indeed.

²⁹ He articulates this point very strongly on pp. 200–5. I also have some serious objections to his presentation of the monarchian controversy as a conflict between Eastern and Western theologies, but I deal with that at more length later.

³⁰ By “core of monarchian theology” I mean those theological elements that recur in the four major texts that I study. As I note numerous times throughout the dissertation, I think the core of monarchianism entailed two commitments and one accompanying conclusion: (1) There is one God (the Father); (2) Jesus is God; therefore, Jesus and the Father are one and the same. The beginning of *Contra Noetum* presents a very condensed account of monarchian teaching and its exegetical underpinnings.

³¹ Hübner's essays, which were published in various venues, were gathered into a collected volume in 1999. For the sake of ease, I will cite them as they appear in that volume. See Reinhard M. Hübner, *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999). Note also Mark Edwards' somewhat critical review of the volume: M. J. Edwards, “Review of *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert*,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 52, no. 1 (2001): 354–56.

³² See in particular two of his essays within the collected volume: “Die antignostische Glaubensregel des Noët von Smyrna,” (39–94); and “Der antivalentinianische Charakter der Theologie des Noët von Smyrna,” (95–129). As I have argued in an essay tentatively forthcoming in *Studia Patristica*, I think Hübner's broad thesis is correct. Anti-Gnostic polemics probably played some role in the formation of monarchian theology. However, I disagree on many of the particular details of his argument, especially his revisionist chronology.

active early in the second century and that figures like Ignatius and Melito were reliant on his theology.³³ His argument calls for a highly revisionist chronology that is not justified by the evidence. Like the treatments of monarchianism before him, Hübner's fails to produce a clear account of the core of monarchian teaching.

The latest major treatment of monarchianism is Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao's tome written in the mid-1990s.³⁴ Bilbao's main concern is to trace the use of the term *μοναρχία* in order to determine how it relates to Trinity. Specifically, he wants to know whether the term *μοναρχία* necessarily excludes a Trinitarian understanding of God. To answer this question, he begins by tracing the early philosophical roots of the term and follows its usage well into third-century Christian texts. At the end, Bilbao concludes that *μοναρχία* is not necessarily opposed to a Trinitarian understanding of God. Because of this conclusion, he judges Praxeas' alleged anti-Trinitarian use of the term to be a bastardization of its normal use.³⁵ Although Bilbao's book is a careful and nuanced study of the use and history of the term *μοναρχία*, he does not seek to offer a comprehensive account of monarchian theology. Indeed, as Bilbao reminds his readers on multiple occasions, the term *μοναρχία* itself was not at the heart of the monarchian position. His

³³ Most think Ignatius wrote somewhere between 105 and 115 C.E. Melito probably wrote during the 160s. From the scarce data available, scholars typically place Noetus at the end of the second century.

³⁴ Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la controversia "monarquiana,"* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie 1: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996). See also his earlier exploration of the question: "Monarquía: Apuntes sobre el estado de la cuestión," *Estudios eclesiásticos* 69, no. 270 (1994): 343–66.

³⁵ See Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 226. There, he writes, "Praxeas' way of understanding the monarchy is an isolated and exceptional case within the Christian literature that has been handed down to us" (La manera de entender la monarquía de Praxeas es un caso aislado y excepcional dentro de la literatura Cristiana que se nos ha transmitido).

compelling argument that the term *μοναρχία* was not at odds with Trinitarian theology still leaves need for the careful reconstruction I undertake.

None of the major works on monarchianism provides a nuanced reconstruction of their core theological positions by using the full array of extant sources.³⁶ This is precisely the gap in scholarship that I aim to fill in part one of this dissertation.

Monarchianism did not arise out of nowhere. Although the extant witnesses we have for it are laconic with regard to its theological origins, I first offer a hypothesis about what theological developments in the second century might have prompted its rise. After giving a hypothesis about the theological origins of monarchianism, I seek to establish a stable core of monarchian theology through a careful examination of the four primary sources I listed above. I describe their theology by focusing on major themes that recur throughout the different texts, such as the visibility of God, the explicit identification of the Father and Son, and the suffering of the Father, among others. By focusing on these major themes, I am able to identify both a stable core of monarchian theology (the things that remain constant over the time period of the texts that I study) and the elements of monarchian theology that underwent development, perhaps in response to the growing criticism from anti-monarchian writers. In addition, I highlight their exegetical tendencies and popular biblical texts that might have belonged to some sort of monarchian dossier of proof texts.

There is one more problem I must attend to in this introduction: what to call the monarchian controversy. Scholars have long noted that settling on a name for the

³⁶ There are, however, some excellent and nuanced studies of Monarchianism that focus on a smaller issue. See, for example, Ronald Heine's excellent study, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 56–91.

phenomenon often referred to as the monarchian controversy is difficult. In antiquity, the proponents of this theology were variously called “monarchians,” “Sabellians,” and “patripassians.”³⁷ Each of these names for the theological position is objectionable for different reasons. In the first place, not all of the so-called “monarchians” gave the term *μοναρχία* a central place in their theology.³⁸ The use of the title “Sabellian” for the theology I am considering is also problematic. One of the primary reasons such a title is problematic is that we know almost nothing about the theology of Sabellius. As I note in an excursus in my discussion of Novatian, we have almost no specific details about Sabellius’ theology from contemporary sources; and the later heresiologists mistakenly attribute later teaching to him. Calling this theology “Sabellianism” obscures the fact that these theological positions antedated Sabellius, about whom we know very little.³⁹ Finally, to call this theology “patripassianism” veils the central concern of these theologians. As Ronald Heine notes, the claim that the Father suffered was built on the

³⁷ Contemporary scholars also call them “modalists;” and while this term can be helpful, it does not easily map onto any of the key terms used in the primary texts. I avoid using it for this reason, although I do not find it completely unhelpful.

³⁸ This is one of the central contentions of Bilbao. See Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 226, 279. Instead of “monarchians,” Bilbao prefers to call them “patripassians” or “Sabellians.” But these designations have their own sets of problems. See especially his discussion of the naming: Ibid., 497–500. Note also Simonetti’s critical response to some of Bilbao’s conclusions about the use of the term *μοναρχία*: Manlio Simonetti, “Monarchia e Trinità: Alcune osservazioni su un libro recente,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33, no. 3 (1997): 627–8.

³⁹ For discussions of the difficulties surrounding Sabellius, see Reinhard M Hübner, “Die Hauptquelle des Epiphanius (Panarion, haer 65) über Paulus von Samosata: Ps-Athanasius, Contra Sabellianos,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 90, no. 2–3 (1979): 201–20; Joseph T. Lienhard, “Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and ‘Sabellius,’” *Church History* 58, no. 2 (1989): 157–67; M. Simonetti, “Sulla recente fortuna del ‘Contra Sabellianos’ ps. atanasiano,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 26, no. 1 (1990): 117–32; Wolfgang A. Bienert, “Sabellius und Sabellianismus als historisches Problem,” in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993), 124–39; idem, “Wer war Sabellius?,” *Studia patristica* 40 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 359–65.

more fundamental, exegetically-based claims that the Father and Son were identical.⁴⁰

Even more, as becomes evident in my later discussions, although the commitment to the identity of Father and Son remained unwavering, judgments about the patripassian implications of this fundamental stance varied as the theology developed.⁴¹

Although there are problems with each of the main terms used to describe the theology I am studying, I have chosen to refer to it as “monarchianism” in this dissertation.⁴² As is clear at the end of my examination of the primary texts in the first part of the dissertation, the monarchians had two core commitments: (1) God is one alone; (2) Jesus is God. These two core commitments led them to conclude that the Father and the Son are “one and the same” (ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ).⁴³ This is the heart of the theological position I am calling monarchianism. Thus, those whom I call monarchians are the same as those called “modalistic monarchians” in Harnack’s popular phraseology.⁴⁴ By confining my definition of “monarchianism” to those who hold (1) and (2) above, as well as the concomitant identification of Father and Son, I am able to

⁴⁰ He writes, “The monarchian thesis, in which the Noetians included Christ, is derived from their reading of Scripture, but the patripassianist thesis is supported solely by logic based on the monarchian thesis.” Heine, “The Christology of Callistus,” 83.

⁴¹ Of note here are the sections in *Adversus Praxean* and the *Refutatio* where monarchian theologians seem to shy away from affirming that the Father suffered. I discuss these passages in later sections on the suffering of the Father in the chapters on *Adversus Praxean* and the *Refutatio*.

⁴² I do this fully conscious of Bilbao’s valid critique and observation that the term itself is not necessarily opposed to Trinitarian understandings of God. I think the problems with the other terms, such as “Sabellianism” and “patripassianism” outweigh Bilbao’s point about the use of μοναρχία.

⁴³ See *Refutatio* 9.10.11-12 for this claim. See also the same claim in *Adversus Praxean* 2.3.

⁴⁴ In the later chapters, I discuss the differences and similarities between Harnack’s “dynamistic Monarchians,” whom I prefer to call “psilanthropists,” and his “modalistic monarchians.” Although they share a similar concern to protect the oneness of God, they differ dramatically on the question of Jesus’ divinity.

identify the core of the theology while still allowing for more precise descriptions of the diversity and development within it.

My research into monarchianism constitutes part one of the dissertation and presents a clearer picture of the monarchian theological commitments than has yet been produced. The spate of anti-monarchian works produced at the beginning of the third century shows that some prominent theologians viewed it as a major threat. With my reconstruction of monarchian theology in place, we will be better able to understand why some viewed it as such a threat.⁴⁵ Furthermore, this reconstruction of their theology allows us to understand the role they played in the development of Trinitarian theology in the early third century. Part two of this dissertation is a modest attempt to begin revisiting the development of Trinitarian theology at the beginning of the third century with fuller attention given to the anti-monarchian context.

Origen

Origen is a battlefield on which scholars anachronistically fight about pro- and anti-Nicene trajectories, all laying claim to his “true” thought.⁴⁶ The vast impact of his

⁴⁵ A fulsome reconstruction of monarchian theology will allow us to move beyond such outdate assumptions as those that underwrote the work of Harnack and Lebreton, for example.

⁴⁶ The legacy of Origen was already controverted less than one hundred years after his death. His theology was appropriated and adapted to support varied, and sometimes opposed, theologies. See, for example, two clear treatments of the appropriation of Origen in the fourth-century doctrinal conflicts: Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20–30; Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, rev. ed (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 117–57. Consider also R. P. C. Hanson’s deliberation about the relationship between Origen’s theology and Arius: *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 60–70. For a more recent account in which Origen plays a foundational role, see Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). Beeley is more concerned with Christological issues than with Nicaea, but his whole project hinges on his reading of Origen, “the great master.” The conflict over the legacy of Origen has continued to unfold throughout Christian history.

thought in the fourth century and beyond is undeniable, but the preoccupation with determining who got Origen “right” often distorts our vision of his thought.⁴⁷ Origen is more than the *Nachleben* of his theology in the fourth century. Instead of reading Origen *in situ*, scholars often read Origen with one eye toward Nicaea, looking for anticipation, development, and consonance in every phrase.⁴⁸ They depict an Origen always coursing through time toward Nicaea and its aftermath.⁴⁹ Origen, it seems, is always on a train barreling forward in time that scholars often fail to examine before it leaves the station of his own context, his own time in the first half of the third century.

Writing in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas could echo the sentiment of earlier heresiologists that Origen was the source of Arius’ heresy: *Super Boetium de Trinitate*, II, Q. 3, A. 4.

⁴⁷ Our readings of Origen are shaped as much by later appropriations of him as they are by his contemporary context.

⁴⁸ A prime example is the continuous debate about whether Origen used the term *homoousios*. The most important attestation of the term in Origen’s corpus comes from a fragment of Origen’s *Commentary on Hebrews* in Rufinus’ Latin translation of Pamphilus’ *Apology for Origen*. Despite such scant evidence that Origen actually used this term, scholars devote substantial attention to the question of whether Origen could have used it. This focus, I contend, is the product of reading Nicaea back onto Origen. The reasoning runs something like this: 1) Origen’s theology was important in the Nicene debates; 2) *homoousios* was a key term in the Nicene debates; 3) therefore, we must determine how (or if) Origen used this important term. Scholars pursue the question even though the preponderance of evidence suggests that Origen did not use the term, or that if he did, it was not a major part of this theology. With the caveat that I think the question itself is anachronistic, I am inclined to agree with Hanson, Williams, and Ayres that Origen probably did not use the term. See R. P. C. Hanson, “Did Origen Apply the Word *Homoousios* to the Son?,” in *Épektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 293–303; Williams, *Arius*, 131–7; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 24. For a scholar who argues in the affirmative, see M. J. Edwards, “Did Origen Apply the Word *Homoousios* to the Son,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 658–70. See also Ramelli’s more recent claims that Origen used *homoousios*: Ilaria Ramelli, “Origen’s Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 1 (2011): 31–2. Note also Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l’image de Dieu chez Origène*, *Théologie, Études publiées sous la direction de la faculté de théologie S.J. de Lyon-Fourvière* 34 (Paris: Aubier, 1956), 99–100.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey Dunn observes this tendency in scholarship, even if he cannot completely extricate himself from it: “The hermeneutical principle that texts and theological history are to be understood in their own contexts and not in the light of later developments is an important one to repeat. Words like orthodoxy and heresy are often not helpful when considering the development of doctrine because they condition us to project backwards thoughts, expressions, positions, and outcomes which were not in place at the time.” Geoffrey D. Dunn, “The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian’s *De Trinitate*,” *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 78, no. 4 (2002): 387.

This tendency to project Origen toward Nicaea is easily recognizable in some major contemporary narratives about Nicene and post-Nicene Trinitarian theology and Christology.⁵⁰ This debate has, for some time, revolved around the question of whether Origen was a “subordinationist.”⁵¹ The bulk of scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have had no doubt that Origen’s Trinitarian theology was a prime example of subordinationism.⁵² Some of these scholars, like Lebreton,⁵³ lack nuance in their

⁵⁰ See especially in this regard Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*. Beeley’s reading of Origen forms the substrate on which the rest of his argument is built. This trend is even evident in the title of one of Ramelli’s essays on Origen: Ramelli, “Origen’s Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line.” My point here is that the trend for reading Origen is “Origen and X Nicene or post-Nicene figure or concept” rather than “Origen and X antecedent or contemporary problem.”

⁵¹ Lewis Ayres discusses the difficulty that accompanies the use of the term “subordinationism.” He notes that its application to pre-Nicene figures often “directs our attention away from the concern to emphasize continuity of being between the [Father and Son].” Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 21. Ayres himself prefers to use the term to describe theologies “whose clear intent is to subordinate the Son to the Father in opposition to the gradual emergence of Nicene and pro-Nicene theologies” (Ibid.). Ayres’ corrective here is useful, but I will continue to use the term in my description of pre-Nicene theologians. My continued usage is partially motivated by the fact that the term is so embedded in debates about pre-Nicene theology that it is difficult to proceed without using it. The primary reason for my continued usage, however, is that I intend to recontextualize the term when it is applied to pre-Nicene theologians. As I argue in my last chapter, the subordination of the Son to the Father was a common strategy for distinguishing the Father and Son. Far from being a rejection of emerging fourth-century orthodoxy, it was an intentionally employed polemical strategy in the anti-Monarchian milieu. With these caveats in place, I will no longer use quotation marks around subordination language.

⁵² Good examples of this position include the following: Harnack, *History of Dogma*; Eugène de Faye, *Origen and His Work* (Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Library Editions, 1978); Jules Lebreton, *The History of the Primitive Church* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1949). Jean Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955); T. E. Pollard, “Logos and Son in Origen, Arius and Athanasius,” *Studia Patristica* 2 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 282–87; Williamina M. Macaulay, “Nature of Christ in Origen’s Commentary on John,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19, no. 2 (1966): 176–87; J. Nigel Rowe, “Origen’s Subordinationism as Illustrated in His Commentary on St John’s Gospel,” *Studia Patristica* 11.2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972), 222–28; J. Nigel Rowe, *Origen’s Doctrine of Subordination: A Study in Origen’s Christology*, vol. 272, European University Studies. Series XXIII (Berne; New York: P. Lang, 1987); A. H. B. Logan, “Origen and Alexandrian Wisdom Christology,” in *Origeniana Tertia: The Third International Colloquium for Origen Studies, University of Manchester, September 7th-11th, 1981*, ed. Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel (Roma: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1985), 123–29.

⁵³ Lebreton, *The History of the Primitive Church*, 940–1. Note especially his uncritical insertion of the notion of consubstantiality. He states, “The vital truth that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit transcend all other beings was always affirmed by Origen, and we find it already in the treatise *De Principiis*. But we must allow that there is in this treatise a hierarchical conception of the divine persons which endangers their equality and their consubstantiality. This idea appears in the treatise *De Principiis*, in spite of all the corrections made by Rufinus; it is also very marked in the *Commentary on St. John*; it will

discussion of Origen's so-called subordination, while others, like Jean Daniélou, have very detailed accounts that nonetheless employ the language of subordination with its negative connotations.⁵⁴ Within the past 20 years, however, a handful of scholars have argued that Origen was actually an anti-subordinationist and that the old scholarly consensus was misguided. There were a few scholars in the twentieth century, notably Crouzel and Kannengiesser, who championed this position prior to its recent resurgence.⁵⁵ The scholars who have recently argued against Origen's alleged subordinationism have insisted that he taught the equality of the Father and the Son.⁵⁶

Christoph Bruns' recent consideration of Origen's Trinitarian theology is preoccupied with the question of subordination in Origen's Trinitarian theology.⁵⁷ Bruns sets out to determine if Origen was, in fact, a subordinationist. If the question is answered

dominate the whole theological work of Origen, and he will even regard it as the rule governing Christian worship."

⁵⁴ See especially his discussion of Origen's Christology: Daniélou, *Origen*, 251–75. There, he gives a very nuanced account of Origen's Christology before noting that "it is obviously tainted with subordinationism" (255).

⁵⁵ Crouzel, *Origen*, 181–91; Charles Kannengiesser, "Christology," in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin, 1st ed, The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 73–78.

⁵⁶ Christopher Beeley writes, "Although he has been accused for centuries of subordinationism (or making Christ to be less divine than God the Father), Origen asserted the divinity of Christ in stronger terms than any Christian theologian to date.... Origen argues that Christ is equal to God the Father in both divinity and eternity" (Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*, 17–8). See also Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis," *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 3 (2012): 302–50; Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line." As is clear throughout my discussion of Origen, I disagree with the claims of both Beeley and Ramelli. The last chapter demonstrates the grounds from which I reject Beeley's assertion that "Origen argues that Christ is equal to God the Father in both divinity and eternity." My disagreement is not with Beeley's claim about the eternity of Christ; it is with his claims about the equal divinity.

⁵⁷ Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*. Bruns notes that his book, which is a revised version of his dissertation, fills a lacuna in Origen scholarship—namely, the lack of a protracted study of his Trinitarian theology (14). Bruns is right to note that the lack of protracted treatment of Origen's Trinitarian theology is a major lacuna in scholarship. Edwards suggested in his review, however, that Bruns' book might not have completely succeeded in filling the lacuna. See M. J. Edwards, "Review of Trinität und Kosmos," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 66, no. 2 (2015): 390–91.

in the affirmative, Bruns wishes further to determine if Origen's subordinationism was ontological or relational/functional (which is to say, "economic").⁵⁸ Bruns' treatment spans Origen's entire corpus, although it is heavily weighted toward the *Commentary on John* and *De principiis*. Bruns acknowledges that adoptianism and modalism are two of the primary opposing positions against which Origen's Trinitarian theology was formed.⁵⁹ Beyond this assertion at the beginning of the book, however, neither adoptianism nor modalism plays a significant role, even as Bruns asserts repeatedly that Origen's *Hypostasiskonzeption* was largely formed in his anti-modalist polemic.⁶⁰ He mentions modalism repeatedly, but it remains a vague bugaboo in the background of his reconstruction of Origen's thought.

⁵⁸ See especially his discussions of the distinction in types of subordination (22-3). Bruns' distinction between these two types of subordinationism is strained—especially in his discussion of the ontological status of Holy Spirit in chapter three. In this chapter, the majority of the passages do not map cleanly onto his distinction. Origen addresses the question of the relationship of the Spirit to the Son and Father in the context of the Spirit's work of sanctification among humans. Thus, it is clear that ontology and economy are often of a piece for Origen. It seems as though Bruns introduces this distinction in order to affirm that passages in Origen are subordinationist while protecting him from what he considers the more damning charge of ontological subordination. Bruns himself acknowledges that his construct is not necessarily found in Origen's work itself (39).

⁵⁹ Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 21.

⁶⁰ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 138. Bruns also notes that "Origen is clearly anxious to delineate the independence of the three hypostases against contemporary modalism" (87). Bruns scarcely treats the origins of modalism or the contemporary forms of its expression. In his narrative, it seems to be little more than a vague overemphasis on the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit. He does, however, offer one interpretation of modalism: "[modalism], according to which the unity of God is guaranteed by the existence of a single divine hypostasis and Father and Son are only two different aspects or forms of expression of this one and only hypostasis" (102). Bruns' laconic definition is made without reference to any of the attestations to modalism (or monarchianism) at the beginning of the third century. For example, one could easily press Bruns to identify what form of modalism used *hypostasis*, a somewhat technical term that does not seem to have been used in the earliest stages of monarchianism. Heine also observes that Bruns has scarcely defined modalism or considered its full significance: Ronald E. Heine, "Review: Christoph Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*," *Augustinian Studies* 45, no. 2 (2014): 306.

From the outset of the work, it is clear that Bruns is considering Origen within the horizon of the development of Nicene-Constantinopolitan Trinitarian theology.⁶¹ Bruns pauses at regular intervals throughout the book to consider if Origen's thought can align with pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology.⁶² He often asserts that elements of Origen's thought align cleanly with later Nicene thought.⁶³ More frequently, however, Bruns argues that there is an unavoidable ambiguity in Origen's Trinitarian theology, that at times it appears to be subordinationist (whether ontological or economic, in his construct).⁶⁴ Such judgments about the ambiguity of Origen's theology express as much about Bruns' reticence to label Origen an outright subordinationist as they do about Origen's theology itself.⁶⁵ In the end, Bruns gives us a picture of an Origen whose Trinitarian theology was ambiguous but was, nevertheless, the seedbed from which grew multiple streams of fourth-century Trinitarian theology. While such a view conveys some truth, however, his focus on Origen's relationship to later Nicene and post-Nicene theology often precludes a robust reconstruction of Origen's contemporary context, specifically his interaction with monarchianism. This tendency is especially evident when Bruns considers Origen's interpretation of John 14:28 ("the Father is greater than I") with

⁶¹ Bruns signals this horizon in the introduction, when he writes, "So with good reason is Origen referred to as the progenitor of the Nicene faith... which has been strongly reaffirmed by Illaria Ramelli" (Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 19).

⁶² See, for example, *Ibid.*, 76–8, 88, 104–5, 304.

⁶³ Thus he can write, "In the Trinitarian theology of Origen the Trinitarian faith of the church first assumed clear contours, with it as the breeding ground from which Trinitarian dogma could grow" (Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 20).

⁶⁴ See, especially, *Ibid.*, 21–3, 25, 51, 75, 88, 108–9, 112–3.

⁶⁵ I am not here suggesting that there is no ambiguity in Origen's thought; there is plenty. A good bit of it, perhaps, stems from the difficulties in determining what parts of Origen's Trinitarian theology Rufinus has corrected in translation.

reference to the exegesis of Athanasius, Hilary, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and John Chrysostom instead of giving due weight to Origen's contemporaries or predecessors.⁶⁶ Bruns' project is ambitious; but unfortunately, it does not situate Origen adequately within his contemporary and antecedent theological and polemical contexts.

Subordinationism

Although terms denoting subordination have frequently driven the narrations of Origen's Trinitarian theology, scholars seldom take the time to actually define what they mean by subordination.⁶⁷ R. P. C. Hanson affirms that virtually every theologian, excepting Athanasius, held some form of subordinationism before the *dénouement* of the Arian controversy sometime after 355.⁶⁸ He suggests that some type of subordination would have been accepted as orthodox Trinitarian theology in the pre-Nicene era; but,

⁶⁶ Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 76. Bruns only briefly mentions Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, and Clement of Alexandria in a footnote.

⁶⁷ Beeley is one of the few who defines the term. His two definitions of subordinationism or subordinationists are (1) "making Christ to be less divine than God the Father," and (2) "those who deny the full divinity of Christ" (Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*, 10, 17–8). Another notable exception to this ill-defined use of the term is the work of Wolfgang Marcus, which has received less attention than it is due: Wolfgang Marcus, *Der Subordinatianismus als historiologisches Phänomen: Ein Beitrag zu unserer Kenntnis von der Entstehung der altchristlichen "Theologie" und Kultur unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Begriffe Oikonomia und Theologia* (München: M. Hueber, 1963). Marcus surveys what he deems "liberal" and "conservative" scholarly explanations of subordinationism and notes that both view it as erroneous and locate the source of the error in the influence of Hellenism (27). Marcus views the focus on the role of subordinationism as overplayed. Instead, he looks for the scriptural warrant for subordinationism and any precedents in Judaism (48). One of Marcus' main goals is to normalize pre-Nicene subordinationism, to argue that it was not deviant. He thinks subordinationism is better understood as an intermediate position between Marcionite theology and monarchianism (93). He labels this sort of subordinationism "orthodox" and later argues that the theology of Arius cannot be seen as a logical development of this orthodox subordinationism (93–5). Marcus' reassessment of subordinationism has the merit of considering the phenomenon within its own historical context instead of projecting anachronistic categories onto it. His is one of the few accounts that does so. Nevertheless, it is still interesting that his study is driven by determining whether the subordinationists were legitimately the forebears of Arius. He offers a contextual reading of subordination, but he never quite escapes the orbit of the Nicene conflicts.

⁶⁸ Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, xix.

like many others, he does not produce a clear definition of what constitutes subordinationism.

Given the current scholarly context, it is difficult to write about Origen's Trinitarian theology without addressing whether he was a subordinationist. As was the case for most of the twentieth century, such is still the question *du jour* when it comes to Origen's Trinitarian theology. In my final chapter, I explore what it means to speak of subordinationist theologies in the third century. I must develop a definition of subordinationism that is based on specific theological statements in their third-century contexts. This definition contains no implicit evaluative judgment about whether something aligns with later theological standards. By defining subordinationism without reference to Nicene and post-Nicene theology, we can make more meaningful claims about what Origen sought to accomplish in his own theological context. In addition, I formulate my definition of subordination with reference to my reconstruction of monarchianism in part one of the dissertation, for the argument against monarchianism was one of the main places in which our third-century authors deployed their subordinationist theologies.

In order to avoid over-generalizing, I work with a definition of subordinationism created from examples in the three main texts I consider in the final chapter: Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, Novatian's *De Trinitate*, and Origen's *ComJn*.⁶⁹ As I observe when reading these three texts, the subordination of the Son to the Father is not a uniform phenomenon in the early third century. Thus, perhaps my definition will add nuance to

⁶⁹ In the final chapter, I consider the texts in this order, which is not the chronological order in which they were written. I place Origen at the end of the chapter because he is the focus of my argument, which needed the context of Tertullian and Novatian already in place.

the ways we speak of subordination. In the texts I survey, subordination often occurs when the authors speak of the relationship between a cause/source and its effect (in our case, the Father and Son). When authors are dealing with a cause and effect, the effect either lacks something present in the cause or possesses it less fully. For example, Tertullian claims that the Father is invisible because of the greatness of his majesty, but the Son is visible because his majesty is *derived* from the Father.⁷⁰ The Son has something derivatively from the Father (majesty), and because of this, has less of it than the Father. Because the Son has less majesty, he is able to be seen. Elsewhere, Tertullian speaks of the Father possessing the wholeness of substance while the Son only possesses a portion of it.⁷¹

Novatian exhibits a similar manner of speaking about cause/source and effect. He argues that the Holy Spirit is less than the Son because the Spirit receives what it announces from the Son.⁷² Novatian here does not even broach the question of whether the Spirit fully possesses what it receives from the Son; the mere act of reception implies that the Spirit is less (*minor*) than the Son. Novatian applies this same logic to the Father/Son relationship, arguing that the Son is less (*minor*) than the Father because the Son receives sanctification from the Father.⁷³ Later, Novatian uses an inverted form of the same logic. The Father is unoriginate; but the Son has an origin and is, therefore, less

⁷⁰ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.3.

⁷¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.1-4. There is a tension in Tertullian's thought with regard to the visibility of the Son. In *Adversus Praxean* 9, he suggests that the Son is visible because his majesty is derivative. In *Adversus Praxean* 14, however, Tertullian argues that the Son is invisible as Word and Spirit because of the condition of his substance.

⁷² Novatian, *De Trinitate* 16.3.

⁷³ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.12.

than (*minor*) the Father.⁷⁴ In this case, the Father's lack of something (an origin) is desirable. The Son is less than the Father and distinguished from him because he has an origin.⁷⁵ For both Tertullian and Novatian, the reception or derivation of something from a source necessarily implies that the recipient is less than the source. Novatian is explicit about this and states multiple times that the Son is less than (*minor*) the Father.⁷⁶ This is what I mean by subordination. Notice also that this definition does not require particular attention to the effect caused or the thing received.⁷⁷

A similar scheme can be seen in Origen, but there are some notable variations with him. As I lay out in more detail in the final chapter, Origen has a hierarchical understanding of the universe, with the Father at the top. In my discussion of passages where Origen discusses the goodness of the Father and Son, Origen employs this hierarchy. He also speaks of the Father as the source of goodness and the Son as having his goodness from the Father (or being an image of that goodness).⁷⁸ In these passages, he speaks of the Father as being superior to the Son or superseding the Son (using ὑπερέχω and similar terms).

⁷⁴ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 31.3.

⁷⁵ Despite the inversion of his logic, Novatian's position is consistent. In each case, the Son's existence or qualities are more tightly circumscribed than the Father who is unoriginate and possesses all good things in their fullness.

⁷⁶ See, for example, *De Trinitate* 27.12, 31.3.

⁷⁷ Later understandings of subordination will focus specifically on divinity and substance, but such was not necessarily the focus of the third century authors I consider. At various points, the anti-monarchian writers focus on the Son's reception of divinity, substance, goodness, and sanctification, among other things.

⁷⁸ See especially, *ComJn* 13.151-3 and *ComMatt* 15.10.

In the main passage from Origen that I survey (*ComJn* 2.13ff), Origen draws together a number of these concepts. He speaks about the Father as cause and source.⁷⁹ He speaks about the Son receiving divinity from the Father or drawing it into himself.⁸⁰ At the end of this passage, Origen employs the same hierarchical framework as he does elsewhere and speaks of the Son being transcended by the Father.⁸¹ It is clear that for Origen, the Father transcends the Son because he is cause and source (of goodness or divinity). What is interesting, however, is that in these passages Origen never explicitly says that the Son is less than the Father. It is an obvious implication of his affirmation of the transcendence of the Father, but the absence of explicit claims that the Son is inferior differentiates his subordination from that of Novatian and Tertullian. Thus, at the beginning of the third century, subordinationism was not some monolithic theological movement. Different authors accented their theologies differently so that we may speak of variation under the umbrella term “subordinationism.”

In these texts, we see a relatively stable subordinationist framework. In this framework, the cause or source is greater than its effects or recipients. This is the common ground shared by all three authors I study in the last chapter. There is variation with how explicitly our authors draw out the consequences of this subordinationist logic.

⁷⁹ At *ComJn* 2.14, he refers to the Father as the uncreated cause of the universe (τοῦ ἀγενήτου τῶν ὅλων αἰτίου). Note again the alpha-privative descriptor. Later, Origen refers to both the Father and the Son as sources but sources of different things. At *ComJn* 2.20, he writes, “For both hold the place of a source; the Father, that of divinity, the Son, that of reason” (ἀμφοτέρα γὰρ πηγῆς ἔχει χώραν, ὁ μὲν πατὴρ θεότητος, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς λόγου) (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 80 [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989], 100; Greek from SC 120:226).

⁸⁰ In *ComJn* 2.17, he uses two verbs, σπάω and ἀρύω to speak of the Son “drawing” divinity into himself.

⁸¹ Origen, *ComJn* 2.32. Origen again uses ὑπερέχω to describe the transcendence of the Father over the Son.

Some clearly claim that the Son is less than the Father, but Origen is content to say that the Father is superior to the Son. This implies the inferiority of the Son; but in the limited passages I have studied, Origen nowhere argues for the inferiority of the Son in explicit terms.⁸²

My discussion of third-century subordinationism here, as with the fuller study in the final chapter, is an attempt to read Origen alongside his contemporaries and with reference to one of the primary polemical contexts of his day. I adopt the focus of scholarship on whether Origen was a subordinationist, but I reorient the discussion to the early third century instead of the late fourth. My account does not attempt to be as comprehensive as Bruns' more recent study. It is an exercise in a disciplined reading of important parts of Origen's oeuvre that considers his theology in its own context and a suggestion for how the rest of his corpus might profitably be reread.

Plan of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part, which is roughly two-thirds of the whole, focuses on reconstructing monarchian theology. The second part offers a rereading of key passages from *ComJn* 1-2 with a focus on Origen's engagement with monarchian theology. In the first chapter, I attempt to provide a plausible background for the rise of monarchianism in the late second and early third centuries. In order to do this, I survey models of articulating the Father-Son relationship in the second

⁸² This is a notable variation. A full exploration behind Origen's motivations for this variation is beyond the scope of my current project. As I broaden my further study of Origen beyond his early works, it will be worth tracking whether he ever explicitly speaks of the Son as inferior to the Father or is merely content to emphasize the Father's transcendence over the Son.

century. Specifically, I am concerned with how second-century theologians express the unity and distinction between the Father and Son. Rather than a diachronic survey, I organize the theologians along a spectrum that runs from what I term “soft distinction” to “hard distinction” between the Father and Son. At the end of the chapter, I suggest that a theology like that of Justin Martyr, which stressed the alterity of the Son from the Father, was probably the sort of theology against which the monarchians reacted.⁸³

After my exploration of what might have prompted monarchianism, I undertake a reconstruction of monarchian theology in chapters two and three. I begin by examining the relevant sections of Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, which does not offer much direct testimony about monarchianism but does give us valuable background information about the church in Rome at the beginning of the third century. I then offer a close reading of the four main sources that attest to monarchianism. This reading occurs in what I deem to be the chronological order of the texts: Hippolytus’ *Contra Noetum*, Tertullian’s *Adversus Praxean*, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, and Novatian’s *De Trinitate*.⁸⁴

In order to fill what I consider to be a lacuna in scholarship, my reconstruction of monarchian theology focuses on their major theological emphases and exegetical practices. To that end, I pay particular attention to their discussions of the unity of God, the divinity of Jesus, the visibility of God, and the suffering of God. With regard to

⁸³ Although not included in the dissertation, I have an article forthcoming in *Vigiliae Christianae* that rejects the claims of Daniel Boyarin that monarchianism was Judaism being “cast out” of Christianity. The article is entitled “Monarchianism and Two Powers: Jewish and Christian Monotheism at the Beginning of the Third Century.”

⁸⁴ As becomes clear in those chapters, however, there is little consensus about the dating and authorship of *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio*. One group of scholars reverses the order and considers the *Refutatio* to be the earlier of the two. I discuss this matter in detail in the relevant chapters.

exegesis, I draw particular attention to their focus on Old Testament theophanies and key passages from the Gospel of John. The result of these two chapters is a picture of monarchianism whose core teaching was that the Father and the Son were “one and the same.” The monarchians actively denied that there was any real distinction between the Father and Son by emphasizing their sameness. My reading of these four sources also shows that while monarchianism maintained a stable core, there was development or disagreement with regard to some of the implications of the core teaching. Specifically, monarchians began to differ over whether their claim that the Father and Son were “one and the same” necessarily meant that the Father suffered.⁸⁵

In part two of the dissertation, I focus on rereading books 1-2 of Origen’s *ComJn* in light of my reconstruction of the monarchian controversy. In chapter four, I begin by giving a detailed account of the date and context for the first two books of *ComJn*. There, I argue that Origen most likely wrote them in the midst of the monarchian controversy and most likely after his return from Rome, which was the epicenter of the monarchian controversy. Thus, I situate Origen firmly within the context of an early third-century debate. In the remainder of chapter four, I consider how the Wisdom Christology Origen develops in book one of *ComJn* has anti-monarchian polemical utility.⁸⁶

In the final chapter of the dissertation, I undertake a dense reading of *ComJn* 2.13ff, which I consider to be an important passage for understanding Origen’s early Trinitarian theology. I contextualize this passage by reading it alongside passages from

⁸⁵ As I make clear in the relevant chapters, it is unclear if this diversity was synchronic or diachronic.

⁸⁶ The core of this argument about Origen’s Wisdom Christology has been accepted for publication in the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*. The forthcoming article is entitled, “Wisdom Christology and Monarchianism in Origen’s *Commentary on John*.”

Tertullian and Novatian which fit my definition of subordinationism above. In order to justify my focus on this passage instead of *De principiis*, which many scholars privilege in accounts of Origen's Trinitarian theology, I include an excursus on the reliability of Rufinus' translations of Trinitarian passages in Origen.⁸⁷ At the end of my reading of this passage, I argue that Origen's theology can be properly labelled "subordinationist" when using my specific definition. Furthermore, I argue that Origen's subordinationism is helpfully elucidated when read alongside that of his rough contemporaries, Tertullian and Novatian. All three of these authors intentionally deployed subordinationist theologies in order to combat the monarchian assertion that the Father and Son were "one and the same." Novatian is perhaps the bluntest about how subordinationism functions as effective anti-monarchian polemic when he argues that what is less than the Father (that is, the Son) cannot be the same as the Father. Here, I argue, is the primary horizon within which we must consider Origen's subordinationism.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ There, I argue that at least with regard to Trinitarian passages, Rufinus' translations cannot be trusted. My position in this regard goes against the views of some major contemporary scholars. For example, in a review of a new translation of *De principiis* for a popular magazine, Christopher Beeley writes, "But the tide has finally turned. In recent decades, scholars have concluded that Rufinus's translation is generally reliable, and certainly more faithful than Koetschau's reconstruction." Christopher A. Beeley, "Rescuing Origen from Neglect," *The Living Church* (February 2016): 10.

⁸⁸ Thus, we must offer a dense contextual reading of Origen's theology before we try to untangle the complicated legacy of his theology in the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century.

CHAPTER ONE: MODELS OF FATHER/SON RELATIONSHIP IN THE SECOND CENTURY

Introduction

Scholars frequently refer to figures from the second century as “modalists” or “monarchians” without first defining what either of those terms means. For example, Campbell Bonner called Melito of Sardis’ theology “naïve modalism.”¹ More recently, Reinhard Hübner has argued that Ignatius of Antioch was a monarchian.² As I noted in the introduction and develop in the later chapters on the monarchian controversy, I prefer a restrictive and specific definition of monarchianism. Using my definition, monarchianism is restricted to those who explicitly claim that the Father and the Son are “one and the same” in an effort to maintain that there is only one God.³ This definition allows for a distinction between monarchianism and psilanthropism or adoptionism. Although they are related, I distinguish monarchianism from psilanthropism because the

¹ Campbell Bonner, *The Homily on the Passion* (London; Philadelphia: Christophers; University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), 27–8. As I note later, I think calling any sort of modalism “naïve” betrays an insufficient definition of modalism.

² Hübner’s claims about Ignatius (and also Melito) rest on his problematic assertion that Noetus antedated them and that they were drawing on his monarchian theology. In order to make his case, he argues that Ignatius wrote in the second half of the second century. As I discuss in more detail later, I find his chronology untenable. See the essays on Ignatius and Melito in Reinhard M Hübner, *Der Paradox Eine: antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

³ For two of the major places where we see monarchians claiming that the Father and Son are one and the same, see *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.10.11-2; Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3: “maxime haec quae se existimat meram veritatem possidere dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum dicat.” Latin from Tertullian, *Tertulliani Opera: Pars II*, ed. A Kroymann and Ernest Evans, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 2 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1954), 1161. Not everyone whom I consider a monarchian explicitly claimed that the Father and Son are “one and the same.” However, all of the theologies I am labeling monarchian actively seek to deny any real distinction between the Father and Son. By real distinction, I mean some sort of distinction of being, i.e., of distinct things. Part of the problem with discussing these issues is that there was not yet a developed technical vocabulary.

latter appears to have been far less bothersome to figures like Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Origen.⁴ More importantly, this definition makes it clear that monarchianism or modalism was an actively chosen position. It was not the failure to distinguish the Father and Son; it was an active and intentional identification of the two. Therefore, one could not hold this sort of position accidentally.⁵

One of the difficulties with monarchianism is that its theological origins are difficult to trace.⁶ We know that the two earliest named monarchian leaders, Noetus and Praxeas, were both from Asia Minor; but we know little about their theological background or motivation.⁷ The explosion of their theology at the beginning of the third century begs for an explanation that the surviving texts from the period do not furnish. This chapter explores the possible theological motivations of monarchianism. Because we lack direct evidence, the best we can do is to offer a plausible explanation. Rather than focusing on the use and development of the term *μοναρχία*, I begin with the assumption that the claim that the Father and Son were “one and the same” and other

⁴ As will become clear in later analysis, the hard distinction between the two threatens to break down at certain points. However, I still think it is a helpful distinction to make.

⁵ Regarding the phrase “naïve modalism,” it does seem that there were many unlearned people in the early church who adopted this position. In that way, one might be able to speak of a “naïve modalism.” The figures depicted in the anti-monarchian treatises, however, were not naïve. They knowingly rejected any real distinction between the Father and Son.

⁶ A few scholars have traced the use of the term *μοναρχία* in early Christian literature, but this is not sufficient to establish the theological motivations of monarchianism. The term *μοναρχία* was flexible enough to be claimed by both monarchians and their opponents. For this reason, the monarchian use of the term cannot be assumed to encapsulate all of their theology. For the examination of the term *monarchia*, see Ernest Evans, “Introduction,” in *Tertullian’s Treatise against Praxeas* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 6–18; Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico “monarchia” en la controversia “monarquiana,”* Publicaciones de la Universidad pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie 1: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996).

⁷ For the claim that Noetus is from Smyrna, see, Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.1; for Praxeas’ putative Asian origin, see Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.

explicit denials of distinction between the two were the most distinguishing characteristics of early monarchianism. As will be clear in the surviving texts of the period, the monarchian identification of Father and Son was a reaction against certain ways of articulating distinction between the Father and Son that they thought were tantamount to ditheism.⁸

In order to determine what the monarchians might have reacted against at the end of the second century, I offer a broad survey of the ways second-century authors spoke about the relationship between the Father and Son. In this survey, I pay special attention to means of expressing both unity and distinction between the Father and Son, as well as expressions of monotheistic commitment. By establishing models of the Father/Son relationship in the second century, I will provide the background necessary to establish continuity and discontinuity between earlier models and monarchianism. This consideration of monarchianism against second-century models will clarify its motivations and distinctive features.⁹

In order to aid in this analysis of second-century models of the Father/Son relationship, I employ the following heuristic. In the course of my discussion, I will attempt to locate models of Father-Son relationship along a continuum between “soft

⁸ I avoid saying that monarchianism was a reaction against Logos theology. I avoid this common assertion because I do not think the monarchians were reacting against Logos theology *qua* Logos theology; they were reacting against the strong distinction drawn between the Father and Son by some Logos theologians like Justin Martyr. As will become clear in my later analysis of Callistus’ positions in the *Refutatio*, some monarchians developed a form of Logos theology that they deemed acceptable.

⁹ Although I read second-century texts here with an interest in how they might elucidate the genesis of monarchianism, I hope to avoid an anachronistic imposition of later categories on them. The interest in the relationship between the Father and Son was already current in second-century texts and, thus, is not a projection of the concerns of the monarchian controversy into the second-century. For example, consider how acutely Justin feels the need to articulate the distinction between the Father and Son in opposition from his Jewish opponents.

distinction” and “hard distinction.” By “soft distinction,” I mean primarily the distinction of Father and Son by the use of names or titles. On this end of the continuum, theologians exhibit little desire to articulate the manner of distinction between the Father and Son, perhaps because they were not aware of any need to do this. By “hard distinction,” I mean an explicit explanation of how the Father and Son are distinct. Justin’s claim that the Father and Son are ἕτερος ἐν ἀριθμῷ is a prime example of this “hard distinction.” As will become clear in the course of my analysis, I think all of the second-century authors that I survey fall somewhere on this continuum. The early third-century monarchians, on the other hand, do not fit anywhere on this continuum. Their explicit denial of distinction between the Father and Son makes their theology a novel development in comparison with that of the second century.¹⁰

As I remarked above, I consider Justin a turning point in second-century theology. In order to demonstrate how things shifted in his work, it is first necessary to summarize the salient points of Christology in the first half of the second century. Instead of surveying the texts diachronically, I have chosen to divide them into groups depending on how they describe the relationship between the Father and Son. These groupings, or models, of Father/Son relationship are a helpful heuristic because theology did not develop in a clean, linear manner in the second century. One prime example of this fact is the comparison of the theology of Justin and Melito, discussed below. Justin, writing in the 150s C.E., articulated the distinction between the Father and Son that was stronger

¹⁰ Some monarchians admitted a sort of superficial distinction by the use of names, but they denied that this nominal distinction represented any underlying reality. The second-century authors who distinguished the Father and Son by the use of names were unconcerned with whether the names corresponded to any underlying reality.

than any Christian theologian before him. Melito of Sardis' *Peri Pascha*, probably written between 160 and 170 C.E., shows almost no concern to distinguish the Father and the Son. If I were approaching the second century with a model of linear development and the presupposition that a stronger articulation of distinction is "more orthodox," I would have to judge Melito's theology to be a regression of sorts.

The development of theology in the second century C.E. appears to have been episodic and geographically driven, likely because of the limitations of textual transmission and of the spread of ideas.¹¹ What this means is that the geographic provenance of texts is important to consider in the time-period we are studying. The geographical provenance of theologies may help establish some theological context for the genesis of the monarchian controversy.¹² Noetus, perhaps the earliest to espouse a so-called monarchian position, was from Smyrna, in Asia Minor. Tertullian also claims that Praxeas brought his theology to Rome from Asia. Both Noetus and Praxeas denied that there was any real distinction between the Father and Son. Melito's *Peri Pascha*, probably written in Sardis, also exhibits little concern to distinguish the Father and Son. Thus, the textual evidence suggests that at the end of the second century and beginning of

¹¹ What I mean by this is that we cannot assume, without clear textual evidence, that one author in the second century has read another second-century author. Although this occasionally happened, as in the case of Irenaeus reading and utilizing Theophilus' *Ad Autolyicum*, we cannot take it for granted in the absence of any evidence. Furthermore, the surviving textual evidence from this period is so sparse that it is difficult to construct a coherent narrative.

¹² If the earliest forms of monarchianism were an Asian phenomenon, a comparison with the works of Melito will elucidate some of their theological tendencies. As I make clear later in the chapter, I do not think that Melito was "guilty" of monarchianism because he was from Asia Minor. In his dissertation, Decker casts the monarchian controversy as a disagreement between East and West. There is something to be said for this approach, but I think Decker's statement pushes beyond what the evidence allows. See especially his conclusions: Michael Decker, "Die Monarchianer: Frühchristliche Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und Kleinasien" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1987), 206–10.

the third, at least one group of theologians in Asia Minor seldom used any technical means to distinguish the Father from the Son.¹³

Because I group authors based on the characteristics of their theology rather than the chronology of their texts, such labels as “Apostolic Fathers” or “Apologists” are mostly unhelpful. These labels and divisions of the texts are largely the constructs of later interpreters of the texts. For example, the collection of texts known as the “Apostolic Fathers” was not gathered together until the end of the 17th century, and there is still debate about which texts should be included in the collection.¹⁴ The label “Apologists” is also a later construct. As I argue in what follows, Justin’s articulation of the distinction between the Father and the Son differs substantially from that of Athenagoras or Theophilus, thus making the common label “Apologists” unhelpful for my purposes.¹⁵

The following account is not a detailed examination of every aspect of each of the primary texts, but rather an overview of the major writings of the second century. This overview focuses on two key themes: (1) statements about monotheism; (2) articulations of the relationship between the Father and the Son. The findings in this chapter will serve as the backdrop against which I assess the rise of monarchianism at the beginning of the

¹³ As I noted earlier, I think the central characteristic of monarchianism is the claim that the Father and Son are one and the same. While Melito does not carefully distinguish the Father from the Son, he nowhere claims that they are one and the same. Therefore, I do not classify him as a monarchian.

¹⁴ For a succinct summary of this history, see Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Loeb Classical Library 24-25 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), 24:1–14; Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2007), 5–6. For a recent discussion on the name “Apostolic Fathers,” see David Lincicum, “The Paratextual Invention of the Term ‘Apostolic Fathers,’” *Journal of Theological Studies* 66, no. 1 (2015): 139–48.

¹⁵ This is not to say that there are not common features that merit the grouping of theologians together. My point is that when it comes to articulating the distinction of the Father and Son, there is not a common model among all of those labeled “Apologists.”

third century. By focusing on these key themes in writers of the second century, I hope to isolate the parts of their theology that are most relevant for explaining what might have motivated monarchian theology.

Soft Distinction

1 Clement

Whereas the *Epistles of Ignatius* unambiguously call Christ “God,” *1 Clement* does not contain such evocative language.¹⁶ The author of *1 Clement* preserves a form of distinction between the Father and Son.¹⁷ One of the chief ways he accomplishes this distinction is through the use of titles.¹⁸ He uses a few phrases to refer to the God: “Father and Maker (πατέρα καὶ κτίστην)”¹⁹ and “Creator and Master (ὁ δημιουργὸς καὶ δεσπότης).”²⁰ The author of *1 Clement* consistently uses δεσπότης to refer to God and κύριος to refer to the Jesus. This usage is striking because the LXX uses κύριος in place of the Tetragrammaton. Because of this usage in the LXX, one would expect the title

¹⁶ Outside of the New Testament, *1 Clement* is one of the earliest Christian writings we possess. It was probably written in Rome during the mid-90s of the first century. For a concise introduction to its dating, provenance, and theology, see Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 24:18–30.

¹⁷ My use of “Father and Son” in this chapter is, at times, artificial. These are often not focal terms for the authors I am studying, and I use them in order to avoid confusion. For example, when second-century authors speak of “God” without any qualification, they are almost always referring to the Father. Thus, in *1 Clement*, the terms Father and Son do not play a central role.

¹⁸ I do not mean to imply here that the author of *1 Clement* was self-consciously developing a means of distinguishing the Father and Son. I am only drawing attention to patterns that are present in the text.

¹⁹ *1 Clement* 19.2. In my discussion of *1 Clement*, I am using Ehrman’s text and translation in the Loeb edition: Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 24-25 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003). *1 Clement* is in vol. 24.

²⁰ *1 Clement* 20.11.

κύριος to be applied to the Father.²¹ *1 Clement* also contains strong monotheistic statements. Moses is described as acting “in order that the name of the true and only God might be glorified.”²² Later, the author asks, “Do we not have one God and one Christ and one Spirit of grace that was poured out upon us, and one calling in Christ?”²³ *1 Clement* preserves the distinction between the Father and Son much more cleanly than do the Ignatian *Epistles*.²⁴ This distinction is done primarily by means of roles (for example, the Father, not the Son, is creator) and titles. Perhaps one reason why the distinction between Father and Son is more evident in *1 Clement* is that this text does not contain blunt descriptions of Christ as “God” like we see in the Ignatian *Epistles*.²⁵ Nevertheless, *1 Clement* does not exhibit any inclination to specify the manner of distinction between the Father and Son. Its use of titles and roles is a rather soft way of articulating distinction between the Father and Son.

2 Clement

Scholars have not reached any consensus on the relationship between *1 Clement* and *2 Clement*. Nearly all agree that *2 Clement* was not written by the same author as *1*

²¹ Perhaps this usage of κύριος for Christ is an example of how thoroughly the worship of Christ had permeated early Christianity.

²² *1 Clement* 43.6.

²³ *1 Clement* 46.6.

²⁴ Again, my use of “Father and Son” here is artificial. As noted above, *1 Clement*’s use of κύριος and δεσπότης does far more distinguishing work than do the titles Father and Son.

²⁵ Apropos to this discussion is Vogt’s contention that *1 Clement* teaches the pre-existence of Christ and does not show signs of patripassianism. See Hermann Josef Vogt, “Monarchianismus Im 2. Jahrhundert,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 179, no. 4 (1999): 238–9.

Clement and that 2 *Clement* is the later of the two.²⁶ 2 *Clement* contains a stronger statement of Christ's divinity than 1 *Clement*. The author writes, "it is necessary for us to think concerning Jesus Christ just as [we think] concerning God."²⁷ Even this statement, however, is not as strong as Ignatius' reference to "Jesus Christ our God."²⁸ 2 *Clement* concludes with a doxology that uses familiar monotheistic language: "To the only God, invisible, the Father of truth, who sent to us the Savior and Founder of immortality, through whom he also revealed to us the truth and the heavenly life, to him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."²⁹ None of these expressions in 2 *Clement* has the sort of polemical edge that we see in the monarchian controversy. There are no signs that the author of 2 *Clement* is concerned with the same questions.³⁰ Neither is he concerned with mapping out the manner of unity and distinction between the Father and Son, leaving him in the category of "soft distinction."

²⁶ See Tuckett's thorough introduction to 2 *Clement* and its critical issues: C. M. Tuckett, ed., 2 *Clement: Introduction, Text, and Commentary*, Oxford Apostolic Fathers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Tuckett argues that the best we can do for dating the work is to place it somewhere in the second century. There is not enough evidence to be more precise than this. Nearly all scholars agree that it is not a letter. Tuckett argues that the best description for it is some sort of paraenetic homily. Ibid., 19–26. On the whole, the author of 2 *Clement* is much more concerned with the ethical behavior of his readers than he is with technical theological formulations.

²⁷ 2 *Clement* 1.1. "οὕτως δεῖ ἡμᾶς φρονεῖν περὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὡς περὶ Θεοῦ."

²⁸ See the preface in Ignatius, *Ephesians* for this statement.

²⁹ 2 *Clement* 20.5 (trans. Holmes, 165). "Τῷ μόνῳ θεῷ ἀοράτῳ, πατρὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, τῷ ἐξαποστείλαντι ἡμῖν τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ἀφθαρσίας, δι' οὗ καὶ ἐφανερώσεν ἡμῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ τὴν ἐπουράνιον ζωὴν, αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. ἀμήν." This doxology immediately follows a section of the text that many authors view as an interpolation (19.1 – 20.4), but Tuckett argues that it shares enough features with 2 *Clement* 1-18 that it is probably by the same author. See Tuckett, 2 *Clement*, 301–3.

³⁰ Tuckett notes that some scholars have argued that 2 *Clement* is writing against incipient forms of Valentinian theology. If it is present at all, Tuckett suggests that such polemic is very muted in 2 *Clement*. Ibid., 46–57.

Ignatius of Antioch

The letters of Ignatius contain some striking passages about Jesus.³¹ Ignatius seems concerned to emphasize both the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ.³² In two places, Ignatius uses what appears to be a stock phrase, “Jesus Christ our God.”³³ Elsewhere, Ignatius writes of God becoming manifest as a human (ἀνθρωπίνως).³⁴ For Ignatius, Jesus Christ is God; and he states this multiple times without qualification.³⁵ In addition to referring to Christ as God, Ignatius uses other images to affirm a close relationship between Christ and the Father.³⁶ He calls Christ the γνώμη of the Father and

³¹ I follow Schoedel’s dating of Ignatius’ *Letters* to the first twenty years of the second century: William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 5. This means that I reject the dating schema of Joly, upon which Hübner bases many of his conclusions about Noetus and Ignatius. See Robert Joly, *Le dossier d’Ignace d’Antioche*, [Travaux] - Université libre de Bruxelles, Faculté de philosophie et lettres 69 (Bruxelles: Éditions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1979); Reinhard M Hübner, “Die Ignatianen und Noët von Smyrna,” in *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999), 131–206. In my discussion of the *Ignatian Epistles*, I use Holmes’ text and translation: Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007).

³² I discuss his emphasis on Jesus’ divinity in what follows. He emphasizes Jesus’ humanity in response to those who say that Jesus “suffered in appearance only” (*Trallians* 10.1; *Smyrnaeans* 2.1). For discussion of this dual emphasis, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 636–40.

³³ Ignatius, *Ephesians* preface; Ignatius, *Romans* preface. See also Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans* 1.1, where Ignatius writes, “I glorify Jesus Christ, the God who made you so wise” (trans. Holmes, 249).

³⁴ Ignatius, *Ephesians* 19.3.

³⁵ In addition to the references above, see *Ephesians* 15.3, 18.2; *Romans* 3.3, 6.3; *Polycarp* 8.3. Schoedel notes that some have argued that Ignatius did not view “Christ as God in an absolute sense.” He is unconvinced by these arguments and notes that Christ is called God because he is so closely related to the Father. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 39.

³⁶ As noted above, Ignatius uses the phrase “Jesus Christ our God” in two places. In other cases, as in *Ephesians* 18.2, Ignatius seems to use Christ as a title. There he writes, “ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός.” Ignatius does not appear to make the distinction between Jesus (the human) and Christ (the divine) that we see in some other second-century writers.

the knowledge (γνῶσιν) of God.³⁷ Christians are those who have taken on new life “in the blood of God” (ἐν αἵματι θεοῦ).³⁸ Ignatius writes that he wants to imitate the “suffering of my God” (τοῦ πάθους τοῦ θεοῦ μου), again closely associating the suffering of Christ with God.³⁹ In one of his stronger statements, Ignatius urges his readers to “wait expectantly for the one who is above time: the Eternal, the Invisible, who for our sake became visible; the Intangible, the Unsuffering, who for our sake suffered, who for our sake endured in every way.”⁴⁰ Ignatius did not shy away from paradoxical statements like “the Unsuffering, who for our sake suffered.” Elsewhere, he refers to Christ using two of these paradoxical pairings, stating that Christ is “γεννητὸς καὶ ἀγέννητος” and “πρῶτον παθητὸς καὶ τότε ἀπαθής.”⁴¹ As these statements make clear, Ignatius had no problem closely associating the God and Jesus, or even attributing the sufferings of Jesus to “God.” How exactly Ignatius understands these attributions of suffering to “God” is another question. As his usage above seems to indicate, Ignatius does not necessarily

³⁷ Ignatius, *Ephesians* 3.2, 17.2.

³⁸ Ignatius, *Ephesians* 1.1.

³⁹ Ignatius, *Romans* 6.3.

⁴⁰ Ignatius, *Polycarp* 3.2 (trans. and Greek from Holmes, 264-5): “τὸν ὑπὲρ καιρὸν προσδόκα, τὸν ἄχρονον, τὸν ἀόρατον, τὸν δι’ ἡμᾶς ὁρατόν, τὸν ἀψηλάφητον, τὸν ἀπαθῆ, τὸν δι’ ἡμᾶς παθητόν, τὸν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον δι’ ἡμᾶς ὑπομείναντα.”

⁴¹ Ignatius, *Ephesians* 7.2. These sorts of pairings bear a striking resemblance to some of the formulations that appear later in the monarchian controversy. For instance, the monarchians often spoke of God as both invisible and visible. This is precisely the sort of language that Hübner picks up on in his arguments about Noetus and Ignatius. Because he sees similar paradoxical expressions about God in Ignatius and Noetus, and because he accepts Joly’s dating of the middle recension of the Ignatian texts, Hübner posits that Noetus predated Ignatius and was one of Ignatius’ sources. For Hübner, Ignatius was a monarchian. Although his argument is spread across a number of different essays, see especially: Hübner, “Die Ignatianen und Noët von Smyrna.” Given the lack of any attestation to Noetus prior to the beginning of the third century, I find it problematic to offer such a broad revisionist narrative on the basis of such tenuous evidence as these paradoxical statements about God. Furthermore, if we use my narrow definition of monarchianism—a position that explicitly claims that the Father and Son are the same—Ignatius does not qualify.

mean “Father” when he says “God.” Because he explicitly states that Christ is God, he might mean nothing more than that Christ suffered or bled when he writes about the suffering and blood of God. Ignatius’ wording certainly does not reflect the sensitivity to patripassianism that arose only 100 years later in response to some of the conclusions drawn by early monarchians. Ignatius unequivocally expresses the divinity of Jesus Christ, but the characterization of that divinity is left ambiguous in his theology.⁴²

This is not to say, however, that Ignatius confuses the Father and the Son or that he never distinguishes between them. He has several means of acknowledging the distinction between the Father and the Son. Jesus is the one through whom Christians will reach God.⁴³ Jesus was alongside the Father before the ages, and appeared at the consummation.⁴⁴ Ignatius describes Jesus as the mouth in whom the Father has spoken, making Jesus the agent of the Father.⁴⁵ Ignatius writes that the Father raised Christ from the dead.⁴⁶ Thus, while some of Ignatius’ statements about God are ambiguous, the way he uses Father and Son suggests that he understands some sort of distinction between

⁴² This ambiguity militates against calling Ignatius a monarchian. Neither party in the monarchian controversy produced such ambiguous statements because they were concerned with a different set of questions. The monarchians unambiguously taught that the Father and the Son were one and the same. Some of the early monarchians elaborated on this teaching and plainly stated that the Father suffered. This theology was unambiguous. The ambiguity in Ignatius’ theology here is what earns him the title of a “naïve modalist.” Again, see Hübner, “Die Ignatianen und Noët von Smyrna,” 152. My definition of monarchianism (and modalism, by extension) excludes Ignatius because he did not explicitly deny distinction between the Father and Son.

⁴³ Ignatius, *Magnesians* 1.2.

⁴⁴ Ignatius, *Magnesians* 6.1.

⁴⁵ Ignatius, *Romans* 8.2.

⁴⁶ Ignatius, *Trallians* 9.2.

them, if only the distinction of different actors or agents.⁴⁷ The ambiguity present in the way he speaks about God shows that the questions about the unity and distinction of the Father and Son at the heart of the monarchian controversy were not yet pressing when he wrote. Ignatius does not explicitly address how Father and Son are distinct. He unequivocally states that Jesus is God, but the reader must infer from the titles he uses that Ignatius considers the Son to be somehow distinguished from the Father. Thus, Ignatius' theology is an example of what I am calling "soft distinction." He nowhere seems concerned with defining how they are distinct, but neither does he claim that they are the same.

Polycarp

Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians*⁴⁸ and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*⁴⁹ do not offer extended reflection on the relationship between the Father and the Son. The *Epistle to the Philippians* uses what appear to be stock phrases when speaking of the Father and Son. At multiple points, he speaks of "God and Christ" or "God and our Lord."⁵⁰ In

⁴⁷ Ignatius uses "Father and Son" far more frequently and consistently than the author of *1 Clement*. Thus, we have in Ignatius much more of a Father-Son distinction than *1 Clement*.

⁴⁸ Polycarp's *Epistle* seems to have functioned as a cover letter attached to the collection of Ignatius' letters that he was sending to the Philippians. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 24:324–5. There is a chance that it is actually two letters of Polycarp that were combined at a later date. See Ehrman's discussion of the critical issues surrounding the letter. *Ibid.*, 24:326–9. For the text and translation in this section on Polycarp, I rely on Ehrman's text.

⁴⁹ The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* was written by someone named Marcion (not the infamous Marcion). Most scholars think that the *Martyrdom* was composed sometime around 155 – 156 C.E. See Ehrman's survey: *The Apostolic Fathers*, 24:361–2.

⁵⁰ Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians* 1.1, 3.3, 5.2, 5.3.

addition, actions are addressed to God through Jesus Christ (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).⁵¹

Likewise, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* speaks of glorifying God through Jesus Christ the eternal and heavenly high priest (διὰ τοῦ αἰωνίου καὶ ἐπουρανίου ἀρχιερέως).⁵² The *Martyrdom* does assert that Christians worship (προσκυνοῦμεν) the Son of God, which supports the arguments of Bauckham and Hurtado regarding the worship of Christ as a means of expressing his divinity.⁵³ Neither of these texts is concerned with the issues that are at the center of the later monarchian controversy, and they exhibit no concern with defining the distinction between the Father and Son.

Didache, Epistle of Barnabas, and Shepherd of Hermas

Neither the *Didache*⁵⁴ nor the *Epistle of Barnabas*⁵⁵ is terribly concerned with the specifics of the relationship between the Father and the Son. The *Didache* is

⁵¹ Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians* 1.3.

⁵² *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 14.3.

⁵³ *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17.3. See, Richard Bauckham, “The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity,” *New Testament Studies* 27, no. 3 (1981): 322–41; idem, “The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus,” in *Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 43–69; idem, “The Worship of Jesus in Early Christianity,” in *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 127–51; idem, “The Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 15–36; Larry W. Hurtado, “New Testament Christology: A Critique of Bousset’s Influence,” *Theological Studies* 40, no. 2 (1979): 306–17; idem, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); idem, *Lord Jesus Christ*.

⁵⁴ The *Didache* was probably compiled sometime around 110 – 120 C.E., although Niederwimmer argues that the source material used probably dates from the end of the first century. Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A Commentary*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 52–53. He also argues that the compiler of the document “is no ‘theologian.’ It would be foolish to attempt to derive the complete teaching or views of the Didachist from the *Didache*.” Ibid., 2.

⁵⁵ We know virtually nothing about the author of this letter, which is more of a treatise fit into the epistolary form. Barnard argues that it was written “very early in the reign of Hadrian.” L. W. Barnard, “The Date of the Epistle of Barnabas: A Document of Early Egyptian Christianity,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 44 (1958): 107. Ehrman is not as confident that we can date it with as much

overwhelmingly concerned with Christian praxis and gives almost no information about the relationship between the Father and the Son. At one point, however, the *Didache* does refer to God as δεσπότης; but there is not enough of a pattern to discern if the author of the *Didache* was using it in a manner similar to *1 Clement*.⁵⁶ The *Didache* also uses the term Father, but it does this without correlating it to Son.⁵⁷ Even more interesting is the fact that when the Didachist uses “Father” in the Eucharistic section in *Didache* 9, he refers to Jesus as the child (παῖς) of the Father.⁵⁸ In addition to this the *Didache* twice states that baptism is to be “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁹ These baptismal formulae are not explicated, and the author of the *Didache* does not address the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit.

The *Epistle of Barnabas* is mostly concerned with the relationship between Christianity and Judaism and contains a “virulently anti-Jewish” message.⁶⁰ The *Epistle of Barnabas* does identify the Lord [Jesus] or the Son as the one to whom God spoke at the creation of humans, when he said, “Let us make humans according to our image and likeness.”⁶¹ The *Epistle of Barnabas* also speaks of the Son returning to earth.⁶² Even

specificity and places it sometime in the broad period between 70 – 135 C.E., though probably at the later end of this spectrum. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 25:6–8.

⁵⁶ *Didache* 10.3.

⁵⁷ *Didache* 1.5.

⁵⁸ The Didachist continues to call Jesus the child in *Didache* 10.

⁵⁹ *Didache* 7.1, 7.3. The formulas are almost exactly the same. In Ehrman’s edition of the text, 7.1 reads, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος.

⁶⁰ Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 25:3.

⁶¹ *Epistle of Barnabas* 5.5, 6.12. At 5.5, God is said to have spoken to the Lord, while at 6.12, he is said to have spoken to the Son. Given the putative Alexandrian provenance of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, this comment could show an early Christian Alexandrian focus on this verse in the creation narrative.

⁶² *Epistle of Barnabas* 15.5.

more striking, however, is the *Epistle of Barnabas*' strong correlation between Father and Jesus as Son of God.⁶³ The *Epistle of Barnabas* addresses the question of the visibility of the Son of God and seems to suggest that prior to the incarnation, the Son was invisible.⁶⁴

Like the *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Shepherd of Hermas* is predominantly concerned with praxis and holiness.⁶⁵ It yields very little data about the relationship between the Father and the Son because it scarcely mentions the Son at all.⁶⁶ Although it is not concerned with propounding a developed doctrine of God and Christ, it does bear the marks of monotheistic piety in at least one place. The first *Mandate* exhorts the readers as follows:

First of all, believe that God is one, who created all things and set them in order, and made out of what did not exist everything that is, and who contains all things but is himself alone uncontained. Believe in him, therefore, and fear him, and fearing him, exercise self-control. Observe these things, and you will cast off all evil from yourself and will put on every virtue of righteousness and will live to God, if you observe this commandment.⁶⁷

⁶³ *Epistle of Barnabas* 12.8-10. The author does not clarify the implications of this Father-Son correlation, but he makes it very strongly here. See also 7.2 and 7.9 where the *Epistle* speaks of the suffering of the Son of God.

⁶⁴ *Epistle of Barnabas* 5.8-12. This is a marked contrast to the (probably later) theology of Justin, who claimed that it was the Son who was visible in all of the Old Testament theophanies.

⁶⁵ The dating of the *Shepherd of Hermas* is quite difficult. Carolyn Osiek writes, "Though there is no consensus on dating, the majority of scholars would situate the writing in the first half of the second century." Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 19. Despite the uncertainty about the dating of the text, most scholars are confident that it was written in Rome.

⁶⁶ Hauck argues that *Hermas* is not a Christological or theological treatise and that the best way to understand the Christology of *Hermas* is through a soteriological lens. Robert J Hauck, "The Great Fast: Christology in the Shepherd of Hermas," *Anglican Theological Review* 75, no. 2 (1993): 187-98.

⁶⁷ *Shepherd of Hermas* Mand. 1 (trans. Holmes, 505).

The passage begins with a classic exhortation to monotheism, πίστευσον ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός.⁶⁸ Later, the *Shepherd of Hermas* includes a lengthy parable that touches on the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁶⁹ The Father creates and hands over control of the creation to the Son, indicating if nothing else that the *Shepherd* views them as distinct actors in the drama of creation. While the treatise is relatively unconcerned with the relationship between the Father and the Son, it clearly asserts a monotheistic stance in its limited theological material. Osiek highlights the background in Hellenistic Judaism of the assertion that God created all things out of nothing.⁷⁰ On the whole, the *Didache*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas* are not concerned with developing a technical doctrine of God or the Father's relationship to the Son. The hints of distinction between Father and Son are faint, especially when compared to their emphases on praxis and ethical living.

Epistle to Diognetus

Although the *Epistle to Diognetus* was probably written at the end of the second century or the beginning of the third, it has some interesting continuities with the earlier second-century texts and is useful for this overview.⁷¹ The author of the *Epistle* writes concerning the place of Christians in the world,

⁶⁸ Osiek notes that this strong affirmation of monotheism made this passage appealing for later heresiologists. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 103.

⁶⁹ *Shepherd of Hermas* Parable 5.1-6.

⁷⁰ Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 103.

⁷¹ Ehrman suggests that because of the style and content, a date in the middle of the second century is probable. He even suggests that it might be one of the earliest apologies we possess. Ehrman,

On the contrary, the omnipotent Creator of all, the invisible God himself, established among humans the truth and the holy, incomprehensible word from heaven and fixed it firmly in their hearts, not, as one might imagine, by sending them some subordinate, or angel or ruler or one of those who manage earthly matters, or one of those entrusted with the administration of things in heaven, but the Designer and Creator of the universe himself, by whom he created the heavens... this one he sent to them.⁷²

This passage refers to the truth and Word as Designer (τεχνίτην) and Creator (δημιουργόν), language that *I Clement* used to describe the Father.⁷³ The author later uses almost the same language to refer to God, calling him Master (δεσπότης) and Creator of the universe (δημιουργὸς τῶν ὅλων).⁷⁴ It is clear from these two closely related passages that the author views both God and the Word as sharing in the work of creation. The author also writes that the Son was sent as God (ὡς θεόν).⁷⁵ Despite using such language for the Word, the author of the *Epistle* still preserves some distinction between God and the Word. God is distinguished as invisible (ἀόρατος) and the Creator of all (παντοκτίστης or δημιουργὸς τῶν ὅλων), a different term for creator than that used for the Word. The *Epistle to Diognetus* does identify the Word and Son and state that the Father sent the Word to whom he entrusted his mystery.⁷⁶ In the *Epistle to Diognetus*, then, we see some means of distinguishing the Father from the Son; but there is nothing like a developed, technical means of distinguishing them. This is still soft distinction.

The Apostolic Fathers, 25:127. We know very little about the author of this letter or even about whether the named recipient, Diognetus, was real or fictional.

⁷² *Epistle to Diognetus* 7.2 (trans. Holmes, 705-7).

⁷³ In this section, the author does not use the terms Father or Son; and I use them here only for the sake of clarity and continuity with my other discussions.

⁷⁴ *Epistle to Diognetus* 8.7.

⁷⁵ *Epistle to Diognetus* 7.4.

⁷⁶ *Epistle to Diognetus* 11.1-6.

Melito

Since its discovery in the early twentieth century, the majority of scholars have held that the *Peri Pascha* was the work of Melito of Sardis. This is still the predominant view, although at least one scholar opposes it.⁷⁷ The traditional date for the text is sometime between 160 and 170 C.E.⁷⁸ Some scholars have borrowed Harnack's phrase, "naïve modalism," to describe the theology of *Peri Pascha*.⁷⁹ As with Ignatius, my judgment against the use of the phrase "naïve modalism" still stands. Properly understood, modalism (or monarchianism) is an intentional identification of the Father and Son, not a position one accidentally adopts. What we see in the *Peri Pascha* is not modalism *per se* but a lack of concern to distinguish the Father and Son.

The following passages illustrate the aspects of the *Peri Pascha* that lead scholars to classify it as "naively" modalist. Speaking of the Son, Melito writes,

For he is all things: inasmuch as he judges, Law; inasmuch as he teaches, Word; inasmuch as he saves, Grace; inasmuch as he begets, Father; inasmuch as he is begotten, Son; inasmuch as he suffers, Sheep; inasmuch as he is buried, Man;

⁷⁷ For an alternative theory, see the work of Lynn Cohick. Cohick notes that none of the text given in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* is present in the *Peri Pascha*. Cohick addresses other information, such as the dating of the archaeological finds of the synagogue in Sardis, in order to challenge the mainstream views of the intent of the *Peri Pascha*. Cohick argues that Melito's construction of "Israel" in *Peri Pascha* "does not reflect any second- or third-century rivalry between Jews and Christians but rather highlights the developing theological arguments concerning identity among Christians." Lynn H. Cohick, "Melito of Sardis's *Peri Pascha* and Its 'Israel,'" *Harvard Theological Review* 91, no. 4 (1998): 371. Cohick's arguments are strong enough to prove that traditional interpretations of the document are not quite airtight, but I do not think they are compelling enough to shift the scholarly majority. See also Lynn H. Cohick, *The Peri Pascha Attributed to Melito of Sardis: Setting, Purpose, and Sources*, Brown Judaic Studies 327 (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000). Despite her alternate arguments about setting and authorship, Cohick still dates the text to the mid- to late second century. *Ibid.*, 6–7.

⁷⁸ Stuart George Hall, "Introduction," in *On Pascha and Fragments*, ed. Stuart George Hall, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1979), xxii.

⁷⁹ Stuart G. Hall calls attention to the fact that Bonner borrowed the phrase from Harnack: *Ibid.*, xliii. See also Bonner, *The Homily on the Passion*, 27–8. Also note that *Peri Pascha* was not discovered until after the death of Harnack, so he was not applying the phrase to this work. There are indeed some striking passages in the *Peri Pascha*, but the label of "naïve modalism" is ill-suited.

inasmuch as he is raised, God. This is Jesus the Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.⁸⁰

Immediately preceding these lines, Melito had referred to Jesus as God three times.⁸¹ The most striking detail of this passage is that Melito calls Christ Father, “inasmuch as he begets” (καθ’ ὃ γεννᾷ πατήρ). Part of the difficulty with this passage is that Melito does not clarify what exactly the Son begets. The later monarchian writings claim that the Father became his own Son; but nothing that specific is being said here.⁸² Nevertheless, it is jarring that Melito calls Christ “Father.”

When Melito speaks of the crucifixion, he plainly asserts that “the Sovereign has been insulted; the God has been murdered” (ὁ δεσπότης ὕβρισται· ὁ θεὸς πεφόνεuitαι).⁸³ Melito’s use of δεσπότης here does not follow the pattern of earlier authors like Clement of Rome, who consistently used δεσπότης to refer to God. Melito’s use of δεσπότης shows no such consistency. He writes, “This is the cry, Israel, which you should have made to God: ‘Sovereign, if indeed your Son *had to suffer*, and this is your will, then let him suffer, but not by me” (ὦ Δέσποτα, εἰ καὶ ἔδει σου τὸν υἱὸν παθεῖν καὶ τοῦτό σου τὸ θέλημα, πασχέτω δὴ, ἀλλὰ ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ μὴ).⁸⁴ In this passage, Melito clearly uses δέσποτα to refer to the Father. Shortly following this passage, Melito writes, “O lawless Israel, what is this unprecedented crime you committed, thrusting your Lord among unprecedented

⁸⁰ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 9-10 (trans. and Greek from Melito, *On Pascha and Fragments*, ed. and trans. Stuart George Hall, Oxford Early Christian Texts [Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1979], 6–7).

⁸¹ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 7-8.

⁸² See, for example, Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 10.1.

⁸³ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 96 (trans. and Greek from Hall, 54-5).

⁸⁴ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 76 (trans. and Greek from Hall, 40-1). Italics in original.

sufferings, your Sovereign, who formed you, who made you, who honoured you, who called you ‘Israel’” (καινοῖς ἐμβαλὼν σου τὸν κύριον πάθειςιν, τὸν δεσπότην σου...)?⁸⁵

Here Melito uses both δεσπότης and κύριος to refer to the one being crucified.

Presumably Melito is referring to Jesus, but even his usage here is not entirely clear. For Melito, these titles do not serve to distinguish the Father and Son. In fact, Melito is attempting to depict a relationship as close as possible between the Father and Son. In Melito’s argument against Israel, it is advantageous for him to depict Israel as inflicting “unprecedented sufferings” on the very God who called them Israel.⁸⁶ Melito’s polemical point is that the Jews perpetrated this perfidy on *their own God*. It is unclear if Melito even felt that there was a need to distinguish the Father and Son; but if the need for distinction was on his radar, such a need was passed over in favor of his more immediate polemical purpose.

Raniero Cantalamessa has drawn attention to two passages in *Peri Pascha* that are relevant for our further discussion of monarchianism. First, in Melito’s discussion of what the *Pascha* is, he writes, “Learn therefore who is the suffering one, and who shares the suffering of the suffering one, and why the Lord is present on the earth to clothe

⁸⁵ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 81 (trans. and Greek from Hall, 44-5).

⁸⁶ Cohick has argued that Melito’s “Israel” is a rhetorical construction to help form the identity of Christians. Cohick, “Melito of Sardis’s *Peri Pascha* and Its ‘Israel’”; Lynn H. Cohick, “Melito’s *Peri Pascha*: Its Relationship to Judaism and Sardis in Recent Scholarly Discussion,” in *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress*, ed. Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 123–40. Other scholars have highlighted the possibility of real interaction between Jews and Christians on the ground in Sardis. See, for example, Robert L. Wilken, “Melito, the Jewish Community at Sardis, and the Sacrifice of Isaac,” *Theological Studies* 37, no. 1 (1976): 53–69. Still others warn that we do not possess enough data to draw grand conclusions about Melito or his relationship to Jews in Sardis. See David Satran, “Anti-Jewish Polemic in the *Peri Pascha* of Melito of Sardis: The Problem of Social Context,” in *Contra Iudaeos*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa, *Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism* 10 (Tubingen: Mohr, 1996), 49–58.

himself with the suffering one and carry him off to the heights of heaven.”⁸⁷ Second, in a passage referring to Christ, Melito writes,

It is he who, coming from heaven to the earth because of the suffering one, and clothing himself in that same one through a virgin’s womb, and coming forth a man, accepted the passions of the suffering one through the body which was able to suffer, and dissolved the passions of the flesh; and by the Spirit which could not die he killed death the killer of men.⁸⁸

Cantalamessa argues that Melito is correcting a Valentinian understanding of *sympatheia* here.⁸⁹ More interesting for the current study, however, is that Melito’s position in these passages resembles psilanthropism—at least superficially—and that Melito uses the language of compassion that shows up a few decades later in *Adversus Praxean*. The passage from *Peri Pascha* 66 clarifies Melito’s statements in 46. Christ is the one who comes from heaven and clothes himself in the suffering one. He is the one who shares in suffering—not the Father, as Tertullian’s opponents would later argue. Furthermore, Melito’s position is not the same as that of the psilanthropists, who argued that Jesus was a mere man upon whom Christ descended at some point in his life (often at his baptism in the Jordan).⁹⁰ Melito argues that Christ clothed himself in the suffering one in the virgin’s

⁸⁷ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 46 (trans. and Greek from Hall, 22-5): “μάθετε οὖν τίς ὁ πάσχων, καὶ τίς ὁ τῷ πάσχοντι συμπαθῶν, καὶ διὰ τί πάρεστιν ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἵνα τὸν πάσχοντα ἀμφιασάμενος ἄρπάσῃ εἰς τὰ ὕψηλα τῶν οὐρανῶν.”

⁸⁸ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 66 (trans. and Greek from Hall, 34-5): “οὗτος ἀφικόμενος ἐξ οὐρανῶν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν διὰ τὸν πάσχοντα, αὐτὸν δὲ ἐκείνον ἐνδυσάμενος διὰ παρθένου μήτρας καὶ προελθὼν ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεδέξατο τὰ τοῦ πάσχοντος πάθη διὰ τοῦ παθεῖν δυναμένου σώματος, καὶ κατέλυσεν τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς πάθη· τῷ δὲ θανεῖν μὴ δυναμένῳ πνεύματι ἀπέκτεινεν τὸν ἀνθρωποκτόνον θάνατον.”

⁸⁹ Raniero Cantalamessa, “Les homélies pascales de Méliton de Sardes et du Pseudo-Hippolyte et les extraits de Théodote,” in *Épektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 263–71.

⁹⁰ See my discussions of psilanthropism in the sections on Eusebius and the *Refutatio* in later chapters.

womb, such that the human Jesus was never without Christ.⁹¹ So, when Melito speaks of compassion, he is speaking of the Christ suffering with the flesh, not the Father suffering with the Son.

In a final passage relevant for this study, Melito uses sweeping language to describe the Son:

It is he that made heaven and earth and fashioned man in the beginning, who is proclaimed through the law and prophets, who was enfleshed upon a virgin, who was hung up on a tree, who was buried in the earth, who was raised from the dead and went up to the heights of heaven, who sits at the Father's right hand, who has power to save every man, through whom the Father did his works from beginning to eternity. He is *the Alpha and the Omega*; he is *beginning and end*, beginning inexpressible and end incomprehensible; *he is the Christ*; he is the king; he is Jesus; he is the captain; he is the Lord; he is the one who rose from the dead; he is the one who sits at the Father's right hand; he carries the Father and is carried by the Father. To him be glory and power for ever. Amen.⁹²

Melito begins this passage by ascribing the works of creation to the Son, works that in many earlier writers were attributed only to the Father. The rest of the section, however, offers a reasonable degree of distinction between the Father and Son. The Son is twice said to sit at the Father's right hand. The Father is said to work through the Son. Thus, understanding Melito as a "modalist"—naïve or otherwise—seems premature. The later monarchians (or modalists) were actively concerned to preserve belief in only one God, and they identified the Father and Son to safeguard monotheism. Melito, on the other hand, does not signal anywhere in the *Peri Pascha* that he thinks monotheism is being endangered. In the sections that scholars often identify as modalist, Melito's theology is driven by his polemic against Israel—not some proto-modalist concern to protect

⁹¹ Cantalamessa argues that Melito's position here appears to be an early version of a "two natures" understanding of the incarnation. *Ibid.*, 265.

⁹² Melito, *Peri Pascha* 104-5 (trans. Hall, 59-61).

monotheism. Furthermore, such claims as the Son sitting at the Father's right hand would have been unpalatable for monarchians. What we see in Melito might be naïve, but it is not modalism proper, for it lacks many of the major characteristics which form the core of later monarchianism. Melito's anti-Jewish polemic causes him to articulate a strong and close connection between the Father and Son, and he exhibits little inclination to outline the specifics of their distinction.

The Ambiguous Middle

Theophilus of Antioch

Scholars have offered widely divergent assessments of Theophilus' three books to a certain Autolycus (*Ad Autolycum*).⁹³ On the one hand, Robert M. Grant finds *Ad Autolycum* to be dilettantish, having a firm grasp of neither the Greco-Roman sources he so frequently cites nor the Christian tradition to which he is heir.⁹⁴ On the other hand, Stuart Parsons argues that *Ad Autolycum* is a skillfully constructed rhetorical argument in which Theophilus discredits his opponents' sources and shows his own to be reliable.⁹⁵ Whatever estimation one has of the quality of the work, it is clear that Theophilus is concerned, like Athenagoras, with providing a strong account of monotheism. This

⁹³ Stuart Parsons argues that these three books are to be read as three separate, self-contained letters to Autolycus rather than one premeditated whole in three parts. Stuart Parsons, "Coherence, Rhetoric, and Scripture in Theophilus of Antioch's *Ad Autolycum*," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 53 (2008): 163.

⁹⁴ Robert M. Grant, "Theophilus of Antioch to Autolycus," *Harvard Theological Review* 40, no. 4 (1947): 242, 256.

⁹⁵ Parsons, "Coherence, Rhetoric, and Scripture in Theophilus of Antioch's *Ad Autolycum*."

emphasis on monotheism, when coupled with the fact that he does not directly mention Jesus, has caused some to argue that his theology is more Jewish than Christian.⁹⁶ Despite his omission of any mention of Jesus by name, three aspects of this theology are of interest for my current work: his articulation of monotheism, his *Logos* theology, and his *Sophia* theology.

Throughout *Ad Autolycum* Theophilus repeats his claim that the prophets proclaim that there is only one God. Although he argues that the pagan philosophers are often misguided, Theophilus thinks they are sometimes in agreement with the prophets. He writes, “Sometimes some poets, becoming sober in soul and departing from the demons, made statements in agreement with those of the prophets in order to bear witness to themselves and to all men concerning the sole rule of God (περί τε θεοῦ μοναρχίας) and the judgment and the other matters they discussed.”⁹⁷ For Theophilus, when the

⁹⁶ Robert Grant notes of Theophilus, “The author was evidently a Christian, but as we shall show, he was more a Jew than a Christian.... And we shall see that he was very close to what later fathers called the school of Ebion” (“The Problem of Theophilus,” *Harvard Theological Review* 43, no. 3 (1950): 180). See also the work of Bentivegna, which highlights the absence of Christ from Theophilus’ theology: J Bentivegna, “A Christianity without Christ by Theophilus of Antioch,” *Studia Patristica* 13 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975), 107–30. Grant later goes on to employ Harnack’s terminology to argue that Theophilus was a “dynamistic monarchian” and Judaizer (“The Problem of Theophilus,” 196). As evidence for this claim, Grant offers a shaky reading of 2.24, where Adam is described as being created in a sort of neutral state with the inclination for progress (ἀφορμὴν προκοπῆς). Grant comments on this passage, “Moreover, his description in II 24 of what Adam might have accomplished is clearly modeled on what he thinks Jesus did accomplish. God gave Adam a ‘principle of progress’ (ἀφορμὴ προκοπῆς) so that he could ‘grow’ and ‘become perfect’, and be declared God, and thus ascend into heaven, possessing immortality. The word προκοπή was used by Ebionites to describe the ethical achievement of the human Jesus” (ibid., 195). The perhaps insuperable difficulty with Grant’s assertion is that Theophilus does not once mention Jesus. Therefore, we have nothing to compare with other “dynamistic monarchians” or the Ebionites Grant mentions. Grant’s judgment is premature at best, for we scarcely catch a glimpse of the human Jesus in Theophilus’ work, let alone anything as explicit as the sort of “mere man (psilanthropist)” Christologies that Harnack associated with his term “dynamistic monarchianism.” Although Uríbarri Bilbao does not use a restricted definition of monarchianism like the one I suggest, he likewise disagrees with those who judge Theophilus’ theology to be monarchian. See Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 122–7. He does highlight the fact that Theophilus’ use of μοναρχία is not anti-Trinitarian, and this observation accords well with the thesis that I am advancing about the core of monarchian theology.

⁹⁷ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.8 (trans. and Greek from Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, ed. Robert McQueen Grant, Oxford Early Christian Texts [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970], 38–9).

philosophers get something right, they are merely imitating the inspired prophets, who antedated them. In his discussions of monotheism, Theophilus frequently employs the term *μοναρχία*.⁹⁸ Unlike the later Praxeans, however, Theophilus appears to be using it only to denote the rule of one God. There are no signs of its use as a polemical tool to deny distinction between the Father and Son. Like Athenagoras, his emphasis on monotheism serves as a bridge-concept between Greek philosophy and biblical faith.

Although developing a fulsome *Logos* theology is not Theophilus' primary concern in *Ad Autolycum*, there are a few notable passages where he discusses the role of the *Logos*. His employment of *Logos* is often closely linked to his use of *Sophia*, so I will treat the two themes in tandem. Perhaps the most important passage for these concepts in *Ad Autolycum* comes near the beginning of book two. He writes,

Therefore God, having his own Logos innate (ἐνδιάθετον) in his own bowels, generated him together with his own Sophia, *vomiting* him forth before everything else. He used this Logos as his servant in the things created by him, and through him he made all things. He is called Beginning because he leads and dominates everything fashioned through him. It was he, *Spirit of God* and *Beginning* and *Sophia* and *Power of the Most High*, who came down into the prophets and spoke through them about the creation of the world and all the rest. For the prophets did not exist when the world came into existence; there were the Sophia of God which is in him and his holy Logos who is always present with him. For this reason he speaks thus through Solomon the prophet: 'When he prepared the heaven I was with him, and when he made strong the foundations of the earth I was with him, binding them fast'. And Moses, who lived many years before Solomon,—or rather, the Logos of God, speaking through him as an instrument—says: 'In the Beginning God made heaven and earth'. First he mentioned beginning and creation, and only then did he introduce God, for it is not right to mention God idly and in vain. For the divine Sophia knew in advance that some persons were going to speak nonsense and make mention of a multitude of non-existent gods.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Theophilus' use of *μοναρχία* is confined to books two and three. See *Ad Autolycum* 2.4, 2.8, 2.28, 2.35, 2.38, 3.7. Uríbarri Bilbao notes that Theophilus uses the term *μοναρχία* more frequently than any of the other apologists (*Monarquía y Trinidad*, 105). He argues that *μοναρχία* is something of a "missionary concept" for Theophilus, allowing him to build a bridge from pagan thought to Judaism and Christianity (ibid., 108).

⁹⁹ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.10 (trans. and Greek from Grant, 38-41): "Ἐχων οὖν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις σπλάγχνοις ἐγέννησεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας

There are a number of notable features in this passage. The first is the apparent inconsistency in Theophilus' use of the title *Sophia*. First, Theophilus claims that the *Logos* was generated "together with his own *Sophia* (μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας)," which implies that they are distinct entities. Immediately following that description of their generation, however, Theophilus uses *Sophia* as a title for the *Logos*, not to refer to a separate being or entity.¹⁰⁰ While Theophilus is not consistent with his use of *Sophia*, other passages make it clear that he thinks *Sophia* is a being distinct from the *Logos*. In his reading of Genesis 1:26, Theophilus interprets God saying "Let us" as God speaking to *Sophia* and *Logos*, who were God's partners in creation.¹⁰¹ Here, God's hands appear to be some sort of external actors to whom God speaks, although he still does not make clear the manner of their distinction or connection. In the clearest of the passages where he distinguishes *Logos* and *Sophia*, Theophilus writes regarding the creation account in

ἐξερευζάμενος πρὸ τῶν ὄλων. τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἔσχεν ὑπουργὸν τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένων, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα πεποίηκεν. οὗτος λέγεται ἀρχή, ὅτι ἀρχεῖ καὶ κυριεύει πάντων τῶν δι' αὐτοῦ δεδημιουργημένων. οὗτος οὖν, ὢν πνεῦμα θεοῦ καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου, κατήρχετο εἰς τοὺς προφήτας καὶ δι' αὐτῶν ἐλάλει τὰ περὶ τῆς ποιήσεως τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων. οὐ γὰρ ἦσαν οἱ προφῆται ὅτε ὁ κόσμος ἐγίνετο, ἀλλ' ἡ σοφία ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ ἐν αὐτῷ οὐσα καὶ ὁ λόγος ὁ ἅγιος αὐτοῦ ὁ αἰεὶ συμπαρὼν αὐτῷ. διὸ δὴ καὶ διὰ Σολομῶνος προφήτου οὕτως λέγει· "Ὡνίκα δ' ἠτοίμασεν τὸν οὐρανόν, συμπαρήμην αὐτῷ, καὶ ὡς ἰσχυρὰ ἐποίει τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς, ἤμην παρ' αὐτῷ ἀρμόζουσα." Μωσῆς δὲ ὁ καὶ Σολομῶνος πρὸ πολλῶν ἐτῶν γενόμενος, μᾶλλον δὲ ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς δι' ὀργάνου δι' αὐτοῦ φησιν· "Ὡς ἀρχὴ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν." πρῶτον ἀρχὴν καὶποίησιν ὠνόμασεν, εἴθ' οὕτως τὸν θεὸν συνέστησεν· οὐ γὰρ ἀργῶς χρὴ καὶ ἐπὶ κενῷ θεὸν ὀνομάζειν. προήδει γὰρ ἡ θεία σοφία μέλλειν φλυαρεῖν τινας καὶ πληθὺν θεῶν ὀνομάζειν τῶν οὐκ ὄντων."

¹⁰⁰ Multiple scholars have noted this inconsistency on the part of Theophilus. See, for example, Anthony Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 126–8; Jackson Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 127 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 160–2. Perhaps one reason for Theophilus' inconsistency is that Paul uses *Sophia* as a title of Christ in 1 Corinthians 1:24, "Christ the Power of God and Wisdom of God." Thus, *Sophia* appears in scripture as someone alongside God in creation (Proverbs 8:22) and as a title for Christ (1 Cor. 1:24). It was not until the end of the second century that these two uses were merged into one and *Sophia* became a title for Christ. Even Irenaeus, writing near the end of the second century, used *Sophia* as a title for the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰¹ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.18.

Genesis, “Similarly the three days prior to the luminaries are the types of the triad of God and his Logos and his Sophia.”¹⁰² He does not use precise terminology, but it is clear that Theophilus thinks that God, the *Logos*, and *Sophia* constitute three *somethings*.¹⁰³

The next notable aspect of *Ad Autolycum* 2.10 is Theophilus’ use of the Stoic linguistic categories of λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and λόγος προφορικός. He develops this concept later, when he writes that the *Logos* “was always innate (ἐνδιάθετον) in the heart of God,” but that “when God wished to make what he had planned to make, he generated this Logos, making him external (τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἐγέννησεν προφορικόν), as the *firstborn of all creation*.”¹⁰⁴ It is difficult to tell what Theophilus thinks the status of the *Logos* is when it is interior to God (ἐνδιάθετος)—whether it is identical with God or maintains any degree of distinction. When the *Logos* is made external (προφορικός), however, it is evident that there is a distinction between the two. Again, though, Theophilus offers few clues regarding the manner of the distinction between God and the externalized *Logos*.¹⁰⁵

In his discussion of God walking in paradise, Theophilus focuses on the fact that God, the Father of the universe, is not confined to any place.¹⁰⁶ This ἀχώρητος God and

¹⁰² Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.15 (trans. Grant, 53). See also *Ad Autolycum* 1.7 and 2.18.

¹⁰³ Despite his use of “triad,” Theophilus does not here present something like a developed doctrine of the Trinity. Immediately after his use of triad, Theophilus claims that a human can be added to the triad to make a tetrad. See Grant’s discussion of this matter at, “The Problem of Theophilus,” 188.

¹⁰⁴ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.22 (trans. and Greek from Grant, 62-3). Note the variability in the ways Theophilus describes the interiority of the *Logos*. In 2.10, he describes the *Logos* as in God’s own bowels (ἐν τοῖς ἰδίῳις σπλάγχνοις), while in 2.22, he describes him as in the heart of God (ἐν καρδίᾳ θεοῦ).

¹⁰⁵ Note also that Curry thinks that Theophilus might allow “for the *Logos endiathetos* and the *Logos prophorikos* to exist in different places simultaneously.” This possibility, of course, would increase the complexity here. See Carl Curry, “The Theogony of Theophilus,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 42, no. 4 (1988): 321.

¹⁰⁶ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.22.

Father of the universe is not present in any place, including paradise. Instead, the *Logos* is present in paradise in the role of the Father and Lord of all. Theophilus then discusses the voice that Adam heard in the garden, writing, “what is the ‘voice’ but the Logos of God, who is also his Son?”¹⁰⁷ Theophilus’ equation of *Logos* and Son here is noteworthy, for this is the only place it occurs in *Ad Autolycum*. Furthermore, even when he refers to the Son, he does not correlate the term with Father. The Father is Father of the universe (τῶν ὅλων), but he is nowhere said to be Father of the Son. Thus, in Theophilus’ theology, the Fatherhood of God denotes his role as creator and is not connected to the title Son, which occurs only once.

In Theophilus’ three books *Ad Autolycum*, there are some signs that he views the *Logos* as somehow distinct from God. He can speak of *Logos* and *Sophia* as members of a triad, and he can speak of the *Logos* as external to God, at least for the work of creation. At the same time, however, it is clear that carefully articulating the manners of unity and distinction between God and the *Logos* is not something that concerns Theophilus. He is far more concerned to present a strong picture of monotheism by employing texts from both the Old Testament and pagan philosophical writers. This collection of characteristics leaves Theophilus’ *Ad Autolycum* somewhere in the ambiguous middle when it comes to articulating the distinction between the Father and Son.

¹⁰⁷ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.22 (Greek and trans., Grant, 62-63): φωνὴ δὲ τί ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἀλλ’ ἢ ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃς ἐστὶν καὶ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ;

Irenaeus

John Behr asserts that disputants on both sides of the monarchian controversy were developing the theology of Irenaeus. Regarding the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, he writes, “Despite the fact that this book is our primary source for determining their theology, enough is indicated to suggest that Zephyrinus and Callistus were maintaining the style of theology developed by Irenaeus.... The final protagonist in this series of debates was Hippolytus who, in his *Contra Noetum* and other undisputed works, developed a more Irenaeian theology.”¹⁰⁸ Behr does not specify how each of the parties develops Irenaeus’ theology, perhaps because there is no clear evidence that either the monarchians or their proto-orthodox opponents were drawing on Irenaeus in their conflict with each other.¹⁰⁹

Scholars have noted the development of Irenaeus’ Trinitarian theology over the course of his career, both within *Adversus haereses*, his sprawling anti-Gnostic polemical work, and in his later and more positive theological work, the *Demonstratio*.¹¹⁰ A discussion of the development of Irenaeus’ Trinitarian theology is beyond the scope of this work, and I focus here on a few key passages in Irenaeus that typify his articulation

¹⁰⁸ John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, The Formation of Christian Theology 1 (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 141–2.

¹⁰⁹ The lack of any clear textual evidence has not kept others from speculating about Irenaeus’ legacy in the monarchian controversy. In fact, Stuart Hall has argued, rather fancifully, that Tertullian’s Praxeas is actually a pseudonym for Irenaeus. Stuart George Hall, “Praxeas and Irenaeus,” *Studia Patristica* 14.3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1976), 145–47.

¹¹⁰ Particularly of note here are the following more recent works: Michel R. Barnes, “Irenaeus’s Trinitarian Theology,” *Nova et Vetera* 7, no. 1 (2009): 67–106; Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*; Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*. Briggman has argued that Irenaeus’ theology of the Holy Spirit underwent a notable change after Irenaeus’ interaction with the theology of Theophilus of Antioch, i.e., in *AH*, 3. Not all scholars agree that the *Demonstratio* is the later work. See, for example, Behr, who argues that the *Demonstratio* is earlier: Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, 112.

of the relationship between the Father and the Son. It is important to remember that much of Irenaeus' theology was developed in counterpoint to his Gnostic opponents and that this polemical context shaped some of his emphases.¹¹¹

Irenaeus accused his Gnostic opponents of introducing spatio-temporal distance between the highest God and the less-divine members of the *Pleroma* and describing God by means of analogies from human life that were not fit for such a task. He responds to both of these trends and states regarding the Father of all,

He is a simple, uncompounded Being, without diverse members, and altogether like, and equal to himself, since he is wholly understanding, and wholly spirit and wholly thought, and wholly intelligence, and wholly reason, and wholly hearing, and wholly seeing, and wholly light, and the whole source of all that is good—even as the religious and pious are wont to speak concerning God.¹¹²

Irenaeus stresses the simplicity of God to counter what he perceives as the divisions and distance within the Gnostic *Pleroma*.¹¹³ Another way Irenaeus seeks to combat the notion of any spatial distance within God is by highlighting that God is spirit. Michel Barnes writes, “The polemical purpose of Irenaeus’s emphasis on God as Spirit is to deny spatial language of God and His generation(s).”¹¹⁴ The denial of any spatial language when referring to God and the refusal to use causative language when describing the relations among the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit means that Irenaeus’ picture of God emphasizes

¹¹¹ Lashier argues that the different historical and polemical circumstances in which the works of Irenaeus and the Apologists were composed help to explain Irenaeus’ divergence from and development of the theology of the Apologists. Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, 15.

¹¹² Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 2.13.3 (trans. ANF 1:374).

¹¹³ In his forthcoming book, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, Anthony Briggman argues that simplicity and infinity are central to Irenaeus’ understanding of God.

¹¹⁴ Barnes, “Irenaeus’s Trinitarian Theology,” 76.

the unity of God.¹¹⁵ His resistance to the fracturing of the divine he perceived within the Valentinian *Pleroma* explains why Irenaeus emphasized the unity of God.

When Irenaeus is able to take a step back from his fierce argument against the Gnostics later in his career, he gives an account of God that emphasizes that God is never without the Son and Spirit. Scholars have noted that Irenaeus' overarching concern to protect the unity of God against the Gnostics seems to have prevented him from developing a "separate category approximating 'person.'"¹¹⁶ Although Irenaeus does not have any technical term to denote the distinct identities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinitarian nature of this thought is evident. In a passage near the beginning of the *Demonstratio*, Irenaeus describes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in a way that makes it clear that are all divine and have distinct, yet intertwined, roles in the economy. He writes,

Thus then there is shown forth One God, the Father, not made, invisible, creator of all things; above whom there is no other God, and from whom there is no other God. And, since God is rational, therefore by (the) Word He created the things that were made; and God is Spirit, and by (the) Spirit He adorned all things: as also the prophet says: *By the word of the Lord were the heavens established, and by his spirit all their power.* Since then the Word establishes, that is to say, gives body and grants the reality of being, and the Spirit gives order and form to the diversity of the powers; rightly and fittingly is the Word called the Son, and the Spirit the Wisdom of God. Well also does Paul His apostle say: *One God, the Father, who is over all and through all and in us all.* For *over all* is the Father; and *through all* is the Son, for through Him all things were made by the Father; and *in us all* is the Spirit, who cries *Abba Father*, and fashions man into the likeness of God. Now the Spirit shows forth the Word, and therefore the prophets

¹¹⁵ Irenaeus does speak about the generation of the Son at *Adversus haereses* 2.28.6, but there he is critiquing his opponents for thinking that they can describe the generation of the Son using human analogies. The Son's generation, argues Irenaeus, is indescribable and ought not be fit into the mold of human analogies.

¹¹⁶ Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, 209. Michel Barnes writes, "Here it may be useful to make an apparently minor point about Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology: it has no word to answer 'two (or three) what?'" (*Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology*, 84).

announced the Son of God; and the Word utters the Spirit, and therefore is Himself the announcer of the prophets, and leads and draws man to the Father.¹¹⁷

Irenaeus offers a rendition of the *regula fidei* immediately following this passage which further clarifies that he views the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as having distinct identities, even if he does not develop the technical terminology needed to give a strong account of this distinction.¹¹⁸ Irenaeus' statements of the equal divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are stronger and more definite than most of his predecessors and contemporaries. The exigencies of his opposition to the Gnostics did not require him to develop a clear means of distinguishing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Within his specific polemical context, Irenaeus developed a theology that was strong on articulating the unity of God and but did not focus on articulating the distinction among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹ Although he occasionally offers means for distinguishing Father, Son, and Spirit, they are never particularly clear or precise.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria exhibits a desire to show both that the Father and Son are one and that they are also distinguished from each other. As I have demonstrated in this

¹¹⁷ Irenaeus, *Demonstratio* 5 (trans. Irenaeus, *St. Irenaeus: The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. J. Armitage Robinson [London: S.P.C.K., 1920], 73–4).

¹¹⁸ Irenaeus, *Demonstratio* 6. As is to be expected, Irenaeus structures the *regula* around the three Trinitarian “persons” and lists the distinct activities of each. For example, the Son or Word was manifested in the theophanies. He is the one through whom all things were made, the one who became visible and tangible in the incarnation, etc.

¹¹⁹ In an email conversation, both Briggman and Lashier noted that Irenaeus does not develop strong categories for distinguishing Father, Son, and Spirit and that he focuses on their unity and equality. They do, however, note that Irenaeus has something of a functional hierarchy among the three in the economy. This is one of the ways Irenaeus can speak of distinction.

chapter, the former impulse was shared by nearly every Christian writer of the second century, whereas the latter was given considerable attention only by a few. Clement's exposition of the unity and distinction of the Father and Son, though original and novel at times, is ambiguous. He holds both in tension, but he is never able to reconcile them with sufficient clarity.

A number of scholarly treatments of Clement's understanding of the Father/Son relationship have focused on Clement's *Logos* theology and on a fragment from Photius.¹²⁰ Because of the questionable authenticity of this fragment and the evocative nature of other passages that are almost certainly authentic, I have chosen to bracket questions related to Photius' fragment.¹²¹ Instead, I focus my attention on passages from the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (*Excerpta*) wherein Clement discusses questions of unity and distinction between the Father and Son.¹²² I will supplement these core passages with relevant texts from his other works.

Before assessing Clement's description of the relationship between the Father and Son, we must first consider the ways in which Clement speaks about the Father. One of the most important aspects of Clement's understanding of the Father is the Father's

¹²⁰ On this, see Edwards' disagreement with Casey about whether Clement held that there were two distinct *Logoi*. R. P. Casey, "Clement and the Two Divine Logoi," *Journal of Theological Studies* 25 (1924): 43–56; M. J. Edwards, "Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the Logos," *Vigiliae Christianae* 54, no. 2 (2000): 159–77.

¹²¹ Such considerations would, of course, be necessary in a fuller treatment of Clement's Trinitarian theology. The goal of the present section is not to give an exhaustive account of Clement's Trinitarian theology. Instead, I intend to outline the contours of his understanding of the relationship between the Father and Son.

¹²² In the *Excerpta*, Clement both reproduces Valentinian thought and gives his own. As will become clear in my later analysis, not all scholars agree on which sections belong to Valentinians and which belong to Clement. For a discussion of these matters, see the introductions in the editions of both Casey and Sagnard: Clement, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, ed. Robert Pierce Casey (London: Christophers, 1934); Clement, *Extraits de Théodote*, ed. François Louis Marie Matthiew Sagnard, Sources chrétiennes 23 (Paris: Cerf, 1948).

absolute transcendence.¹²³ In the first book of the *Paedagogus* (*Paed.*), Clement says, “God is one, and He is more than one, beyond unity.”¹²⁴ John 1:18 is a very important verse for Clement’s understanding of both the Father’s transcendence and the Son’s relation to the Father. In book five of the *Stromata* (*Strom.*) Clement reflects on this verse and the difficulty of speaking about God. He writes:

No one can rightly express Him wholly. For on account of His greatness He is ranked as the All, and is the Father of the universe. Nor are any parts to be predicated of Him. For the One is indivisible; wherefore also it is infinite, not considered with reference to inscrutability, but with reference to its being without dimensions, and not having a limit. And therefore it is without form and name. And if we name it, we do not do so properly, terming it either the One, or the Good, or Mind, or Absolute Being, or Father, or God, or Creator, or Lord. We speak not as supplying His name; but for want, we use good names, in order that the mind may have these as points of support, so as not to err in other respects. For each one by itself does not express God; but all together are indicative of the power of the Omnipotent. For predicates are expressed either from what belongs to things themselves, or from their mutual relation. But none of these are admissible in reference to God. Nor any more is He apprehended by the science of demonstration. For it depends on primary and better known principles. But there is nothing antecedent to the Unbegotten.¹²⁵

¹²³ For a discussion of the philosophical and Philonic background of Clement’s understanding of the transcendence of God, see chapters one and two of Raoul Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d’Alexandrie* (Leiden: Brill, 1973). Eric Osborn also deals with Clement’s understanding of God’s transcendence. See especially his *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 122–6. Daniélou’s treatment of the transcendence of God in the broader milieu surrounding Clement is also useful: Jean Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, trans. John Austin Baker, *History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea 2* (London: Longman & Todd, 1973), 323–43.

¹²⁴ Clement, *Paed.* 1.8.71 (trans. FC 23:63): “ἐν δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ἐνὸς καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτὴν μονάδα.” Greek from Clement, *Le Pédagogue*, ed. Henri-Irénée Marrou and Marguerite Harl, vol. 1, *Sources chrétiennes 70* (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 236. Just before this quotation, Clement quotes Jesus’ words in John 17:21–23, thus, making it clear that Clement is referring to the Father when he here says “God.”

¹²⁵ Clement, *Strom.* 5.12.81.5 – 5.12.82.3 (trans. ANF 2:464): οὐκ ἂν δὲ ὅλον εἶποι τις αὐτὸν ὀρθῶς· ἐπὶ μεγέθει γὰρ τάπτεται τὸ ὅλον καὶ ἔστι τῶν ὅλων πατήρ. οὐδὲ μὴν μέρη τινὰ αὐτοῦ λεκτέον· ἀδιαίρετον γὰρ τὸ ἐν, διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἄπειρον, οὐ κατὰ τὸ ἀδιεξίτητον νοούμενον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ ἀδιάστατον καὶ μὴ ἔχον πέρας, καὶ τοίνυν ἀσχημάτιστον καὶ ἀνωνόμαστον. κἂν ὀνομάζωμεν αὐτό ποτε, οὐ κυρίως καλοῦντες ἦτοι ἐν ἡ τάγαθόν ἢ νοῦν ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ ὄν ἢ πατέρα ἢ θεὸν ἢ δημιουργὸν ἢ κύριον, οὐχ ὡς ὄνομα αὐτοῦ προφερόμενοι λέγομεν, ὑπὸ δὲ ἀπορίας ὀνόμασι καλοῖς προσχρώμεθα, ἵν’ ἔχη ἡ διάνοια, μὴ περὶ ἄλλα πλανωμένη, ἐπερείδεσθαι τούτοις. οὐ γὰρ τὸ καθ’ ἑκαστον μηνυτικὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ ἀθρώως ἅπαντα ἐνδεικτικὰ τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δυνάμεως· τὰ γὰρ λεγόμενα ἢ ἐκ τῶν προσόντων αὐτοῖς ῥητὰ ἔστιν ἢ ἐκ τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσεως, οὐδὲν δὲ τούτων λαβεῖν οἷόν τε περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ. ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ἐπιστήμη λαμβάνεται τῇ ἀποδεικτικῇ· αὕτη γὰρ ἐκ προτέρων καὶ γνωριμωτέρων συνίσταται, τοῦ δὲ ἀγεννήτου οὐδὲν προϋπάρχει. Greek from Clement, *Clemens Alexandrinus: Stromata Buch I–VI*, ed. Otto Stählin and

In this passage, Clement uses a number of apophatic terms before conceding that some positive ascriptions can be made of God, but only as something of a crutch for human minds. For Clement, God is beyond our attempts at description.

For the purposes of this study, one more aspect of Clement's description of God is illuminating. Echoing Philo in multiple places, Clement describes God as unable to be circumscribed (ἀπερίγραφος); and this is important for one of the primary ways he describes the distinction between God and his Son in the *Excerpta*.¹²⁶ In the first place, Clement writes:

Since the gnostic Moses does not circumscribe within space Him that cannot be circumscribed, he set up no image in the temple to be worshipped; showing that God was invisible, and incapable of being circumscribed; and somehow leading the Hebrews to the conception of God by the honour for his name in the temple.¹²⁷

In this passage, Clement uses multiple terms with the alpha-privative to denote the same basic concept, the illimitability of God. Daniélou notes, "It will be apparent... that the epithet ἀπερίληπτος is virtually synonymous with ἀπερίγραφος."¹²⁸ Clement employs the same concept later in *Strom.*, writing, "For is it not the case that rightly and truly we do not circumscribe in any place that which cannot be circumscribed; nor do we shut up in

Ludwig Früchtel, vol. 2, *Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* 15 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), 380–1.

¹²⁶ For Philo's prior use of the term, see *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 59, 124. At 59, Philo writes, ἀπερίγραφος γὰρ ὁ θεός, ἀπερίγραφοι δὲ καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις αὐτοῦ. In 124, Philo states that God has uncircumscribed wealth (ἀπερίγραφον πλοῦτον).

¹²⁷ Clement, *Strom.* 5.11.74 (trans. ANF 2:462): καὶ ὅτι οὐ περιλαμβάνει τόπῳ τὸ ἀπερίληπτον ὁ γνωστικὸς Μωυσῆς, ἀφίδρυμα οὐδὲν ἀνέθηκεν εἰς τὸν νεὼν σεβάσμιον, ἄορατον καὶ ἀπερίγραφον δηλῶν εἶναι τὸν θεόν, προσάγων δὲ ἀμῆ γέ πη εἰς ἔννοιαν τοῦ θεοῦ τοὺς Ἑβραίους διὰ τῆς τιμῆς τοῦ κατὰ τὸν νεὼν ὀνόματος. Greek from GCS 15:376.

¹²⁸ Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 326.

temples made with hands that which contains all things?”¹²⁹ For Clement, God cannot be limited or circumscribed. This assertion accords well with his apophatic approach to speaking about God. Clement held that God was one (and even beyond unity) and that God was beyond any human description or limitation.

For Clement, this one illimitable and indescribable God was both united to and distinguished from the Son, who was also God. His description of this unity and distinction is where the ambiguity manifests itself most fully. Before considering how Clement distinguishes the Father and Son, let us examine some of the ways he speaks of their unity. One of the primary ways Clement refers to the Son is through the use of the title *Logos*, and it is precisely this term that makes Clement’s thought so ambiguous. As I noted above, there is disagreement among scholars about the reliability of Photius’ report that Clement taught “two *Logoi*.” I will bracket the questions attached to the Photian fragment by focusing on *Excerpta* 8, 10-15, and 19.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Clement, *Strom.* 7.5.28 (trans. ANF 2:530): “Ἡ γὰρ οὐ καλῶς καὶ ἀληθῶς οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ τινὶ περιγράφομεν τὸν ἀπερίληπτον οὐδ’ ἐν ἱεροῖς καθείργνυμεν «χειροποιήτοις» τὸ πάντων περιεκτικόν; Greek from Clement, *Clemens Alexandrinus: Stromata Buch VII-VIII*, ed. Otto Stählin and Ludwig Früchtel, vol. 3, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 17 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), 20. Clement’s usage of the term here supports Daniélou’s contention that Clement is using them as synonyms.

¹³⁰ As I noted above, it can be difficult to parse out whether a particular passage in the *Excerpta* should be attributed to Clement or to his Valentinian opponents. Sagnard clearly lays out the criteria he uses to determine whose thought is being expressed in any given passage. See Clement, *Extraits de Théodote*, 9. He has also presented the text using different indentation and font size to denote whose position is being represented. One of the surest means to determine the Clementine provenance of a passage is a direct statement by him in the text. He does this in one of the most important passages for my current study, *Exc.* 8. After summarizing the Valentinian position, Clement counters, “But we say” (Ἡμεῖς δὲ... φάμεν)... Both Sagnard and Casey, who have created editions of the text, agree that the sections I am considering represent the thought of Clement. In his more recent article, however, Mark Edwards argues that *Exc.* 19 cannot represent the thought of Clement. He writes regarding the content of *Exc.* 19, “This can scarcely be Clement’s own opinion, as it affirms the identity of Christ on earth with the Creator at the cost of divorcing both from God the Logos, who is not credited with any distinct hypostasis.” Edwards, “Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the Logos,” 174. Earlier in the article, Edwards lamented the fact that “facile skepticism... is too readily adopted when a text proves inconvenient to scholarship,” but such noble resistance to facile skepticism does not seem to prevent him from dismissing *Exc.* 19 as unreliable because it does not fit his narration of Clement’s doctrine of the *Logos* (ibid., 171). Even more, he dismisses the text as unreliable without making reference to the preponderance of earlier scholarship that

One of Clement's strongest statements of the unity between the Father and Son, or, in this case, *Logos*, comes in *Exc.* 8. In this section, Clement is directly responding to a Valentinian *Logos* theology based on a reading of John 1:1. In order to better understand Clement's rejoinder, a brief appraisal of the position of his Valentinian opponents is in order. In *Exc.* 6, Clement records the key terms that the Valentinians focused on in their exegesis: beginning (ἀρχή), Only-Begotten (Μονογενής), and *Logos* (λόγος). In *Exc.* 7, Clement elaborates their position and writes:

Therefore, the Father, being unknown, wished to be known to the Aeons, and through his own thought, as if he had known himself, he put forth (προέβαλε) the Only-Begotten, the spirit of Knowledge which is in Knowledge. So he too who came forth (προελθὼν) from Knowledge, that is, from the Father's Thought, became Knowledge, that is, the Son, because 'through the Son the Father was known.'¹³¹

In this passage, Clement's Valentinian opponents use two verbs that denote the exteriorizing of something from the Father (προβάλλω, προέρχομαι). This exteriorizing of the Only-Begotten, who becomes Knowledge, is important because it reveals the unknown (ἄγνωστος) Father.¹³² Later in the same passage, however, Clement speaks of the one "who remained 'Only-Begotten Son in the bosom of the Father' explaining

claims that it is authentically and reliably Clementine. Furthermore, Edwards must surely search in vain for any claim in Clement that the *Logos* is a "distinct hypostasis," for Clement never uses the term *hypostasis* to describe the distinction between the Father and the *Logos* or Son. Such a specialized meaning for *hypostasis*, as Daniélou notes, does not begin to develop until the next century. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 367. I agree with Sagnard and Casey that *Exc.* 19 does represent Clement's thought, and I think it is a particularly important passage.

¹³¹ Clement, *Exc.* 7 (trans. Casey, 45): Ἄγνωστος οὖν ὁ Πατήρ ὢν, ἠθέλησεν γνωσθῆναι τοῖς Αἰῶσι· καὶ διὰ τῆς Ἐνθυμήσεως τῆς ἑαυτοῦ, ὡς ἂν ἑαυτὸν ἐγνωκώς, Πνεῦμα γνώσεως οὔσης ἐν γνώσει, προέβαλε τὸν Μονογενῆ. Γέγονεν οὖν καὶ ὁ ἀπὸ γνώσεως (τουτέστι τῆς πατρικῆς Ἐνθυμήσεως) προελθὼν Γνωστὴς, τουτέστιν ὁ Υἱός, ὅτι «δι' Υἱοῦ ὁ Πατήρ ἐγνώσθη.» Greek from SC 23:66-8.

¹³² Clement also holds that the Father is unknown because of his transcendence. Furthermore, the Son, as an intermediary, plays a crucial role in the revelation of the invisible and unknown God in Clement's schema. In this regard, he has some interesting overlap with his Valentinian opponents.

Thought to the Aeons through Knowledge, just as if he had also been put forth (προβληθείς) from his bosom.”¹³³ In this one passage in *Exc.* 7, it is unclear whether the Only-Begotten remains in the bosom of the Father or is exteriorized. Regardless of the answer to that question, it is clear that it is necessary for something to go out from the Father in order for him to be known to the Aeons—whether it be the Only-Begotten or Knowledge.

At the end of the Valentinian excerpt, the focus shifts to the incarnation and the relationship between the one who appeared on earth and the one who remained in heaven. Here, the Valentinian author is commenting on John 1:14, which describes the glory of the incarnate. Clement writes:

Him who appeared here, the Apostle no longer calls ‘Only-Begotten,’ but ‘as Only-Begotten’ ‘Glory as of an Only-Begotten.’ This is because being one and the same, Jesus is the ‘First-Born’ in creation, but in the Pleroma is ‘Only-Begotten.’ But he is the same, being to each place such as can be contained [in it]. And he who descended is never divided from him who remained.¹³⁴

Casey notes that the identification of the Only-Begotten with Jesus is the most striking part of this teaching and the thing that causes Clement to be somewhat sympathetic to it.¹³⁵ Almost immediately following this statement of unity between the Only-Begotten

¹³³ Clement, *Exc.*, 7 (trans. Casey, 45 with my modifications): καὶ ὁ μὲν μείνας «Μονογενὴς Υἱὸς εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πατρὸς», τὴν Ἐνθύμησιν διὰ τῆς γνώσεως ἐξηγεῖται τοῖς Αἰῶσιν, ὥς ἂν καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κόλπου αὐτοῦ προβληθείς· Greek from SC 23:68.

¹³⁴ Clement, *Exc.* 7 (trans. Casey, 45): ὁ δὲ ἐνταῦθα ὁφθεὶς οὐκέτι «Μονογενής», ἀλλ’ «ὡς Μονογενής» πρὸς τοῦ Ἀποστόλου προσαγορεύεται, «δόξαν ὡς Μονογενοῦς».—ὅτι εἷς καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ὢν, ἐν μὲν τῇ κτίσει «Πρωτότοκός» ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς, ἐν δὲ Πληρώματι «Μονογενής». Ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς ἐστὶ, τοιοῦτος ὢν ἐκάστῳ τόπῳ οἷος κεχωρῆσθαι δύναται. Καὶ οὐδέποτε τοῦ μείναντος ὁ καταβὰς μερίζεται. Greek from SC 23:68-70.

¹³⁵ Clement, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 103. The use of εἷς καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς is particularly interesting for me because it will show up again in the monarchian controversy. There, however, it will be used to argue for the absolute identity of the Father and the Son, not the earthly Jesus and the heavenly Only-Begotten.

and Jesus, the Valentinian author draws a sharp distinction between the Only-Begotten and the Demiurge. Clement reports, “They call the Creator the image of the Only-Begotten.”¹³⁶ Thus, while they could affirm the unity of Jesus and the Only-Begotten, the Demiurge is only an image of the Only-Begotten. Because he is not identified with the Only-Begotten, the Demiurge is another step removed from the Father.

Following his report of the Valentinian interpretation of John 1, Clement emphatically offers his own position. He writes, “But we maintain that the Logos in its constant identity is God in God, who is also said to be ‘in the bosom of the Father,’ continuous, undivided, one God.”¹³⁷ That Clement holds the unity of the *Logos* with the Father here is unquestionable, but it is unclear exactly what Clement means when he speaks of the *Logos*. Regardless of what Clement means by *Logos*, he immediately affirms the Johannine claim that all things were made by [the Word] (Jn. 1:3). This affirmation directly contradicts the Valentinian assertion that there was some sort of disjunction between the *Logos* (or Only-Begotten) and the Demiurge. Later in the same passage, Clement seamlessly shifts to speaking of the “Only-Begotten in his constant identity” (ὁ δὲ ἐν ταυτότητι μονογενής); so it seems that Clement identifies the two titles.

¹³⁶ Clement, *Exc.*, 7 (trans. Casey, 47): Εἰκόνα δὲ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς τὸν Δημιουργὸν λέγουσιν. Greek from SC 23:70

¹³⁷ Clement, *Exc.* 8 (trans. Casey, 47 with modifications): Ἡμεῖς δὲ τὸν ἐν ταυτότητι Λόγον Θεὸν ἐν Θεῷ φαμεν, ὃς καὶ «εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πατρὸς» εἶναι λέγεται, ἀδιάστατος, ἀμέριστος, εἷς Θεός. Greek from SC 23:72. Casey translates τὸν ἐν ταυτότητι λόγον as “the essential Logos,” but this translation is misleading because Clement does not use any “essence” language here. In his introduction, Casey notes that Clement uses a novel formulation here: Clement, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 28. I think Sagnard’s translation of the phrase is truer to the original sense, so I have adopted it here. Sagnard translates the phrase as follows, “LOGOS «dans sa constante identité...»” This translation highlights the consistency of the identity of the Logos. It has the further advantage of not muddying the waters by introducing semi-technical terminology that is not present in the Greek.

For Clement, the *Logos* in its constant identity is “God in God” (θεὸν ἐν θεῷ). Since Clement also describes the Only-Begotten using “ἐν ταυτότητι,” it seems that Clement would also consider the Only-Begotten as “God in God.” Shortly following this in *Exc.* 8, Clement speaks of the Savior who works according to the “continuous power” (κατὰ δύναμιν ἀδιάστατον) of the Only-Begotten.¹³⁸ In the *Exc.*, Clement often uses “Savior” to speak about the earthly Jesus.¹³⁹ In *Exc.* 8, then, we see Clement develop a scheme wherein the *Logos* has a “constant identity” as “God in God.” The earthly Jesus, or Savior, works according to the power of this *Logos* or Only-Begotten, who remains God in God.

Regarding the novel phrase ὁ ἐν ταυτότητι λόγος, Casey suggests that Clement means something like the Stoic λόγος ἐνδιάθετος.¹⁴⁰ In *Exc.* 8, however, we see neither that specific terminology nor a scheme that would indicate that Clement was using the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος / λόγος προφορικός distinction. That according to which the Savior works is not some exteriorized word, but rather the “power of the Only-Begotten in his constant identity.” As far as Clement is concerned in *Exc.* 8, the *Logos* does not cease to be God in God.

At *Exc.* 19, Clement again speaks about the ὁ ἐν ταυτότητι λόγος, but this time in the context of the incarnation. He writes:

“And the *Logos* became flesh” not only by becoming man at his Advent, but also “at the beginning” the *Logos* in its constant identity became Son by circumscription and not according to essence. And again he became flesh when he acted through the prophets. And the Savior is called a child of the *Logos* in its

¹³⁸ Clement, *Exc.* 8 (Greek from SC 23:74).

¹³⁹ See, e.g., *Exc.* 4, where Clement uses both κύριος and σωτήρ to refer to the earthly Jesus.

¹⁴⁰ Clement, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 28. See also his article which focuses on the Photian fragment: Casey, “Clement and the Two Divine Logoi.”

constant identity; therefore, “in the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God” and “that which came into existence in him was life” and life is the Lord.¹⁴¹

This passage is evocative, for Clement elsewhere refers to God as the one who is unable to be circumscribed (ἀπερίγραφος). In *Exc.* 8, Clement describes the *Logos* ἐν ταυτότητι as God in God; but here he ascribes something to this *Logos* that he denies of God—limitability. This seeming inconsistency appears to be prompted by Clement’s argument that some sort of mediator is needed for there to be a vision of the invisible God. The Son, according to Clement, is the “face of the Father” (πρόσωπον δὲ πατρὸς ὁ υἱός), and it is “through him that the Father is known” (δι’ οὗ γνωρίζεται ὁ πατήρ).¹⁴²

For Clement, at least in the *Exc.*, the distinction between the Father and Son occurs not through the exteriorization of an interior Word but, rather, by the circumscription of that Word in its constant identity. This Word, which should share illimitability with the Father, becomes limited in order that the Father might be known.¹⁴³ This begs the question about what happens to the “constant identity” of the *Logos* when the circumscription occurs. Is this constant identity changed when it becomes Savior, or is it able both to remain constant and reveal the Father in the form of circumscribed Son at the same time? It seems as though Clement wants to have it both ways. Speaking of the manifold appearances of Jesus, Clement writes:

¹⁴¹ Clement, *Exc.* 19 (trans. Casey, 55 with my modifications): «Καὶ ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο», οὐ κατὰ τὴν παρουσίαν μόνον ἄνθρωπος γενόμενος, ἀλλὰ καὶ «ἐν Ἀρχῇ» ὁ ἐν ταυτότητι Λόγος, κατὰ «περιγραφὴν» καὶ οὐ κατ’ οὐσίαν γενόμενος [ὁ] Υἱός. Καὶ πάλιν «σὰρξ ἐγένετο» διὰ προφητῶν ἐνεργήσας. Τέκνον δὲ τοῦ ἐν ταυτότητι Λόγου ὁ Σωτὴρ εἴρηται. Διὰ τοῦτο «ἐν Ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν· ὁ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ, Ζωὴ ἐστίν»· Ζωὴ δὲ ὁ Κύριος. Greek from SC 23:92-94.

¹⁴² Clement, *Exc.* 10 (Greek from SC 23:80).

¹⁴³ Mortley observes the following regarding this passage: “The incarnation, therefore, does not lead to a change of essence but simply to a delimitation of this essence. That which is uncircumscribed becomes limited.” Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d’Alexandrie*, 81.

By reason of great humility the Lord did not appear as an angel but as a man, and when he appeared in glory to the apostles on the Mount he did not do it for his own sake when he showed himself, but for the sake of the Church which is the “elect race,” that it might learn his advancement after his departure from the flesh. For on high, too, he was Light and that which was manifest in the flesh and appeared here is not later than that above nor was it curtailed in that it was translated hither from on high, changing from one place to another, so that this was gain here and loss there. But he was the Omnipresent, and is with the Father, even when here, for he was the Father’s Power.¹⁴⁴

Clement argues that the Lord is both omnipresent and with the Father simultaneously, that the incarnation does not entail some sort of separation of the Son from the Father. If Clement’s logic holds, this would allow for the Logos to maintain a constant identity while at the same time becoming circumscribed as Son.

This logic also helps to clear up a difficult passage at the end of *Exc.* 19, which has drawn the attention of a number of scholars. Casey’s edition produces the passage thus: ‘ἀοράτου’ μὲν γὰρ ‘θεοῦ εἰκόνα’ τὸν λόγον τοῦ λόγου τοῦ ἐν ταυτότητι, ‘προτότωκον δὲ πάσης κτίσεως.’¹⁴⁵ Casey’s edition includes the idiosyncratic feature of noting both “accepted” and “rejected” emendations of the text. He indicates that he has rejected the reading of Bunsen and Stählin. Stählin’s edition of the text in the *GCS* reads, τὸν <υἱὸν> λέγει τοῦ Λόγου τοῦ ἐν ταυτότητι...¹⁴⁶ Shortly after Casey’s edition of the *Exc.* came out, Stählin reviewed it very negatively, taking issue with a number of Casey’s

¹⁴⁴ Clement, *Exc.* 4 (trans. Casey): Ὁ Κύριος, διὰ πολλὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην, οὐχ ὡς ἄγγελος ὤφθη, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἄνθρωπος. Καὶ ὅτε ἐν δόξῃ ὤφθη τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις ἐπὶ τοῦ Ὄρους, οὐ δι’ ἑαυτὸν ἐποίησεν, δεικνὺς ἑαυτὸν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, ἣτις ἐστὶ «τὸ γένος τὸ ἐκλεκτόν», ἵνα μάθῃ τὴν προκοπὴν αὐτοῦ μετὰ τὴν ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐξοδόν. Αὐτὸς γὰρ καὶ ἄνω Φῶς ἦν, καὶ ἐστὶ τὸ «ἐπιφανέν ἐν σαρκὶ» καὶ τὸ ἐνταῦθα ὀφθέν οὐχ ὕστερον τοῦ ἄνω· οὐδὲ διεκέκοπτο ἢ ἄνωθεν μετέστη δεῦρο, τόπον ἐκ τόπου ἀμείβων, ὡς τὸν μὲν ἐπιλαβεῖν, τὸν δὲ ἀπολιπεῖν· ἀλλ’ ἦν τὸ πάντῃ ὄν καὶ παρὰ τῷ Πατρὶ κἀνταῦθα· δύναμις γὰρ ἦν τοῦ Πατρός. Greek from SC 23:58-60.

¹⁴⁵ Clement, *Exc.* 19 (Casey, 54).

¹⁴⁶ *GCS* 17:113.

“accepted” emendations.¹⁴⁷ In his 1948 edition of the text in *SC*, Sagnard largely reproduces Stählin’s critical text, including Stählin’s reading of 19.¹⁴⁸ Casey’s choice to produce the Greek text as he does is perhaps influenced by his decision in his earlier article that Clement teaches “two logoi”—the same conclusion which leads him to posit that ὁ ἐν ταυτότητι λόγος in the *Exc.* 8 and 19 is synonymous with ὁ λόγος ἐνδιάθετος.¹⁴⁹

The reading of Stählin and Sagnard, however, makes better sense of the passage in its immediate context.¹⁵⁰ Just above the phrase in question, Clement speaks of the Savior as a “child of the *Logos* in its constant state (τέκνον δὲ τοῦ ἐν ταυτότητι λόγου ὁ σωτὴρ εἴρηται).”¹⁵¹ It seems only natural, then, that Clement would speak of the “First-Born of all creation” here as “Son of the *Logos*” instead of introducing the puzzling phrase “the *Logos* of the *Logos* in its constant state.” The Son, Savior, or Lord is, for Clement, the limited and knowable manifestation of ὁ ἐν ταυτότητι λόγος, which always remains with the Father, God in God.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Otto Stählin, “[Rezension] Clemens Alexandrinus, The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria 1935,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 60 (1935): 414–16.

¹⁴⁸ Like Stählin, he thinks there are substantial issues with Casey’s text. He writes, “On peut y noter un certain nombre d’erreurs de détail, parfois même sérieuses...” Clement, *Extraits de Théodote*, 50.

¹⁴⁹ Casey, “Clement and the Two Divine Logoi.”

¹⁵⁰ In his dismissal of *Exc.* 19 as authentically Clementine, Edwards makes no mention of the discussion of the Greek text by the editors of the critical editions. Edwards, “Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the Logos,” 174.

¹⁵¹ Clement, *Exc.* 19 (Greek from *SC* 23:92).

¹⁵² Note the similarity of this scheme in *Exc.* to that Bogdan Bucur describes in *Strom.* 4.25.156, which “speaks of the utterly transcendent God and the Logos as his agent. The difference between Father and Son is very similar to Numenius’ distinction between the first and the second god: God cannot be the object of any epistemology (ἀναπόδεικτος; οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστημονικός), while the exact opposite is true of the Son (σοφία τέ ἐστι καὶ ἐπιστήμη; ἀπόδειξιν ἔχει). This difference on the epistemological level corresponds to a different relation to the cosmos, where it is the Son who founds multiplicity: The Son is neither simply one thing as one thing (ἐν ὡς ἐν), nor many things as parts (πολλὰ ὡς μέρη), but one thing as all things (ὡς πάντα ἐν).” Bogdan G. Bucur, “Revisiting Christian Oeyen: ‘The Other Clement’ on Father, Son, and the Angelomorphic Spirit,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 61, no. 4 (2007): 391.

There is tension and ambiguity in Clement's thought about the relationship between the Father and Son as it is presented in the *Exc.* On the one hand, he states very clearly that the *Logos* in its constant state is God in God. This would entail the host of apophatic epithets used of the Father, such as ἀπερίγραφος, being applied to the *Logos* as well. On the other hand, the *Logos* in its constant state becomes Son κατὰ περιγραφὴν, seemingly interrupting the constancy for the sake of revealing the unknown and invisible Father. Even more, Clement never clarifies the duration of this circumscription of the Son. Is this a temporary circumscription that applies only to the incarnation, or does it extend eternally? Scholars look for Clement to use some sort of language to signal that the Son or *Logos* is a “*hypostasis* distinct from God the Father.”¹⁵³ In the *Exc.* we are left with the pregnant tension between the claim that the *Logos* is both God in God and limits himself to become Son. Clement wants to affirm both the unity and distinction of the Father and Son, but he never quite smooths out the wrinkles in his theory. Thus, regarding the distinction of the Father and the Son, he too finds himself in the ambiguous middle of authors in the second century.

Athenagoras

Athenagoras' *Legatio* is unique among the works surveyed in this chapter. His apologetic purpose and intended audience result in a treatise that is dense with references from Greco-Roman literature and light on references from Jewish and Christian

¹⁵³ Edwards, “Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the Logos,” 177.

scripture.¹⁵⁴ He does use scripture, but it is mostly to bolster the arguments he is making on philosophical grounds. As David Rankin notes, Athenagoras probably did not cite scripture more often because it would have had no authority for his intended audience.¹⁵⁵ Athenagoras' *Legatio* was probably composed between 176 and 180 C.E.¹⁵⁶ The majority of the treatise is devoted to rebutting the charge of atheism that was often directed at Christians.

Athenagoras spends chapters four through eight addressing the charge of atheism from Greco-Roman philosophical sources. Once he has proven that the philosophical sources support the monotheistic belief of Christians, Athenagoras uses scripture to prove that Christian beliefs are not merely of human origin (ἀνθρωπικόν):

Now if we were satisfied with considerations of this kind, one could regard our doctrine as man-made. But since the voices of the prophets affirm our arguments—and I expect that you who are so eager for knowledge and so learned are not without understanding of the teachings either of Moses or of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the rest of the prophets who in the ecstasy of their thoughts, as the divine Spirit moved them, uttered what they had been inspired to say, the Spirit making use of them as a flautist might blow into a flute—what, then, do they say? 'The Lord is our God; no other shall be reckoned in addition to him.' [Baruch 3:36] And again: 'I am God, first and last; and except for me there is no God.' [Isa. 44:6] Similarly: 'There was no other God before me and there will be none after me; I am God and there is none beside me.' [Isa. 43:10-11] And concerning his greatness: 'Heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool. What house will you build for me, or what place for me to rest?' [Isa. 66:1] I leave it to you to apply yourselves to these very books and to examine more carefully these men's prophecies, that you may with fitting discernment bring to an end the abuse with which we are treated.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Consider as a contrast, for example, how central the interpretation of biblical passages (like Gen. 1-3) is in Theophilus' *Ad Autolycum*.

¹⁵⁵ David Rankin, *Athenagoras: Philosopher and Theologian* (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2009), 156–7.

¹⁵⁶ William R. Schoedel, "Introduction," in *Athenagoras: Legatio and De Resurrectione*, ed. and trans. William R. Schoedel, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), xi. See also Rankin's survey of the scholarship on the dating of the *Legatio*: Rankin, *Athenagoras*, 23–5.

¹⁵⁷ Athenagoras, *Legatio* 9.1-3 (trans. Schoedel, 21).

Athenagoras here lays out a web of texts that later shows up in the monarchian controversy. Both Baruch 3:36-38 and Isaiah 44:6 would become favorite prooftexts of the monarchians—or at least the Noetians with whom Hippolytus was in conflict.¹⁵⁸

Athenagoras' sustained argument demonstrates that he considered monotheism to be the foundation of Christian belief in God, and these passages from the Old Testament were his main scriptural proofs for this belief.

It is within this philosophical and scriptural framework of monotheism that Athenagoras fits his understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son:

We have brought before you a God who is uncreated, eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible, and infinite, who can be apprehended by mind and reason alone, who is encompassed by light, beauty, spirit, and indescribable power, and who created, adorned, and now rules the universe through the Word that issues from him. I have given sufficient evidence that we are not atheists on the basis of arguments presenting this God as one. For we think there is also a Son of God. Now let no one think that this talk of God having a Son is ridiculous. For we have not come to our views on either God the Father or his Son as do the poets, who create myths in which they present the gods as no better than men. On the contrary, the Son of God is the Word of the Father in Ideal Form and Energizing Power; for in his likeness and through him all things came into existence, which presupposes that the Father and the Son are one. Now since the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son [John 10:38, 14:10?] by a powerful unity of spirit, the Son of God is the mind and reason of the Father.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.2-5 for the use of both of these passages in conjunction. Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* notes that the Isaiah passage was a favorite of the monarchians, but he does not include any reference to Baruch 3.

¹⁵⁹ Athenagoras, *Legatio* 10.1-2 (trans. and Greek from Schoedel, 20-3): Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἄθεοι μὴ εἶναι, ἕνα τὸν ἀγέννητον καὶ αἰδῖον καὶ ἀόρατον καὶ ἀπαθῆ καὶ ἀκατάληπτον καὶ ἀχώρητον, νῶ μόνῳ καὶ λόγῳ καταλαμβανόμενον, φωτὶ καὶ κάλλει καὶ πνεύματι καὶ δυνάμει ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ περιεχόμενον, ὅφ' οὗ γεγένηται τὸ πᾶν διὰ <τοῦ πατρὸς> αὐτοῦ λόγου καὶ διακεκόσμηται καὶ συγκρατεῖται, θεὸν ἄγοντες, ἱκανῶς μοι δέδεικται. νοοῦμεν γὰρ καὶ υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ. καὶ μὴ μοι γελοῖόν τις νομίση τὸ υἱὸν εἶναι τῷ θεῷ. οὐ γὰρ ὡς ποιητὰ μυθοποιοῦσιν οὐδὲν βελτίους τῶν ἀνθρώπων δεικνύντες τοὺς θεοὺς, ἢ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἢ περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ πεφρονήκαμεν, ἀλλ' ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν ἰδέᾳ καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ· πρὸς αὐτοῦ γὰρ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐγένετο, ἐνὸς ὄντος τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ. ὄντος δὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐν πατρὶ καὶ πατρὸς ἐν υἱῷ ἐνότητι καὶ δυνάμει πνεύματος, νοῦς καὶ λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

Athenagoras pointedly asserts that the Father and Son are one in this passage, which is in accord with his earlier articulation of Christian monotheism. He also admits that there is an apparent tension between the claim that God is one and the claim that God has a Son: “Let no one think that this talk of God having a Son is ridiculous.” In addition to the use of philosophical categories, he demonstrates that the Son is one with the Father because the Son was also involved in creation. He then explains that the Son is the first begotten of the Father (πρῶτον γέννημα), which does not imply that he began to exist at some point.¹⁶⁰ The Son existed with the Father from the beginning (ἐξ ἀρχῆς) but came forth (προελθὼν) for the purpose of creation. Athenagoras then quotes Proverbs 8:22 to support his claims about the Son.¹⁶¹

Athenagoras’ presentation of the relationship between the Father and the Son, however, is not one of unqualified unity. He writes, “Who then would not be amazed if he heard of men called atheists who bring forward God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit and who proclaim both their power in their unity and their diversity in rank?”¹⁶² Thus, while Athenagoras does not equivocate about the fact that God is one, he does recognize that there is diversity within the one God.¹⁶³ Later, he repeats this

¹⁶⁰ Athenagoras, *Legatio* 10.3.

¹⁶¹ Athenagoras, *Legatio* 10.4. Athenagoras’ use of Proverbs 8:22 in support of his arguments about the begetting of the Son is suggestive of his knowledge of Justin. Compare this section in Athenagoras with Justin, *Dialogue*, 61. Even more interesting is that Athenagoras introduces the quotation from Proverbs by attributing it to the prophetic Spirit (τὸ προφητικὸν πνεῦμα), one of Justin’s favorite titles for the Spirit.

¹⁶² Athenagoras, *Legatio* 10.5 (trans. and Greek from Schoedel, 22-3): τίς οὖν οὐκ ἂν ἀπορήσαι <τοὺς> ἄγοντας θεὸν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν θεὸν καὶ πνεῦμα ἅγιον, δεικνύντας αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ ἐνώσει δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ τάξει διαίρεσιν, ἀκούσας ἀθέους καλουμένων;

¹⁶³ Regarding Athenagoras’ dual emphasis on unity and diversity in God, Schoedel writes, “We shall try to show that an important reason for the phenomenon is the apologist’s concern not only to stress the oneness of God but also to set forth the pluralistic strain in Christian theism as an answer to traditional polytheism” (“A Neglected Motive for Second-Century Trinitarianism,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 31, no. 2 (1980): 356–67). Schoedel later gives a paraphrase of what he thinks the main points of

assertion that there is both unity and diversity in God: “We are attended only by the knowledge of him who is truly God and of the Word that issues from him—a knowledge as to what is the unity of the Son with the Father, what is the communion of the Father with the Son, what is the Spirit, what is the unity of these powers—the Spirit, the Son, and the Father—and their diversity when thus united.”¹⁶⁴ Athenagoras has not yet made clear the manner of this unity and diversity between God, his Son, and the Spirit; and he has certainly claimed nothing so strong as Justin’s assertion that the Father and Son are numerically different.¹⁶⁵ Athenagoras uses language of origination in multiple places, and this clarifies the distinction or diversity between God, Son, and Spirit some.¹⁶⁶

Athenagoras once more asserts the unity and diversity among God, his Son, and the Spirit, and he seems to employ an image that Justin uses in the *Dialogue*. He argues, “We say that there is God and the Son, his Word, and the Holy Spirit, united in power yet distinguished in rank (ἐνούμενα μὲν κατὰ δύναμιν <διαιρούμενα δὲ κατὰ τάξιν>) as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, since the Son is mind, reason [word], and wisdom of the Father and the Spirit an effluence like light from fire.”¹⁶⁷ Justin addresses light/source

Athenagoras’ argument were: “that is, our pure monotheism is proof enough of our piety, but our Trinitarianism makes it still clearer that we are not atheists even if measured by the pluralistic conception of paganism” (358).

¹⁶⁴ Athenagoras, *Legatio* 12.3 (trans. Schoedel, *Athenagoras: Legatio and De Resurrectione*, 27.). “ὕπὸ μόνου δὲ παραπεμπόμενοι τοῦ τὸν ὄντως θεὸν καὶ τὸν παρ’ αὐτοῦ λόγον εἰδέναι, τίς ἢ τοῦ παιδὸς πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἐνότης, τίς ἢ τοῦ πατρὸς πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν κοινωνία, τί τὸ πνεῦμα, τίς ἢ τῶν τοσούτων ἔνωσις καὶ διαίρεσις ἐνουμένων.”

¹⁶⁵ Athenagoras’ use of τάξις is, to a certain extent, a clarification of how they are distinguished; but it leaves the exact relationship among the three unclear.

¹⁶⁶ For example, at *Legatio* 10.3-4, he speaks of the Son as first-begotten of the Father and states that the Son “came forth” (προελθὼν) from the Father. Furthermore, in both 10.4 and 24.2, Athenagoras states that the Spirit is an ἀπόρροια from God.

¹⁶⁷ Athenagoras, *Legatio* 24.2 (trans. and Greek from Schoedel, 58-9). Schoedel has accepted Schwartz’s reconstruction of the text here, and he notes that the reconstruction fits well with what Athenagoras says in 10.5. See Eduardus Schwartz and Athenagoras, *Athenagorae libellus pro Christianis*,

imagery to explain the generation of the Son, but he rejects it because some were using it to claim that when the sun sets, the light disappears.¹⁶⁸ Justin rejects this image because those using it claimed that the Son and angels who proceed from God as light from the sun could be returned to God and cease to have a distinct existence. Athenagoras, on the other hand, does not seem to be dealing with the same controversy; and he uses the light/source imagery only to argue for distinction without a destruction of unity.

In his discussions of the relationship between the Father and the Son in the *Legatio*, Athenagoras holds unity and diversity in tension. As the beginning of the treatise makes clear, the oneness of God is foundational for him. Whereas Justin could write that the Son was numerically different from the Father, Athenagoras always juxtaposes an assertion of the diversity of the Father and Son with an equally strong assertion of their unity. Athenagoras takes some steps to define the diversity between Father, Son, and Spirit, such as using *τάξις* and language of origination. However he thinks the three are distinct or diverse, he is clear that it does not destroy the unity of God. Athenagoras seems aware of the tension between unity and diversity in the Godhead, but he does not seem intent on resolving it. Like Clement, then, he remains in the ambiguous middle; however, his introduction of *τάξις* into God, coupled with his use of origination language, makes him closer to clearly defining the distinction between the Father and Son.

oratio de resurrectione cadaverum, vol. 2, Texte und Untersuchungen 4 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1891). Note also that Athenagoras here identifies Wisdom with the Son, not the Spirit as Theophilus and Irenaeus did.

¹⁶⁸ Justin, *Dialogue* 128.3.

Hard Distinction: Justin Martyr

Many of the scholarly works that treat the questions of monotheism and Christology at the beginning of the Common Era are heavily weighted to texts in the New Testament and the apostolic fathers. When Justin is addressed in these works, he is often considered as an end-point or transitional figure.¹⁶⁹ Hurtado writes,

I propose that the writings of Justin Martyr give us the earliest extant example of a proto-orthodox Christian seriously attempting to articulate an understanding of Jesus as divine in terms he hoped to make comprehensible and even persuasive both to Jewish interlocutors and the wider culture.¹⁷⁰

Hurtado is right: Justin does seem to represent something of a new approach to the persistent questions raised by the tension between claims about monotheism and the divinity of Christ. Justin's new approach to the problem does not mean, however, that what he is doing is somehow fundamentally discontinuous with what had come before. As Hurtado, Bauckham, and others have demonstrated, Christians had long held their affirmations of monotheism and the divinity of Christ in tension. Justin's work accepts the premises underlying the tension that the earlier writers had tolerated, but Justin appears to have less of a tolerance for ambiguity than his predecessors.¹⁷¹

Thus, Justin begins to address *how* the Father and Son are one and *how* the Father and Son are distinct. Justin is important for my reconstruction of the background of the

¹⁶⁹ Hurtado, for example, views Justin as a transitional figure between “earliest Christianity and what comes thereafter.” Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 642.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 641.

¹⁷¹ For the sake of brevity, I will not here push the question of what Hurtado means by the “proto-orthodox” and how one would go about distinguishing them from those who are not “proto-orthodox.” A good place to start with these discussions is Rowan Williams’ excellent essay: “Does It Make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy?,” in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Henry Chadwick and Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–23.

monarchian controversy because he is overtly concerned with *how* the Father and Son are distinct. While many of the other Christian authors from the second century do not give much attention to the distinction of the Father and Son, the articulation of this distinction comes sharply into relief in Justin's *Dialogue*.¹⁷² Many of the other authors in the second century do not even signal that they think it is a problem. Justin faces something that makes the clear differentiation of the Father and Son important.

He employs philosophical language to clarify problems left unresolved by the ambiguity of the language of his predecessors. The polyvalent concept of *Logos* plays an important role for Justin as he seeks to articulate unity and distinction more clearly. Scholars rightly note that Justin readily employs concepts from Hellenistic philosophy, and this observation is often accompanied by the accusation that he thus perpetrates some sort of pollution of pure Christianity with the foreign ideas of Hellenism.¹⁷³ These Hellenistic "fall narratives," however, fail to account for the fact that despite the supposed shift or evolution of the conceptual framework (from a "Jewish" to a "Hellenistic" conceptual framework), there is still a fundamental continuity.¹⁷⁴ Justin is

¹⁷² Justin's works can be dated with a fair degree of precision. From internal evidence in the *Apologies*, they can be dated sometime between 147 and 154 C.E. See Justin, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, ed. Denis Minns and P. M. Parvis, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 44; Robert McQueen Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 52–4. At *Dialogue* 120.6, Justin mentions the *1 Apology*, thus placing the composition of the *Dialogue* after that of *1 Apology*. Marcovich suggests that this results in a date range of 155–160 C.E. for the *Dialogue*: Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 47 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 1.

¹⁷³ For example, Bousset argued that Justin's *Dialogue* "shows how foreign Old Testament monotheism was to the deification of the Son...." For Bousset, Justin's thought represents an inevitable decline from the pure faith of the Palestinian Primitive Community. Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E Steely (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 332.

¹⁷⁴ R. M. Price has addressed the issue of Justin's use of *Logos* and judgments about Hellenization. Although his argument lacks precision at times, his main point is well taken: at the turn of the Common Era, it is very difficult to speak of something like the pure Judaism Bousset's argument presupposes. By the turn of the Common Era, Hellenizing forces had been at work in Judaism for hundreds of years. Price

addressing the very problem that was bequeathed to him by his forebears, the problem that was at the heart of Christian theology and devotion during the first centuries of the church: the relation between monotheism and the divinity of Christ. Given that Justin was a Gentile who came to Christianity after a philosophical education, it is no surprise that he uses different conceptual tools for addressing the same problems as Jewish Christians had before him.¹⁷⁵ The following analysis of Justin highlights both the fact that Justin is addressing an old problem and the fact that he brings new tools and concepts to bear in an attempt to clarify the question.

Among the many topics of debate between Justin and Trypho in the *Dialogue*, perhaps the most prominent is how monotheism fits with the position of Christ in relation to the Father.¹⁷⁶ The centrality of this question is evident in the repeatedly expressed concerns of both Justin and Trypho. Justin deploys his full arsenal of scriptural argumentation to prove to Trypho that Christ is also God. Trypho remains unconvinced by Justin's proofs and will not admit that there is another called God alongside the

further argues that while Justin's use of *Logos* was clearly influenced by Hellenistic philosophy, he was probably also drawing some of it from the Old Testament occurrences of "word of God." R M. Price, "'Hellenization' and Logos Doctrine in Justin Martyr," *Vigiliae Christianae* 42, no. 1 (1988): 18–23.

¹⁷⁵ Remember here that my organizational scheme in this chapter is not strictly chronological. Writing in the 150s, Justin was one of the first to heavily utilize philosophical concepts. While I treated Athenagoras before Justin in this chapter, I am well aware that Justin antedated Athenagoras.

¹⁷⁶ A number of different theories have been advanced about Justin's intended audience for the *Dialogue*. See the following, among others: Jon Nilson, "To Whom Is Justin's Dialogue with Trypho Addressed," *Theological Studies* 38, no. 3 (1977): 538–46; Michael Mach, "Justin Martyr's Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo and the Development of Christian Anti-Judaism," in *Contra Iudaeos*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa, Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism 10 (Tubingen: Mohr, 1996), 27–47; David Rokeah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews*, Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series 5 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2002), 12–9. Also of note here are Daniel Boyarin's somewhat speculative claims that Justin was engaged in constructing boundaries between what had theretofore been a basically indistinguishable mass of "Judeo-Christianity." Specifically, see Daniel Boyarin, "Justin Martyr Invents Judaism," *Church History* 70, no. 3 (2001): 427–61. For a broader picture of Boyarin's project, see his lengthier treatment: *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity*, Divinations (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Creator of all. Because the questions about monotheism and the divinity of Jesus are central in the *Dialogue*, my analysis is weighted toward that work. Where there is relevant data in the *Apologies*, I draw that in as well.

One God

As Justin and Trypho meet in the *Dialogue*, we see that they are both interested in philosophy because it considers important questions about God. To Justin's question about why he would be interested in philosophy, Trypho retorts, "Why not, for do not the philosophers speak always about God? Do they not constantly propose questions about his monarchy and providence (καὶ περὶ μοναρχίας αὐτοῖς καὶ προνοίας)? Is this not the task of philosophy, to inquire about the divine?"¹⁷⁷ It is notable here that Trypho uses the term monarchy, but it is not entirely clear how he is using it. Justin responds and says that similar questions draw him to the study of philosophy, but he then complains that many philosophers have failed to inquire about "whether there is one or even several gods."¹⁷⁸

After his account of his journey through the philosophical schools, Justin describes a conversation with the "old man" who introduced him to Christianity. In the course of this conversation, Justin gives his own definition of God. He writes, "God is the Being who always has the same nature in the same manner, and is the cause of existence to all else."¹⁷⁹ The old man approves of this definition of God and then states that there is

¹⁷⁷ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 1.3 (trans. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, ed. Thomas P. Halton and Michael Slusser, trans. Thomas B. Falls, Selections from the Fathers of the Church 3 (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 4 with modifications; Greek from Marcovich, 70). Unless otherwise noted, all Greek for the *Dialogue* is taken from Marcovich's edition.

¹⁷⁸ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 1.4 (trans. Falls, 4).

¹⁷⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 3.5 (trans. Falls, 8).

only “one Unbegotten.”¹⁸⁰ He also commends to Justin the writings of the prophets: “They also are worthy of belief because of the miracles which they performed, for they exalted God, the Father and Creator of all things, and made known Christ, his Son, who was sent by him.”¹⁸¹ Already in this statement we see one of the ways that Justin will distinguish between the Father and Son. For Justin, the Father, the unbegotten one, is frequently referred to as the Creator of all. Later in the *Dialogue*, Justin will include Christ in the prerogative of creation; but he never applies to Christ the title “Creator of all.” It seems as though this descriptor is reserved for the Father alone in Justin’s thought.

In neither the *Dialogue* nor the *Apologies* do we see Justin dwelling on the fact that Christians believe in only one God. The only such strong affirmation that Justin makes in the *Dialogue* occurs near the beginning:

Trypho, there never will be, nor has there ever been from eternity, any other God except him who created and formed this universe. Furthermore, we do not claim that our God is different from yours, for he is the God who, *with a strong hand and outstretched arm, led your forefathers out of the land of Egypt*. Nor have we placed our trust in any other (for, indeed, there is no other), but only in him whom you also have trusted, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. But our hope is not through Moses or through the Law, otherwise our customs would be the same as yours.¹⁸²

In this statement, Justin is highlighting the fact that they are discussing the same God, but the debate quickly turns to how Jews and Christians relate to this God vis-à-vis the law. Trypho’s responses in this section of the dialogue show that the real disagreement was over observance of the law, not whether they worshipped the same God. Other than this passage, blunt professions of monotheism like “We Christians believe in only one God”

¹⁸⁰ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 5.6.

¹⁸¹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 7.3 (trans. Falls, 14).

¹⁸² Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 11.1 (trans. Falls, 20).

are absent from Justin's extant works. Justin does acknowledge multiple times that there is only one "unbegotten," but this does not appear to be motivated by his polemic with Judaism.¹⁸³ It seems that even in the *Dialogue*, monotheism is a taken-for-granted bedrock assumption for both parties.

Theophanies: Visible Son

What Justin is concerned with, however, is proving that Christ is also God. This comes sharply into focus around chapter fifty of the *Dialogue*, where Justin offers Christological interpretations of the Old Testament theophanies. The interpretation of Old Testament theophanies was a central point of contention in the later monarchian controversy, so a thorough analysis of Justin on this point will help to provide background for my later discussions.¹⁸⁴ Justin belabors his point that the one who appeared in the theophanies was not the Father. Regarding Genesis 18:1-3, he writes,

Moses, then, that faithful and blessed servant of God, tells us that he who appeared to Abraham under the oak tree of Mamre was God, sent, with two accompanying angels, to judge Sodom by another, who forever abides in the super-celestial regions, who has never been seen by any man, and with whom no man has ever conversed, and whom we call Creator of all and Father.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ See *1 Apol.* 14; *2 Apol.* 13; *Dialogue with Trypho* 5.6.

¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, as Bogdan Bucur has demonstrated, the interpretation of theophanies was one of the primary means by which Jews and Christians distinguished themselves from each other. Bogdan G. Bucur, "Justin Martyr's Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies and the Parting of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism," *Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2014): 34–91.

¹⁸⁵ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.1 (trans. Falls, 83). Note also André Méhat's discussion of Justin's reference to the "super-celestial regions" here, in André Méhat, "Le «lieu supracéleste» de Saint Justin à Origène," in *Forma futuri: Studi in onore del cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1975), 282–94.

In this passage, the first notable thing is that Justin unequivocally refers to Christ as God. Secondly, to avoid any confusion, Justin reiterates that the one seen (ὁ ὀφθεις) was sent by another (ὑπὸ ἄλλου).¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, the one who sent Christ “has never been seen by any man.” Here, Justin has introduced his hard rule for interpreting the theophanies: the “Creator of all and Father” (ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων καὶ πατέρα) is never seen, never descends to earth from the heavens.

Justin’s dialogue partners responded to his interpretation of Gen. 18:1-3 by stating that his reading of the passage had not convinced them that there was any other (ἄλλος) God or Lord mentioned in scripture.¹⁸⁷ Undeterred by their response, Justin replied,

I shall attempt to prove my assertion, namely that there exists and is mentioned in Scripture another God and Lord alongside the Creator of all things (ὅτι ἐστὶ... θεὸς καὶ κύριος ἕτερος παρὰ τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων), who is also called an *Angel*, because he proclaims to man whatever the Creator of the world—above whom there is no other God (ὑπὲρ ὃν ἄλλος θεὸς οὐκ ἔστι)—wishes to reveal to them.¹⁸⁸

Justin unabashedly asserts that there is another God alongside the Creator God whom his dialogue partners acknowledge. Trypho and his coreligionists were pleased that Justin had clearly stated that there was no God above the Creator of all, but they remained unconvinced by Justin’s argument that there was another God alongside the Creator.¹⁸⁹ This exchange between Justin and Trypho signals one of the chief points of disagreement that frequently recurs as the dialogue progresses. Justin again and again claims that the Son is *another God* alongside the Father. Other second-century authors spoke of Christ as

¹⁸⁶ Greek from Marcovich, 161.

¹⁸⁷ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.3.

¹⁸⁸ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.4 (trans. Falls, 84 with my modifications; Greek from Marcovich, 161-2).

¹⁸⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.16.

God, but they did not clarify that he was *another God*. Justin carries on the tradition of maintaining the Son's divinity, but he couples it with an equally strong affirmation that the Son is a God distinct from, and even different than, the Father.

Justin continues to outline the details of his position despite Trypho's incredulity and writes:

I shall now show from the Scriptures that God has begotten of himself a certain rational power as a beginning before all creatures (ὅτι ἀρχὴν πρὸ πάντων τῶν κτισμάτων ὁ Θεὸς γεγέννηκε δυνάμιν τινα ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ λογικὴν). The Holy Spirit indicates this power by various titles, sometimes *the Glory of the Lord*, at other times *Son*, or *Wisdom*, or *Angel*, or *God*, or *Lord*, or *Word*.... Indeed, he can justly lay claim to all these titles from the fact both that he performs the Father's will and that he was begotten by an act of the Father's will (ἔχει γὰρ πάντα <ταῦτα> προσονομάζεσθαι ἔκ τε τοῦ ὑπηρετεῖν τῷ πατρικῷ βουλήματι καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς θελήσει γεγεννησθαι).¹⁹⁰

Justin had earlier simply asserted that the one who appeared in the theophanies was another God alongside the Creator; but here, he further addresses the relationship between the Creator and the Son. Here and elsewhere Justin argues that the Son is both angel and God. Justin appears to be using angel functionally: Christ is angel because he is the messenger of the Creator.¹⁹¹ Justin does not seem to think that the Son is ontologically an angel. Justin also argues that the Son was begotten by an act of the Father's will, although he does not elaborate on the significance or manner of this begetting.

¹⁹⁰ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 61.1 (trans. Falls, 93-4; Greek from Marcovich, 174-5). Italics in original.

¹⁹¹ Anthony Briggman has shown that the ways Justin speaks about the functions of the Son and Spirit betray that he had a Binitarian orientation despite some of the Trinitarian formulas he used in liturgical settings. Anthony Briggman, "Measuring Justin's Approach to the Spirit: Trinitarian Conviction and Binitarian Orientation," *Vigiliae Christianae* 63, no. 2 (2009): 107-37.

Justin has consistently argued that the Son is another God alongside the Father. He repeatedly calls him God and posits that he was begotten by the Father. None of these descriptors, however, is terribly precise. It is clear that Justin wants to place the Son with the Father, but it is not clear what this means. Justin seems aware of the ambiguity of the way he has described the Son and the Father, so he clarifies himself. He writes, “I wish again to quote Moses to prove beyond all doubt that he spoke with one endowed with reason and numerically different (ἀριθμῷ ὄντα ἕτερον) from himself.”¹⁹² In this passage, Justin is trying to refute Trypho’s assertion that God was talking to himself when he said “let us...” in Gen. 1:26. For Justin, the plural in those verses clearly signals that God was talking to someone else who was present at the creation of the world. Elsewhere Justin makes his case for the distinction between the Father and Son: “Let us return to the Scriptures and I shall try to convince you that he who is said to have appeared to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, and is called God, is distinct from God, the Creator; distinct, that is, in number, but not in mind” (θεὸς ἕτερός ἐστι τοῦ τὰ πάντα ποιήσαντος θεοῦ· ἀριθμῷ <δὲ> λέγω, ἀλλὰ οὐ γνώμη).¹⁹³ Note again in this passage that Justin uses both ἕτερος and ἀριθμός to articulate the distinction between the Father and the Son. Both of these are very strong ways of distinguishing the Father and Son.¹⁹⁴

Justin restates the distinction between the Father and Son in the strongest terms at the close of the discourse: “It has also been shown at length that this power which the

¹⁹² Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 62.2 (trans. Falls, 95; Greek from Marcovich, 177).

¹⁹³ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.11 (trans. Falls, 85; Greek from Marcovich, 163).

¹⁹⁴ These terms do not feature very prominently in the later monarchian controversy. Because the monarchians often accused their opponents of being ditheists, I suspect that these terms fell out of use. After all, calling the Son “another God” and claiming that he was numerically distinct would easily attract the accusation of ditheism.

prophetic Word also calls *God* and *Angel* not only is numbered as different by its name... but is something distinct in real number... but not by abscission, as if the substance of the Father were divided.”¹⁹⁵ Again, Justin is clear that the Son is God; but he is equally clear that the Son is *other than the Father*. Unlike Ignatius or Melito, scholars never accuse Justin of being a “naïve modalist.”

To further strengthen his case, Justin turns to the interpretation of Pr. 8:22, writing, “But this offspring, who was really begotten of the Father, was with the Father and talked with him before all creation as the Word clearly showed us through Solomon, saying that this Son, who is called *Wisdom* by Solomon, was begotten both as a beginning before all his works, and as his offspring.”¹⁹⁶ By his Christological use of this passage at this point in the debate, Justin attempts to prove that the Son was with the Father before and during creation.¹⁹⁷ Justin continues this line of thought later in the *Dialogue* and suggests that all living beings were created by the Word.¹⁹⁸ Not only has Justin argued that the Son was present with the Father in creation, but he has also given

¹⁹⁵ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 128.4 (trans. Falls, 194; Greek from Marcovich, 293): ἀλλ’ ὅτι μὲν οὖν εἰσὶν ἄγγελοι, καὶ αἰεὶ μένοντες καὶ μὴ ἀναλυόμενοι εἰς ἐκεῖνο ἐξ οὗπερ γεγόνασιν, ἀποδέδεικται· καὶ ὅτι δύναμις αὕτη, ἣν καὶ θεὸν καλεῖ ὁ προφητικὸς λόγος, διὰ πολλῶν ὡσαύτως ἀποδέδεικται, καὶ ἄγγελον, οὐχ ὡς τὸ τοῦ ἡλίου φῶς ὀνόματι μόνον ἀριθμεῖται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀριθμῷ ἕτερόν τι ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς προειρημένοις διὰ βραχέων τὸν λόγον ἐξήτασα, εἰπὼν τὴν δύναμιν ταύτην γεγεννησθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς, δυνάμει καὶ βουλῇ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ’ οὐ κατὰ ἀποτομήν, ὡς ἀπομεριζομένης τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας, ὅποια τὰ ἄλλα πάντα μεριζόμενα καὶ τεμνόμενα οὐ τὰ αὐτά ἐστιν ἃ καὶ πρὶν τμηθῆναι· καὶ παραδείγματος χάριν παρείληφεν ὡς τὰ ἀπὸ πυρὸς ἀναπτόμενα πυρὰ ἕτερα ὁρῶμεν, οὐδὲν ἐλαττουμένου ἐκείνου, ἐξ οὗ ἀναφθῆναι πολλὰ δύνανται, ἀλλὰ ταῦτο τοῦ μένοντος.

¹⁹⁶ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 62.4 (trans. Falls, 96 with my modifications). Italics in original.

¹⁹⁷ Justin’s use of Proverbs 8:22 as a Christological passage here is also noteworthy because some other second-century authors interpreted the passage as referring to the Spirit. See Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.10 and Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 4.20.1. Such Pneumatological readings of Proverbs 8:22 did not continue past the end of the second century, however.

¹⁹⁸ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 84.2.

the Son (or Word) a role in the act of creation itself. One of the reasons this is so significant is that Justin consistently refers to the Father as the Creator of all. When he attributes the creation of living beings to the Son, he is arguing that the Son is involved in carrying out the divine prerogative of creation. One interesting thing to note is that Justin modifies the passage from Pr. 8:22. In the LXX, the text reads “κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ...” Justin replaces “ἔκτισέν” with “γεγέννηκε” when he is speaking about Wisdom.¹⁹⁹ Justin often quotes passages in the dialogue and offers little interpretation. His laconic streak continues here, and he does not offer an explanation for changing the verb in Pr. 8:22.²⁰⁰ Perhaps Justin changes this verb for the same reason he stresses the pre-existence of the Son—to make the Son prior to and above the created order. Justin could have also changed the verb here because γεννάω is also used in Pr. 8:25, where Wisdom speaks of being begotten before the mountains were settled.²⁰¹

Justin repeats his claim that the Son existed prior to the incarnation. Trypho is aware that Justin claims that the Son “already existed as God (καὶ θεὸν αὐτὸν προϋπάρχοντα λέγεις καὶ κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θεοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντα αὐτόν)” before the incarnation.²⁰² The issue of the Son’s pre-existence continues to be an important issue for

¹⁹⁹ See, for example, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 61.1, 62.4.

²⁰⁰ See James Ernest’s discussion of this section in the *Dialogue*: “Patristic Exegesis and the Arithmetic of the Divine,” in *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Memory of Lloyd G. Patterson*, ed. Andrew Brian McGowan, Brian Daley, and Timothy J. Gaden, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 133–5.

²⁰¹ See also Maurice Wiles’ discussion of the importance of Proverbs 8 in the development of the doctrine of eternal generation: “Eternal Generation,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 12, no. 2 (1961): 285. Regarding the different verb, there is always the chance that Justin’s *Vorlage* had a different reading.

²⁰² Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 87.2 (trans. Falls, 135; Greek form Marcovich, 221).

Justin.²⁰³ Speaking of Christ, Justin writes, “This is he who was before all things, and the eternal priest of God, and the King and Christ.”²⁰⁴ Throughout the *Dialogue*, Justin repeats a sort of standard formula when referring to Christ. The following is a prime example: “We know him as the first-begotten of God before all creatures, and as the Son of the patriarchs since he became incarnate by a virgin of their race, and condescended to become a man without comeliness or honor and subject to suffering.”²⁰⁵ In Justin’s understanding, the pre-existence of the Son serves an important function, for it is one of the things that proves that the Son is divine. Justin makes this connection explicit on multiple occasions: “[Christ] is God, because he is the first-begotten of all creatures.”²⁰⁶

Even with all of Justin’s exegetical proofs, Trypho is not swayed; and he urges that “Christians should... acknowledge this Jesus to be a man of mere human origin (καὶ μᾶλλον ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον λέγειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν).”²⁰⁷ Trypho’s response shows that Justin is faced with a difficult task in the *Dialogue*. He must convince his Jewish interlocutor of three things: 1) that he, like Trypho believes in only one God; 2) that Christ is God alongside the Father; 3) that the second claim does not negate the first. Because Trypho resists affirming that there is another God alongside the Father, Justin spends the bulk of his time arguing in favor of the divinity of Christ. At the same time,

²⁰³ On this point, see Demetrios Trakatellis, *The Pre-Existence of Christ in the Writings of Justin Martyr*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 6 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976).

²⁰⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 96.1 (trans. Falls, 147).

²⁰⁵ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 100.2 (trans. Falls, 151). See also the similar clear expressions in 48.1-2.

²⁰⁶ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 125.3 (trans. Falls, 188).

²⁰⁷ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 66.2 (trans. Falls, 103; Greek from Marcovich, 185). As the Greek shows, this is not the same as the ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος terminology that recurs in the accounts in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*.

however, he must prove that Christ is not the same as the Father—that what we are dealing with in Christ is *another* God. The introduction of this language of alterity implies that Justin is suggesting that there are two Gods, something Trypho would certainly never admit.

As Hurtado and others suggest, I think Justin marks a turning point in second-century theology. In his dialogue (real or fictional) with Judaism, he demonstrates a new concern to distinguish the Son from the Father. Like earlier theologians, he held that the Son was God; and he expressed this belief unequivocally. His development, however, came when he claimed that the Son was *another* God alongside the Father. In response to his Jewish interlocutors, Justin articulated the alterity of the Father and the Son more strongly than any other Christian theologian of the second century. The Father and Son were ἕτερος ἐν ἀριθμῷ. Even more, Justin is so concerned to discuss the distinction between the Father and Son that he does not give equal stress to their unity.²⁰⁸ Justin's was a hard distinction between the Father and Son which was unparalleled in the second century. As will become clear in my later discussion of monarchianism, I think such strong articulations of the distinction of the Father and Son were what prompted the monarchians to stress that the Father and Son were “one and the same.” Furthermore, it might be no coincidence that Rome, where Justin taught, became the epicenter of monarchianism at the beginning of the third century.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ This is not to say that he rejected the unity of the Father and Son. It was not, however, one of his chief concerns in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Recall, for example, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.11, where Justin argues that Father and Son are not distinct in γνώμη.

²⁰⁹ In the texts attesting to monarchianism, we are not told why the monarchians ventured to Rome from Asia Minor. What I am suggesting is that, among other things, Justin's strong articulation of Trinitarian (or Binitarian) distinction might have drawn the monarchians to Rome so that they could oppose it.

Conclusion

Hurtado, Bauckham, and the so-called New *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* have argued that Jesus was considered divine very early in the history of Christianity. Furthermore, they have demonstrated that the earliest Christians articulated Jesus' divinity through the use of Jewish concepts and categories. Hurtado argues that Jesus was fit into the Jewish divine agent paradigm but that devotion to Jesus also developed beyond this paradigm. Indeed, no other divine agents were given such formalized cultic worship in Judaism prior to the time of Jesus. This devotion to Jesus, argues Hurtado, was a mutation of Jewish monotheism in the first century. Richard Bauckham argued that the divinity of Jesus was expressed by including him in the divine identity of the God of Israel. This move entailed ascribing to him things that were reserved for God alone: creation and sole rule of the universe. Both note that the divinity of Jesus was not expressed using ontological terminology. The earliest Christians, then, established the divinity of Jesus through the use of Jewish categories and concepts.²¹⁰

The so-called Apostolic Fathers took up where the earliest Christians left off. They still maintained the divinity of Jesus and often used stronger language than the New Testament—even using phrases like “Jesus Christ our God.”²¹¹ The divinity of Jesus never seems to be in question in any of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, but they are

²¹⁰ A full consideration of the arguments of Hurtado and Bauckham is beyond the scope of the current chapter. Their main arguments can be found in the following: Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008). Both have numerous articles that address the same themes, but I have chosen to list monographs and collections of essays here for brevity.

²¹¹ Ignatius, *Ephesians*, preface; Ignatius, *Romans*, preface.

not terribly concerned to work out exactly how Jesus is divine or how he relates to the Father. They distinguish between the Father and Son almost exclusively by means of titles and functions, and they are not always consistent about such distinctions. They did not explicitly address how the Father and Son were distinguished.

Melito's *Peri Pascha*, written in the second half of the second century, bears much in common with earlier Christian writings. Like his forebears, Melito considered Jesus to be divine. Also like those before them, he was relatively unconcerned with precisely distinguishing between the Father and Son. He also continued to use Jewish concepts and categories as the primary means of distinguishing the Father and Son. As I noted above, his lack of concern to distinguish the Father and Son caused scholars to call his theology naively modalistic. His language was often ambiguous and seemed to risk collapsing any distinction between Father and Son.

Of all of the writings surveyed in this chapter, Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* stands out because of its strong concern to show that the Father and Son are distinct, even different. He argues that the Son is *another* God and that he is distinct from the Father *in number*. Justin's descriptions of the difference between the Father and the Son offer a sharp contrast to the other second-century theologies that did not take care to distinguish them so strongly. Even more, while Justin uses an abundance of scripture from the Old Testament to support his positions, he does not shy away from using Greek philosophical concepts in a way that we do not see in the Apostolic Fathers. Athenagoras likewise uses Greek philosophical categories to discuss monotheism and the divinity of the Son. Unlike Justin, Athenagoras always holds the unity of God and the divinity of the Son in tension. Athenagoras is also intent on showing that Christian monotheistic belief in God is in

accord with the systems of Greco-Roman philosophers. In short, Athenagoras does not articulate the distinction between the Father and Son as strongly as Justin.

Justin and Athenagoras represent the demographic shift in early Christianity that Hurtado has discussed. Their theology bears the marks of the shift from a primarily Jewish conceptual matrix to one that was indebted to both Judaism and Greco-Roman philosophy. Justin employed more precise and technical language to define the relationship between the Father and the Son than almost all of the other second-century theologians. Justin's argument that the Son was another God, I argue, is one of the contexts which best illuminates the motivation of the monarchian controversy. Before Justin, Christian theology did not carefully distinguish the Father and Son by means of precise technical terminology. Justin's developments, however, did away with much ambiguity regarding the relationship between the Father and the Son: they were distinct, even different. In his conversation with Trypho the Jew, Justin left no doubt that the Son was *another* God alongside the Father. This would have problematized theologies like that of Melito, theologies that did not carefully distinguish the Father and Son. Justin's theory of the alterity of the Father and Son would have also militated against any theologies that wanted to deny any distinction between the Father and the Son. The monarchianism that arose at the beginning of the third century was just such a theology, and it is possible that it was a reaction to theologies like that of Justin.

CHAPTER TWO: EUSEBIUS, *CONTRA NOETUM*, AND *ADVERSUS PRAXEAN*

Introduction: The Beginnings of Monarchianism

The monarchian controversy erupted in Rome at the beginning of the third century, but it does appear in any of the second-century theologies I surveyed in the last chapter. While second-century theologians exhibited varying levels of concern to articulate the distinction between the Father and Son, none explicitly denied their distinction and claimed that they were the same. Nor did they seem to be defending this distinction against those who denied it. This denial, however, is precisely what was at the heart of monarchian theology: a denial of any distinction between the Father and the Son in order to protect a commitment to the oneness of God.

As I have already noted, we lack any account of the origins of monarchianism. One of the most probable explanations for its origins is that this strong affirmation of the oneness of God and the denial of distinction between the Father and Son was a reaction against theological developments that the monarchians perceived as endangering the oneness of God. Of the models of relationship between the Father and Son surveyed in the last chapter, Justin's is the sort that could have easily provoked a monarchian reaction. The monarchian insistence on the sameness of the Father and Son would make sense as a reaction against Justin's claims that the Son is *another* God.

Despite our lack of knowledge about the background of monarchianism, we can imagine what sorts of theology would have troubled them, namely, those that stressed the alterity of Father and Son. Now that I have offered this hypothesis about the theological

motivations of monarchianism, I turn to a detailed analysis of the main texts of the period that bear witness to monarchian theology. Unfortunately, we do not possess any texts from the monarchians themselves.¹ We are thus left with the difficult task of reconstructing monarchian theology using only the fragmentary evidence we can extract from hostile witnesses.

Although it is the latest of the texts I survey, I begin with an overview of passages relevant to monarchianism in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. He has little to say about monarchianism itself, but his work does elucidate the state of the church in Rome at the time when monarchianism made its appearance. Next, I discuss Hippolytus' *Contra Noetum*, which I take to be the earliest of the sources attesting to monarchiansim.² Then, I examine Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, which I consider to be dependent on *Contra Noetum*. These two sources are the earliest attestation to monarchianism, and they show that there was a stable core to monarchian theology. At the same time, there was also variation and development within monarchian theology, early signs of which can be seen in *Adversus Praxean*. In chapter three, I undertake a similar analysis of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* and Novatian's *De Trinitate*, which give us later portraits of monarchianism. At the close of that chapter, I summarize my conclusions about monarchianism and reevaluate some of the major scholarly theories about it.

¹ We thus have no primary sources for monarchianism. The best we can do is reconstruct their position from secondary sources written by their contemporaries.

² I offer a full argument regarding the date and authorship of *Contra Noetum* and the other third-century works below.

Eusebius

Although Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History* (EH) dwells at some length on the life of the church in the late second and early third centuries, it offers relatively little information on the varieties of monarchianism that were prevalent at the beginning of the third century.³ His omission of details about monarchianism does not seem to be motivated by a lack of concern for Trinitarian or Christological issues since he lays out what he considers to be a proper view of Christ at the beginning of *EH*.⁴ Despite the absence of any in-depth treatment of monarchianism itself, Eusebius does provide chronology and lists of succession for the bishops of major sees during the period that can be useful for determining the chronology of the monarchian controversy and some of its possible antecedents.

In his discussion of the Ebionites, Eusebius states that they held a low view of Christ and denied his miraculous birth.⁵ Specifically, according to Eusebius, they taught that Christ was a simple (λίτὸν) and common (κοινόν) man. Others of the same name, recounts Eusebius, did not deny the virgin birth but nevertheless denied the pre-existence of the Son.⁶ In a later discussion of the Ebionites, Eusebius states that they held Christ to

³ Reinhard Hübner argues that Eusebius' silence regarding monarchianism is confirmation of his contention that it was the dominant position well into the third century. See his, *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 31. Many of Hübner's assertions, however, are built on dubious assumptions and chronology.

⁴ Eusebius, *EH* 1.2.

⁵ Eusebius, *EH* 3.27.

⁶ Robert M. Grant helpfully notes that this twofold categorization of the Ebionites comes from Origen, and that Eusebius probably mentioned the second class so that he could distance himself from their teaching. See Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 91.

be a mere man (ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον).⁷ Variations on these themes will show up in later anti-monarchian polemic, although Eusebius' laconic treatment of them gives us little information about what motivated the positions.

Eusebius uses the word μοναρχία twice in *EH*, and both of his uses are in reference to works of other authors. In the first reference, Eusebius attributes to Justin a work entitled περὶ θεοῦ μοναρχίας.⁸ Next, Eusebius tells us that Irenaeus composed a number of letters to address conflicts in the Roman church. One of these letters was addressed to Florinus and was entitled περὶ μοναρχίας.⁹ Eusebius reproduces a quotation from this letter wherein Irenaeus emphasizes his connection to Polycarp, who, in turn, was connected to the apostles. Irenaeus then repeats that Polycarp would have taken great offense at the things Florinus was teaching. Eusebius states that Florinus was defending the position that God was the author of evil. In addition to this letter, Eusebius writes that Irenaeus composed a treatise *On the Ogdoad* because Florinus seems to have been attracted to Valentinianism.¹⁰

⁷ Eusebius, *EH* 6.17.

⁸ Eusebius, *EH* 4.18. We now know that this treatise which Eusebius attributes to Justin was not written by Justin. The treatise is a collection of excerpts from Greek literature arguing against polytheism and idolatry. There is little in this treatise that makes it distinctively Christian, although many scholars assume that it is. For a good introduction and critical edition, see Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Cohortatio ad Graecos; De monarchia; Oratio ad Graecos*, Patristische Texte und Studien 32 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1990). Given that we do not know the author of the text, dating it can be rather difficult. The two major pieces of information that inform dating the text are (1) the fact that it is cited by Eusebius, and (2) some phraseology that seems to mimic Clement of Alexandria. Therefore, the latest it was composed was 311-2. Given the apparent knowledge of Clement, the earliest date of the text would have been the last few years of the second century. Marcovich splits the difference and argues that it was probably written in the middle of the third century. *Ibid.*, 82.

⁹ Eusebius, *EH* 5.20. Unfortunately, this letter is no longer extant.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* The Greek title of the work is περὶ ὀγδοάδος.

It is striking that Irenaeus would write a letter *On Monarchy* to someone who was inclined to Valentinianism. An emphasis on the monarchy or sole rule of God could serve as a sharp rebuff of Valentinian pleromatology which included a multiplication of divine figures who often rebelled against those above them in the hierarchy of the Pleroma. Unfortunately, there is very little in the quotation that would alert us to the specifics of Florinus' teaching or Irenaeus' response. We are, however, left with the fact that Irenaeus wrote a letter *On Monarchy* to someone who was inclined towards Valentinianism, and this is not insignificant in our reconstruction of the monarchian position.¹¹ If the title is indicative of anything, it appears that Irenaeus employed the concept of monarchy to counter the Valentinian leanings of Florinus. It is also important to remember here that Irenaeus gives no indication that the monarchian controversy had begun at the time of his writing. Furthermore, Irenaeus was certainly not a monarchian. That he could use the term monarchy to rebuff Gnosticism, however, demonstrates that such a use might have been appealing a few decades later for those who wished to defend the uniqueness of God.

Eusebius mentions a certain Apelles a few times in book five, following his source Rhodo, and lumps Apelles with Marcion despite variance in their teaching.¹² Eusebius repeatedly states that Apelles taught that there is only one principle (μίαν ἀρχήν). He contrasts this position to that of Marcion, who taught that there were two

¹¹ Ernest Evans was unconvinced that anti-Gnostic sentiment was an impetus for the rise of Monarchianism. See his "Introduction," in *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 6.

¹² Eusebius, *EH* 5.13: "He said that he did not know how the unbegotten God is one but that he believed it" (trans. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History: Books 1-5*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library 153 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926], 469).

principles (δύο ἀρχάς), and still others who taught that there were three natures (τρῆς φύσεις). When pressed on this teaching that there was only one principle, Apelles was unable to defend it, but he held it nonetheless.¹³ Before the outbreak of the monarchian controversy proper, theologians used the word μοναρχία to refute both pagan polytheism and other positions that imperiled the unity of God.¹⁴

At the end of book five of *EH*, Eusebius provides us with the work's most useful information for our reconstruction of the monarchian controversy. It is contained within another writing that Eusebius quotes three times, which he refers to as a treatise "against the heresy of Artemon."¹⁵ Some scholars argue that the sources Eusebius quotes in the *EH* are often of more value than Eusebius' own history or theology because his thought is often driven by polemical concerns.¹⁶ Even in his introduction of these quotations, Eusebius' concern with Paul of Samosata is signaled when he accuses Paul of trying to renew the heresy of Artemon. His animosity towards Paul of Samosata shapes how he writes and what information he includes.

¹³ The problem with the teaching of Apelles seems to have been his views regarding seemingly contradictory material in the Old Testament.

¹⁴ The work of Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao on the uses of *monarchia* prior to the outbreak of the controversy at the beginning of the second century is very informative here. See his *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la controversia "monarquiana,"* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie 1: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996). Note also the discussion of the uses of *monarchia* at Evans, "Introduction," 6–9.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *EH* 5.28.

¹⁶ See, for example, the rather harsh appraisal of Robert Grant: "Eusebius' accounts of the early heresies thus possess no value apart from that of the documents he quoted or paraphrased" (*Eusebius as Church Historian*, 86). See also John T. Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth," in *The Early Church in Its Context*, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, James W. Thompson, and Frederick Norris (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 120–1.

Scholars have pointed out that although Eusebius mentions a treatise against Artemon, the quotations that Eusebius has preserved do not mention Artemon by name.¹⁷ There have, therefore, been numerous attempts to determine the title of the treatise and its author. Many scholars are confident that the title of this treatise from which Eusebius quotes is *The Little Labyrinth*. The main piece of evidence supporting this conclusion comes from Theodoret's *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*.¹⁸ Near the beginning of part two of his *compendium*, Theodoret offers brief accounts of the heresy of Artemon and Theodotus, both of whom Eusebius mentions. Then Theodoret states that “*The Little Labyrinth* was written against the heresy of these [two].”¹⁹ Scholars have preferred the title *The Little Labyrinth* because they are relatively certain that Theodoret has in mind the same text Eusebius quotes. Although we have here no definitive proof of the actual title of the treatise, we can be confident that it was known by this name at the time of Theodoret's writing.²⁰

Although scholars have settled upon the title *The Little Labyrinth* for this treatise, there is much less certainty regarding the authorship and date of the work. The most frequently suggested authors are Origen, Gaius, and Hippolytus. Theodoret notes that “some assume it is the work of Origen but the style [of the writing] refutes those saying

¹⁷ Fitzgerald, “Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth,” 124; Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 91–2.

¹⁸ For a full discussion of the evidence, see Fitzgerald, “Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth,” 124–126.

¹⁹ Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 2.4–5 (PG 83.389–92). Translation mine. Κατὰ τῆς τούτων αἰρέσεως ὁ μικρὸς συνεγρᾶφη Λαβύρινθος.

²⁰ Fitzgerald, “Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth,” 126.

[so].”²¹ The association of Gaius with the treatise is rather limited. The suggestion for authorship that has received the most support is that of Hippolytus.²² Fitzgerald argues that there are insurmountable objections to the Hippolytan authorship of this text and suggests that viewing it as anonymous is the safest way to proceed.²³ After his thorough discussion of the problems of authorship associated with *The Little Labyrinth*, Fitzgerald offers a proposal for the dating of the work. He argues that because Hippolytus seems to be unaware of Artemon, the career of Artemon in Rome must have post-dated the work of Hippolytus. He suggests that the work was probably written sometime between 240 and 255 CE.²⁴ Although it appears to post-date many of the other works that attest to the monarchian controversy, it is still of value because it gives us an alternative glimpse into Rome during the period when the controversy was just beginning.

Between his quotations of *The Little Labyrinth*, Eusebius provides us with an account of the succession of Roman bishops following Victor.²⁵ In the *Refutatio*, both Zephyrinus and Callistus are cast in a negative light and as major personalities in the controversy. Eusebius states that Zephyrinus succeeded Victor during the ninth year of

²¹ Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 2.5 (PG 83.392). Translation mine. ὅν τινες Ὠριγένους ὑπολαμβάνουσι ποίημα, ἀλλ’ ὁ χαρακτήρ ἐλέγχει τοὺς λέγοντας.

²² Fitzgerald, “Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth,” 133; Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 91–2.

²³ Fitzgerald, “Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth,” 133–6. “In view of these and other problems in attributing the document to Hippolytus, it is not surprising that the majority of contemporary scholars appear to reject Hippolytus's putative authorship and treat the work as strictly anonymous. Until a cogent case can be made on behalf of some other early Christian author, *The Little Labyrinth* is best viewed as a truly anonymous document” (136).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 136–44.

²⁵ Eusebius, *EH* 5.28.

the reign of Severus.²⁶ The majority of Eusebius' references to Zephyrinus are passing mentions in lists of succession and do not imply anything about what his role in the monarchian controversy might have been. In Eusebius' first quotation from *The Little Labyrinth*, we learn a bit more about Zephyrinus, even though the account is more suggestive than explicit. This quotation from *The Little Labyrinth* merits being reproduced in full:

For they say that all who went before and the apostles themselves received and taught what they now say, and that the truth of the teaching was preserved until the times of Victor, who was the thirteenth bishop in Rome after Peter, but that the truth had been corrupted from the time of his successor, Zephyrinus. What they said might perhaps be plausible if in the first place the divine Scriptures were not opposed to them, and there are also writings of certain Christians, older than the time of Victor, which they wrote to the Gentiles on behalf of the truth and against the heresies of their own time. I mean the works of Justin and Miltiades and Tatian and Clement and many others in all of which Christ is treated as God. For who is ignorant of the books of Irenaeus and Melito and the others who announced Christ as God and man? And all the Psalms and hymns which were written by faithful Christians from the beginning of the Christ as the Logos of God and treat him as God. How then is it possible that after the mind of the church had been announced for so many years that the generation before Victor can have preached as these say? Why are they not ashamed of so calumniating Victor when they know quite well that Victor excommunicated Theodotus the cobbler, the founder and father of this insurrection which denies God, when he first said that Christ was a mere man (ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον)? For if Victor was so minded towards them as their blasphemy teaches, how could he have thrown out Theodotus who invented this heresy?²⁷

Although all of Eusebius' other references to Zephyrinus in *EH* were neutral or positive, this reference in *The Little Labyrinth* suggests that things started to go awry during the episcopate of Zephyrinus.²⁸

²⁶ Eusebius, *EH* 5.28.

²⁷ Eusebius, *EH* 5.28 (trans. LCL 153:517-9).

²⁸ For a classic discussion of the episcopate of Victor and the state of the Roman church at the end of the second century, see George La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century: The Episcopate of Victor, the Latinization of the Roman Church, the Easter Controversy, Consolidation of Power and Doctrinal Development, the Catacomb of Callistus," *Harvard Theological Review* 18, no. 3

This section of *The Little Labyrinth* has a specific heresy in mind: that which claimed that Christ was a “mere man” (ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον). Eusebius at first attributes this heresy to a certain Artemon, but this quotation from *The Little Labyrinth* connects the beginnings of this heresy to Theodotus, the cobbler.²⁹ Regardless of who was actually responsible for this heresy that called Christ ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον, *The Little Labyrinth* is clear that Victor unequivocally rejected it and that he even excommunicated Theodotus because of it.³⁰ *The Little Labyrinth*’s statement about the corruption of the truth in the time of Zephyrinus lacks any sort of specificity; but given the context surrounding this statement, there is a good chance that this “corruption of the truth” had something to do with teaching about Christ.

In the next quotation of *The Little Labyrinth*, we learn about a certain Natalius who was persuaded by disciples of Theodotus the cobbler (who taught that Christ was ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον) to become their bishop for a certain sum of money.³¹ Eventually his guilt for accepting this illegitimate position got the better of him, and he repented before Zephyrinus. Despite his change of heart and penance, however, *The Little Labyrinth* tells us that he was either not readmitted to communion with the church or just barely taken back into communion.³² This account of Zephyrinus from *The Little Labyrinth* contrasts

(1925): 201–77. La Piana’s discussion is concerned primarily with ecclesiological questions and the growing authority of the Roman see. As a result, he does not focus on many of the doctrinal problems that are of interest here.

²⁹ Theodoret does connect the teaching that Christ was ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον with Artemon. See his *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 2.4 (PG 83.392).

³⁰ Note again that Eusebius also accused the Ebionites of teaching that Christ was ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον. Whether anything actually connects Artemon, Theodotus, and the Ebionites with each other is an open question, but Eusebius paints them as teaching the same thing about Christ.

³¹ Eusebius, *EH* 5.28.

³² *Ibid.*

sharply with what we learn of him in the *Refutatio*. The *Refutatio* portrays Zephyrinus as a weak and servile man who is easily moved by the machinations of Callistus, but *The Little Labyrinth* presents him as someone who was very concerned with proper discipline in the church.³³ If nothing else, the testimony of *The Little Labyrinth* regarding Zephyrinus should make us even warier of the distorting tendencies of the *Refutatio*.³⁴

Another episode in the *EH* merits our attention. Eusebius writes about Beryllus, who was bishop of Bostra in the time of Origen. He states that Beryllus “attempted to introduce things foreign to the faith, daring to say that our Saviour and Lord did not pre-exist in an individual existence of his own before his coming to reside among men, nor had he a divinity of his own, but only the Father's dwelling in him.”³⁵ Concerned bishops then invited Origen to intervene in order to correct Beryllus. As Eusebius recounts it, Origen reasoned Beryllus back to “orthodoxy.”³⁶ It is interesting to note that Eusebius here accuses Beryllus of something similar to his earlier charge against the Ebionites, namely, that he denied the pre-existence of the Son.³⁷

³³ See, for example, *Refutatio* 9.7.

³⁴ It is also interesting that *The Little Labyrinth* can speak of the truth being corrupted during the time of Zephyrinus while also showing him to be a firm disciplinarian.

³⁵ Eusebius, *EH* 6.33 (trans. and Greek from Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History: Books 6-10*, trans. J. E. L. Oulton, Loeb Classical Library 265 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 86–7): ... ξένα τινὰ τῆς πίστεως παρεισφέρειν ἐπειράτο, τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν λέγειν τολμῶν μὴ προϋφεστάναι κατ’ ἰδίαν οὐσίας περιγραφὴν πρὸ τῆς εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιδημίας μηδὲ μὴν θεότητα ἰδίαν ἔχειν, ἀλλ’ ἐμπολιτευομένην αὐτῷ μόνην τὴν πατρικὴν.

³⁶ Eusebius’ account here has many similarities with Origen’s *Dialogue with Heraclides*. In both, Origen appears to have been summoned by bishops, and he functioned as something of a theological trouble-shooter. In both accounts, Origen also wins over the errant person with whom he is in dialogue. Eusebius himself introduces the vocabulary of “orthodoxy” here even though it was often difficult to sharply delineate what was orthodox and what was heterodox at the beginning of the third century.

³⁷ For this discussion of the Ebionites, see Eusebius, *EH* 3.27.

Finally, and even though he post-dates Origen, Eusebius' treatment of Paul of Samosata in the *EH* is worth consideration because it illuminates some of the common threads that run through Eusebius' different accounts of errant views of Christ. Eusebius states that Paul "espoused low and mean views as to Christ, contrary to the Church's teaching, namely, that he was in his nature an ordinary man."³⁸ Eusebius earlier used the same word, ταπεινός, to describe the Ebionite views of Christ.³⁹ Furthermore, Eusebius describes both the Ebionites and Paul of Samosata of teaching that Christ was a common (κοινόν) man. In Eusebius' descriptions of those who hold errant views of Christ, several terms recur: ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον, κοινὸν ἄνθρωπον, ταπεινός. Eusebius says that both the Ebionites and Artemon claimed that Christ was ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον. Eusebius also accuses Paul of Samosata of trying to resurrect the heresy of Artemon. Eusebius clearly has Paul of Samosata in his sights during the composition of the *EH*, and there is little doubt that he intended to create some sort of heretical genealogy with the similarities we see in his account. The tendentious nature of Eusebius' account calls for caution when determining the value of his reports on the heresies that antedated Paul.

Neither Eusebius nor *The Little Labyrinth* gives us any details about the sort of monarchianism we see in *Contra Noetum*, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the *Refutatio*, or Novatian's *De Trinitate*. As I argue in what follows, the same impulse to preserve the uniqueness of God probably prompted both monarchianism and psilanthropism. Thus, although they do not mention monarchianism directly, Eusebius and *The Little Labyrinth*

³⁸ Eusebius, *EH* 7.27 (trans. and Greek from LCL 265:209-11): τούτου δὲ ταπεινὰ καὶ χαμαιπετῇ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρὰ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν διδασκαλίαν φρονήσαντος ὡς κοινοῦ τὴν φύσιν ἀνθρώπου γενομένου.

³⁹ Eusebius, *EH* 3.27.

are helpful. As we see it in Eusebius and *The Little Labyrinth*, psilanthropism can be interpreted as an attempt to safeguard the uniqueness of God that travelled to Rome during the second century. Calling Christ a “mere man” and saying that he was filled by the power of God would certainly be ways of safeguarding this understanding of monotheism. Novatian’s fixation on both psilanthropism and the later “modalistic” monarchianism shows that these were closely related. If nothing else, Eusebius’ *EH* and *The Little Labyrinth* demonstrate that strong views of the uniqueness of God and of Christ’s mere humanity were already a pressing issue in Rome by the time of Victor.

The Hippolytan Question

Before addressing either the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* or the *Contra Noetum*, two works often attributed to Hippolytus, it is necessary to outline the contours of the scholarly discussion about Hippolytus. The nature of the questions about Hippolytus and the texts attributed to him is such that it has a great bearing on how the works are treated. For example, very few scholars still argue that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are by the same author. If different authors wrote these two works, we should expect to see differences in style and theology. Questions of authorship regarding these two texts will in turn affect determinations we make about the relationship between Tertullian’s *Adversus Praxean* and *Contra Noetum*. In short, a thorough grasp of the debate about Hippolytus must necessarily precede any attempt to locate or analyze either the *Refutatio*

or *Contra Noetum*. Accordingly, I here highlight the key pieces of the scholarly debate and draw preliminary conclusions about the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*.⁴⁰

The debate about Hippolytus extends far beyond the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*; but because they feature so prominently in the scholarly debate and represent its major contours, I will mostly limit my summary of the debate to pieces that deal with these works. Prior to the twentieth century, scholars commonly accepted that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* were both written by Hippolytus.⁴¹ Since the beginning of the twentieth century, such a claim for common authorship has become problematic. There is a cloud of uncertainty surrounding both Hippolytus and many of the works ascribed to him. Scholars lack precise details about who Hippolytus was, which writings can be attributed to him with any degree of confidence, and the dating of both his life and the works attributed to him. Scholars have presented numerous theories attempting to make sense of the disparate pieces of data, but these theories are not plausible enough to gain widespread acceptance. Uncertainty is regnant regarding most questions related to Hippolytus.⁴²

Eusebius first mentions Hippolytus as he is discussing church leaders who left written works to posterity. He refers to Hippolytus in passing as someone “who also

⁴⁰ Because questions about these two works are so intertwined, I have chosen to address them together rather than with an introduction to each of the specific works.

⁴¹ Harnack is a good example of this position. See Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 52–4, 62–3.

⁴² For a concise summary of the major trends and problems in Hippolytus research, see Ronald E. Heine, “Hippolytus, Ps.-Hippolytus and the Early Canons,” in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frances M. Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 142–51.

presided over another church somewhere.”⁴³ Even here, our uncertainty about Hippolytus is evident because Eusebius gives him no geographical epithet. A short while later, Eusebius provides us with a list of Hippolytus’ works to which he has access. Among these, he includes the *Refutatio* or Πρὸς ἀπάσας τὰς αἱρέσεις.⁴⁴ Although Eusebius does not mention the *Contra Noetum* in this list, he does say that there are many other works of Hippolytus that have been preserved by other people.⁴⁵ Eusebius’ final reference to Hippolytus in the *EH* comes during his discussion of Dionysius of Alexandria, where he says that Dionysius sent a letter to “those in Rome” and that the letter was delivered through Hippolytus (διὰ Ἱππολύτου).⁴⁶ This last reference, despite the earlier absence of a geographical epithet, does lend some credence to the common association of Hippolytus with the church in Rome.

Furthermore, a statue was discovered in Rome in 1551 near the tomb of a martyr named Hippolytus.⁴⁷ This statue contained both a calculation of dates for the Passover

⁴³ Eusebius, *EH* 6.20 (trans. LCL 265:65).

⁴⁴ Eusebius, *EH* 6.22.

⁴⁵ Scholars debate whether *Contra Noetum* should be viewed as an independent work or as a part of a larger whole. Those who argue that it is a fragment of a larger work usually assume that it was part of the *Syntagma* mentioned by Photius in *Bibliotheca*, codex 121. Pierre Nautin represents the scholarly trajectory that thinks *Contra Noetum* was the conclusion of the *Syntagma*. See his *Hippolyte et Josipe: Contribution à l’histoire de la littérature chrétienne du troisième siècle*, Études et textes pour l’histoire du dogme de la Trinité 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1947), 100. Harnack also considered *Contra Noetum* to be the conclusion of the *Syntagma* (*History of Dogma*, 3:51–2, n. 1). Butterworth argues at length that *Contra Noetum* is an independent work and should not be considered a fragment dislocated from a larger whole. He argues that it is structured as an adaptation of profane diatribe and that this helps explain the structure, style, and content of the work. See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, ed. Robert Butterworth, Heythrop Monographs 2 (London: Heythrop College [University of London], 1977), 118ff. Manlio Simonetti accepts the conclusions of Butterworth and argues that *Contra Noetum* is an independent work (“Una nuova proposta su Ippolito,” *Augustinianum* 36, no. 1 (1996): 40).

⁴⁶ Eusebius, *EH* 6.46. Eusebius does not specify those to whom Dionysius sent the letter. He merely tells us that it was sent to “those in Rome” (τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ).

⁴⁷ See Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 17ff; Josef Frickel, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom: Ein Lösungsversuch; Die Schriften Elenchos und Contra Noëtum*, Grazer theologische Studien 13 (Graz: Eigenverlag des Instituts für Ökumenische Theologie und Patrologie an der Universität Graz, 1988), 65ff;

and a list of written works.⁴⁸ The similarity of the titles of the works on the statue with other lists of Hippolytus' writings, coupled with its location near the tomb of Hippolytus the martyr, led scholars to conclude that this statue depicted Hippolytus. Varying interpretations of the statue have been weighted heavily in the accounts of many scholars on the works of Hippolytus.⁴⁹

As noted above, the authorship and provenance of the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* have been hotly contested for most of the twentieth century.⁵⁰ The common view

Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 3–50; Heine, "Hippolytus, Ps.-Hippolytus and the Early Canons," 144.

⁴⁸ For a good summary of the list of works on the statue, see Miroslav Marcovich, "Introduction," in *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, Patristische Texte und Studien 25 (New York; Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1986), 12–3.

⁴⁹ For a number of reasons, Nautin doubted that Hippolytus was the author of numerous works attributed to him, especially the *Elenchos* or *Refutatio omnium haeresium*. Nautin, therefore, denied that the statue depicted Hippolytus. Nautin argued that the statue actually depicted a certain Josipe (or Josephus) and that this Josipe was the author of the *Elenchos*. See Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 79ff. One of the chief means Nautin used to posit two authors, Hippolytus and Josipe, was that there were differences between chronological sections in works attributed to Hippolytus and the paschal calculations on the statue. Nautin thought it improbable that a single author would produce conflicting chronologies, and thus argued that there were two authors. More recently, John Behr, following Brent's conclusion argues that Hippolytus was not the author of the *Refutatio* and that it antedated the *Contra Noetum*, which was written by Hippolytus. John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea, The Formation of Christian Theology 1* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 141–2.

⁵⁰ Nautin thinks the *Refutatio* is the product of "Josipe", and he places it earlier than *Contra Noetum*, which he deems to be genuinely Hippolytan (*Hippolyte et Josipe*, 85–6). Marcel Richard notes that serious questions arise when we consider whether the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are by the same author. See his "Sainte Hippolyte, 'Hippolyte et Josipe': Bulletin de Patrologie," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 5 (1948): 297–8. Marcovich (1986) argues that the *Refutatio* is actually by Hippolytus and dates it between 222 and 235 ("Introduction," 16–17). Roberth Butterworth sees no reason to doubt that Hippolytus of Rome was the author of *Contra Noetum* ("Introduction," in *Contra Noetum*, Heythrop Monographs 2 [London: Heythrop College (University of London), 1977], i). In his 1988 monograph, Frickel argued that the *Refutatio* is legitimately by Hippolytus, as is *Contra Noetum*. His argument proceeds by comparing the demonstrations of truth at the end of *Contra Noetum* and *Refutatio*, 10. He builds on the work of Richard and argues strongly against Nautin. See Frickel, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*, 299. Caroline P. Bammel says of Frickel's monograph: "Frickel writes as an advocate rather than as an impartial umpire" ("The State of Play with Regard to Hippolytus and the *Contra Noetum*," *Heythrop Journal* 31, no. 2 [1990]: 195). Later, however, Frickel changed his position and suggested that *Contra Noetum* was not written by Hippolytus but was actually responding to fourth- and fifth-century problems. See Josef Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift *Contra Noetum*: Ein Pseudo-Hippolyt," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski*, ed. Hans Christof Brennecke, Ernst Ludwig Grasmück, and Christoph Marksches, *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 67 (Berlin: de

that Hippolytus was the author of both the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* was forcefully challenged with the publication of Pierre Nautin's *Hippolyte et Josipe* in 1947.⁵¹ At the beginning of the work, Nautin signaled his intention to critically reevaluate the prevailing paradigm with the following statement about the *Refutatio*: "Modern criticism attributes this work to Hippolytus, but it presents such very profound divergences with a certainly authentic text of Hippolytus, the fragment *Contra Noetum*, that it was not possible to avoid posing anew the question of its origin."⁵² In this statement, Nautin shows two of his central propositions: (1) that there are substantial differences between the *Refutatio* and the *Contra Noetum*, and (2) that the *Contra Noetum* is a genuine and reliable work of Hippolytus.⁵³

Gruyter, 1993), 87–123. Reinhard M. Hübner adopts a similar position and argues that *Contra Noetum* is a product of the fourth century and is unreliable for establishing the theology of Noetus ("Melito von Sardes und Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine: antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999], 4–9). Brent thinks the *Refutatio* was written by someone other than Hippolytus, but that Hippolytus touched it up and used it as a source for composing *Contra Noetum*, which was an attempt at rapprochement with the semi-monarchianism of Callistus. (*Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 206, 211, 256–8). Nautin also argues that Trinitarian formulae in Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* are not treated as skeptically as those in *Contra Noetum*. Therefore, he sees no reason that the seemingly advanced Trinitarian theology in *Contra Noetum* would have to be considered a later interpolation. While his observation about the lack of skepticism regarding the pneumatological passages in *Adversus Praxean* is true, Nautin fails to consider whether Tertullian's Montanism influenced him to emphasize pneumatology. See, Nautin, 46–7.

⁵¹ Nautin clearly and somewhat polemically outlines the rise of the scholarly consensus regarding the Hippolytan authorship of both works. He pays particular attention to its rise in German scholarship before stating that "A. d'Alès vulgarisait définitivement en France la thèse allemande" (34). For this narration, see *Ibid.*, 17–35.

⁵² Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 7. Translation mine. "La critique moderne attribue cet ouvrage à Hippolyte; mais il présente des divergences si profondes avec un texte certainement authentique d'Hippolyte, le fragment contre Noët, que l'on ne pouvait éviter de poser à nouveau la question de son origine." Note that Nautin and other scholars prefer to call the *Refutatio* the *Elenchos*. Still others refer to it as the *Philosophoumena*. While any of these titles is appropriate, I will use *Refutatio* for the sake of consistency.

⁵³ Nautin states that one of the reasons he considers *Contra Noetum* to be genuinely Hippolytan is that it is attributed to him by the fifth-century authors Gelasius and Theodoret (*ibid.*, 35). As I will note later, several scholars have questioned the Hippolytan authorship of *Contra Noetum*. Nautin notes that some earlier scholars had viewed the seemingly well-developed pneumatological passages in *Contra Noetum* as later interpolations, but Nautin dismisses these critiques. He claims that these pneumatological sections are so tightly interwoven into the fabric of the work that it is highly improbable that they are interpolations.

Nautin attempts to compare the works attributed to Hippolytus in four major areas to determine if they are genuinely Hippolytan: (1) doctrine, (2) genre, (3) formation of general spirit, (4) style.⁵⁴ After a detailed analysis, Nautin concludes that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are not by the same author. Since he had pre-determined that *Contra Noetum* was a genuinely Hippolytan work, he needed to posit a different author for the *Refutatio*. Eventually, he settled on a certain “Josipe” as the author of the *Refutatio*.⁵⁵ Nautin further suggests that the *Refutatio* was the earlier of the two works and that Hippolytus drew on it when he composed *Contra Noetum*.⁵⁶ Despite some of the highly speculative or tendentious conclusions Nautin came to, his work catapulted questions about Hippolytus back into the scholarly consciousness.⁵⁷ His work was a substantial challenge to the prevailing views at the time.

Furthermore, Nautin accepts Photius’ assertion that Hippolytus was a student of Irenaeus and claims that such pneumatology as we see in *Contra Noetum* was already present in the earlier works of Irenaeus (ibid., 37–42). One of the similarities Nautin claims to see between Irenaeus and Hippolytus is that they both identify the Holy Spirit as Wisdom. Nautin is correct to note that Irenaeus identifies the Holy Spirit and Wisdom, but he is quite mistaken with regard to the *Contra Noetum*. The passage from *Contra Noetum* 10 that Nautin cites to support his position is not about the Holy Spirit, but rather the Son. See ibid., 44. What we see in *Contra Noetum* 10, then, is nothing more than the standard early-third century connection of the creative functions of the Son with those of Wisdom. Brent also notes this erroneous assertion of Nautin (*Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 533 n. 126).

⁵⁴ Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 48. By “formation of general spirit” (formation d’esprit générale) Nautin seems to mean something like the intellectual horizon of each author. For example, he thinks that the divergence in usage of scripture between the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* “révèle déjà deux esprits de formations très différentes” (ibid., 51).

⁵⁵ Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 88.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 56–8. One of the chief reasons Nautin gives for believing that the *Refutatio* is earlier is that it has no mention of the condemnation of Noetus. *Contra Noetum*, on the other hand, does have an account of Noetus’ condemnation. Since Nautin assumes that there is some dependence between the works, he finds it very implausible that the “Josipe” would not have included details about the condemnation of Noetus if he had been aware of them. Thus, for Nautin, it makes sense that *Contra Noetum* was later. This whole argument about which of the works was earlier, however, begs the question about dependence. Was there actually direct dependence between the works? If there was, is Nautin’s dating scheme the only way to explain the absence of Noetus’ condemnation in the *Refutatio*?

⁵⁷ Nautin’s work is tendentious in that he exhibits a marked preference for Hippolytus. He views “Josipe” as a pretentious dilettante, while he claims that Hippolytus was a pious man of the church. The following is a good example of his estimation of the two: “Hippolyte et Josipe représentent ainsi deux types

The publication of Nautin's monograph touched off a controversy among French scholars that lasted for nearly a decade.⁵⁸ Gustave Bardy quickly responded to Nautin's thesis with acerbic criticism and argued for common Hippolytan authorship.⁵⁹ Shortly following Bardy's harsh critique of Nautin's thesis, Marcel Richard began a series of articles in which he disputed the conclusions Nautin drew from the chronological inconsistencies. Richard argued that such inconsistencies do not necessarily lead one to conclude that there were two different authors. Indeed, Richard argued that Hippolytus was the author of the works Nautin divided between Hippolytus and Josipe, although he was willing to admit that there were interpolations in the extant texts.⁶⁰

An Italian school of scholars devoted substantial attention to the Hippolytan question beginning in the 1970s and held two conferences devoted to Hippolytus. They generally accepted Nautin's fundamental thesis that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*

d'esprit très différents, et l'on ne peut s'empêcher de comparer l'impression qu'ils nous laissent après bientôt deux millénaires. L'oeuvre de Josipe nous apparaît bien vieille, à cause de l'érudition périmée qui l'encombre. Quand nous lisons aujourd'hui ses développements copieux sur la physique de la création ou sur la description de l'Hadès, nous trouvons que l'"amour de la science", dont il se vantait, l'a entraîné à beaucoup de puérilité. La sobriété d'Hippolyte dans les mêmes matières relève d'une intelligence religieuse plus pénétrante et incontestablement plus proche de l'esprit moderne. C'est à son esprit ecclésiastique, qu'il nous faut accepter d'en savoir gré. Parce qu'Hippolyte n'a pas voulu d'autre science que celle des 'saintes Écritures', son oeuvre reste vivante pour nous" (*Hippolyte et Josipe*, 103).

⁵⁸ Butterworth gives a competent summary of the whole controversy, although it precedes the substantial contributions made by the Italian school in the late 1970s. See Robert Butterworth, "The Growth of the Problem," in *Contra Noetum*, Heythrop Monographs 2 (London: Heythrop College (University of London), 1977), 1–33.

⁵⁹ Gustave Bardy, "L'énigme d'Hippolyte," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 5, no. 1 (1948): 63–88.

⁶⁰ For Richard's response to Nautin, see Richard, "Sainte Hippolyte, 'Hippolyte et Josipe': Bulletin de Patrologie"; idem, "Comput et chronographie chez Saint Hippolyte," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 7 (1950): 237–68; idem, "Comput et chronographie chez Saint Hippolyte," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 8 (1951): 19–51; idem, "Encore le problème d'Hippolyte," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 10 (1953): 13–52; idem, "Dernières remarques sur s. Hippolyte et le soi-disant Josipe," *Recherches de science religieuse* 43 (1955): 379–94.

were not composed by the same author.⁶¹ Josef Frickel, who participated in both of the Italian conferences, maintained the common Hippolytan authorship of the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*.⁶² In 1993, however, Frickel revised his position and argued that *Contra Noetum* was actually not by Hippolytus.⁶³

Since Frickel's change of position in 1993, the majority of scholars have rejected the older view that both texts were composed by Hippolytus of Rome.⁶⁴ Brent's more recent proposal accepts that Hippolytus was not the author of both the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*, but he innovatively, if not convincingly, argues that there was a Hippolytan school operative in Rome.⁶⁵ These scholarly arguments about Hippolytus have ranged widely, drawing upon both archaeological evidence and the written works attributed to Hippolytus. Scholars have clearly shown that there are substantial theological differences between the extant works, especially between the theological positions favored by one or another work.⁶⁶

⁶¹ See the two volumes of conference proceedings, and especially the essays of Simonetti and Loi. *Ricerche su Ippolito*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 13 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1977); *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 30 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1989).

⁶² Josef Frickel, "Contraddizioni nelle opere e nella persona di Ippolito di Roma," in *Ricerche su Ippolito*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 13 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1977), 137–49; idem, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*; idem, "Ippolito di Roma, scrittore e martire," in *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 30 (Roma: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1989), 23–41.

⁶³ Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift *Contra Noetum*: ein Pseudo-Hippolyt."

⁶⁴ Hübner thinks that *Contra Noetum* was written in the fourth century and is fundamentally unreliable for the reconstruction of Noetus' teaching ("Melito und Noët," 1999, 4–9).

⁶⁵ Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*.

⁶⁶ I am referring to places where the authors go beyond refuting their opponents and lay out their own positions. For example, Frickel's earlier argument examines the positions endorsed in the "demonstrations of truth" in *Refutatio X* and *Contra Noetum* (*Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*). On the basis of this study, though, Frickel argues that the two works were written by the same author. His argument countered the multiple-authors hypothesis that was becoming dominant.

One of the most recent detailed treatments of the Hippolytan question is that of J. A. Cerrato.⁶⁷ Cerrato notes at the outset of his work that he is critical of the traditional Roman hypothesis, namely, that all the works commonly ascribed to Hippolytus were penned by a Roman bishop named Hippolytus. Cerrato notes that the majority of studies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries focused on the relationship between the controversial works: the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*. His study breaks new ground because he concentrates his analysis on the biblical commentaries ascribed to Hippolytus.⁶⁸ He argues that the overwhelming majority of biblical commentaries of the same style as those ascribed to Hippolytus were produced in the East; there is little literary evidence for this commentary tradition in Rome. Furthermore, Cerrato sees enough similarities between these (most likely) eastern commentaries and *Contra Noetum* to argue that they were by the same author. The same cannot be said of the *Refutatio*. Although Cerrato does not spend much time discussing the dating of *Contra Noetum*, the fact that he lumps it with the eastern biblical commentaries suggests a date at the beginning of the third century.

The scholarly opinion that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are not both the product of Hippolytus' pen has grown increasingly strong since the publication of Nautin's monograph in the 1940s. Indeed, nearly all scholars have abandoned attempts to

⁶⁷ J. A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁶⁸ Ibid., 82: "Throughout the literary controversy between Nautin and his critics the emphasis remained on the anti-heretical works, especially the *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio*. This had been the focus of the nineteenth century. It was the original point of attack against the Roman hypothesis and, therefore, the centre of defence by advocates of the western provenance view. The evidences for the eastern character of the commentaries, perhaps the most positive and persuasive data in the debate were not brought to the forefront of the discussion."

show that Hippolytus wrote both texts.⁶⁹ Accordingly, my treatment of these two works begins with the well-founded assumption that they were not written by the same author. Although traditional claims about Hippolytan authorship have fallen out of favor, these texts still prove to be worthwhile sources for the reconstruction of the monarchian controversy. Both the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* were concerned with refuting monarchian teaching; and if Heine's thesis is correct, these two texts provide a lens into how monarchianism developed over a period of about thirty years (from ca. 200 to ca. 230).⁷⁰ Even though they are probably by different authors and there are stylistic differences between the two, the texts can still be used to create a more substantial coherent picture of the monarchian teachings. Regarding stylistic differences, I am thinking specifically of the way the accounts of monarchian teaching are organized. In the *Refutatio*, few scriptural references are used when laying out the positions of Callistus et al. In *Contra Noetum*, however, the work is structured around biblical quotations, monarchian interpretation of those verses, and then a rebuttal of their interpretation.

⁶⁹ Mansfeld notes, however, that he finds Frickel's argument that they are by the same author mostly convincing. See Jaap Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context: Hippolytus' Elenchos as a Source for Greek Philosophy*, *Philosophia Antiqua* 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 317.

⁷⁰ Ronald E. Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 78. Heine argues that *Contra Noetum* bears witness to an earlier form of Monarchianism wherein patripassian assertions were not viewed as problematic. The *Refutatio*, on the other hand, shows a more developed form of Monarchianism that sought to distance itself from the difficult patripassian claims of earlier forms of Monarchianism. If Mouraviev is correct, the development of Monarchian teaching is even visible in the different reports on Noetian teaching in the *Refutatio*. See Serge N. Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët (Commentaire d'Hippolyte, Refut. omn. haer. IX 8 - 10)," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, vol. 2.36.6, 1992, 4375–4402.

Hippolytus: *Contra Noetum*

Introduction

As the summary of disparate positions regarding the works of Hippolytus above demonstrates, scholars are divided regarding the date of *Contra Noetum*. Despite the difficulties of dating the work, determinations about its date remain quite important. Nearly all scholars agree that there is a relationship of dependence between *Contra Noetum* and Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*.⁷¹ Narrowing the date of *Contra Noetum* helps us determine the directionality of that dependence. Furthermore, an accurate dating of the work allows us to make determinations about any developments within monarchian theology. Even with the uncertainty about dating, *Contra Noetum* contains snippets of simple and early monarchian teachings that help lay bare some of the core monarchian commitments.

Nautin and Brent both take *Contra Noetum* to be a genuine work of Hippolytus, and both place its composition after the *Refutatio*. In Brent's scheme, the date of the work is sometime after 225 C.E.⁷² Frickel disagreed with the conclusions of Nautin and

⁷¹ One of the main reasons scholars think that there is some sort of dependence between the two works is that they both deploy a similar understanding of "economy" against the monarchians. I detail the theories about dependence in the following discussion. One notable exception to this is Michael Decker, who thinks that the two works were composed independently. See his "Die Monarchianer: Frühchristliche Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und Kleinasien" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1987), 49.

⁷² See Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 85–6; Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 529. Brent is fully aware that his proposal contradicts the positions of the Italian school. He directly engages Simonetti in this section, stating, "We shall argue therefore that though Tertullian is dependent upon the theology of El., C.N. is in fact dependent upon Tertullian. We shall show that where Simonetti claims Tertullian develops, it is in fact C.N. which shortens and omits in order to depersonalize the pre-existent λόγος and thus forge a rapprochement with Monarchianism, which would have regarded a personal pre-existent λόγος as part of a ditheism or tritheism" (529).

proposed that *Contra Noetum* preceded the *Refutatio*.⁷³ Specifically, he dated *Contra Noetum* before 217 and the *Refutatio* around 235.⁷⁴ Later, he changed his position and argued that *Contra Noetum* had undergone substantial redaction.⁷⁵ Simonetti has forcefully and repeatedly rejected the claims of Nautin and Brent that *Contra Noetum* is later than the *Refutatio*.⁷⁶ He contends that *Contra Noetum* was written in the late second century or early third and that it antedates Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*.⁷⁷ On the whole, I find Simonetti's arguments regarding the early dating of *Contra Noetum* to be more compelling than those that argue it was composed after the *Refutatio*.⁷⁸ The argument for

⁷³ Frickel, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*, 204–10. For an explicit rejection of Nautin's proposal, see 208, n. 628.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁷⁵ Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift *Contra Noetum*: Ein Pseudo-Hippolyt."

⁷⁶ See especially Simonetti, "Una nuova proposta su Ippolito," 29–31. Here Simonetti explicitly engages with Brent's work and rejects his conclusions. Although Simonetti rejects many of the details of Brent's argument, he is not fundamentally opposed to Brent's core thesis that there was a Hippolytan school. For a protracted discussion of the relationship between *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*, see Manlio Simonetti, "Due note su Ippolito: Ippolito interprete di Genesi 49; Ippolito e Tertulliano," in *Ricerche su Ippolito*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 13 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1977), 121–36.

⁷⁷ Simonetti, "Due note su Ippolito," 136.

⁷⁸ Although the subject is beyond the scope of this current section, many scholars have observed that the Pneumatology in *Contra Noetum* seems to be rather developed if the document is from the early third century. Despite the rigorous debate, no consensus has been reached. Nautin thinks the Pneumatology is intelligible coming from Hippolytus and does not see the need to posit later interpolations (*Hippolyte et Josipe*, 36–47). Richard disagreed with Nautin and thought that the Holy Spirit passages were perhaps an indication that the entire work was later. See, for example, Richard, "Sainte Hippolyte, 'Hippolyte et Josipe': Bulletin de Patrologie," 298. Reinhard Hübner accepted Richard's theory and viewed *Contra Noetum* as a product of the fourth century and as completely unreliable for the reconstruction of Noetus' thought. See two of his discussions: *Der Paradox Eine*, viii; "Die antignostische Glaubensregel des Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 39. Although Hübner thinks that *Contra Noetum* is a late work, he repeatedly claims that Noetus himself was an early figure and that Ignatius, Irenaeus, Melito, and others drew on this theology. I will discuss his theory in more detail in my section on the *Refutatio*, but suffice it to say that I find it unconvincing. Note also Mark Edwards' negative appraisal of Hübner's main thesis: M. J. Edwards, "Review of *Der Paradox Eine*: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im Zweiten Jahrhundert," *Journal of Theological Studies* 52, no. 1 (2001): 354–56. In his earlier works, Frickel did not think that these pneumatological passages were later interpolations and noted that such Trinitarian formulations can be found in the earlier work of Irenaeus (*Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*, 254–5).

an early dating of *Contra Noetum* is further strengthened by Heine's contention that the straightforward patripassianism of *Contra Noetum* represents an earlier strain of Asian monarchianism.⁷⁹ Thus, I will proceed from the assumption that *Contra Noetum* is the earliest extant witness that we possess to monarchian teachings. Furthermore, this conclusion leads me to consider Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* to have been at least partially dependent upon *Contra Noetum*.

Textual Analysis

Contra Noetum begins with a condensed representation of the most troublesome aspects of the Noetians' teaching and offers some limited biographical background about Noetus. We learn that he was from Smyrna and that he lived not long before the author of *Contra Noetum*.⁸⁰ Next we are informed that Noetus had friction with "the elders" and was eventually condemned.⁸¹ If we can trust Hippolytus' account, Noetus opened his own

⁷⁹ Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 89. Note also Mouraviev's discussion of the possible development of Noetus' teaching by his successors: Serge N. Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët (Commentaire d'Hippolyte, Refut. omn. haer. IX 8 - 10)," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, vol. 2.36.6, 1992, 4375–4402. Especially helpful are his two charts that map out the main areas of development within Noetian theology on pp. 4385-6.

⁸⁰ *Contra Noetum* 1.1. Unless otherwise noted, the Greek for *Contra Noetum* is taken from Butterworth's edition. Because the section numbers are the most specific reference, I will not include the page number from Butterworth.

⁸¹ *Contra Noetum* 1.4; 1.6-7. It seems as though Noetus had multiple run-ins with the elders. In 1.3, Hippolytus mentions one condemnation and in 1.6 speaks of Noetus being called in again by the elders. Hippolytus' tone in this section is far from friendly, and it is possible that this account is unreliable. However, such actions by *presbyteroi* fall in line with what we see in Origen's *Dialogue with Heraclides* and the episode with Beryllus in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.33. Scholars who argue that *Contra Noetum* post-dated the *Refutatio* often fixate on these details about the condemnation of Noetus. They claim that if the author of the *Refutatio* had known these details, he would have included them. The absence of the condemnation in the *Refutatio* signals to them that *Contra Noetum* had not yet been written. For a representative expression of this line of reasoning, see Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 57–9.

didaskaleion in response to the condemnation of the elders.⁸² Hippolytus gives us further information about Noetus' teaching and the response of the elders to him, but Noetus himself does not appear to be Hippolytus' main target.⁸³ Hippolytus' invective is directed against the disciples of Noetus.⁸⁴ When he provides the details of the teaching he is opposing, he presents it not as the teaching of Noetus but as the teaching of his disciples.⁸⁵ Noetus is the villainized heresiarch who quickly fades into the background as Hippolytus addresses the teachings of his disciples, who were most likely the contemporaries of Hippolytus.

One God

After this introduction, Hippolytus begins his exposé of the Noetians' teaching before rebutting it point-by-point. From the outset it becomes clear that the Noetian teaching was firmly rooted in scriptural exegesis.⁸⁶ The first texts presented are all adduced by the Noetians in order to support their foundational claim that there is only

⁸² *Contra Noetum* 1.8.

⁸³ Hippolytus gives us a digest of his teaching in 1.2: "He said that Christ himself was the Father, and that the Father himself had been born and had suffered and had died." (trans. Butterworth, 42 with my modifications). Both Hippolytus' digest of Noetus' teachings and the response of the elders to Noetus are important for reconstructing the positions of the Noetians. I will offer a fuller treatment of them as I develop the major themes of the Noetian teaching.

⁸⁴ *Contra Noetum* 1.1: "Ἐτεροὶ τινες... τινος Νοητοῦ μαθηταί.

⁸⁵ *Contra Noetum* 2.1. οἱ καὶ δεῖξαι βούλονται σύστασιν τῷ δόγματι λέγοντες... The οἱ here is referring to the "Ἐτεροὶ τινες... τινος Νοητοῦ μαθηταί with which the work opens.

⁸⁶ This will be important to note in our later discussion of the *Refutatio*, which expurgates almost all scriptural references when it reports on the teachings of key monarchians. As I observe in my later discussions of the *Refutatio*, scholars have recognized that this was a result of the polemical tendency of the author. Decker argues that the scriptural quotations were not actually used by the Noetians and that they were inserted by Hippolytus to be fodder for his exegetical rebuttal. Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 156–7. Given the prominence of biblical exegesis in every account of monarchianism except the *Refutatio*, Decker's theory lacks textual support.

one God. As the analysis continues, it will become clear that theirs was a particularly rigid interpretation of the claim that there is only one God.⁸⁷

Hippolytus' account has them combining Gen. 46:3 (or Ex. 3:6) with Ex. 20:3 to affirm that there is only one God: Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν· οὐκ ἔσονται ὑμῖν θεοὶ ἕτεροι πλὴν ἐμοῦ.⁸⁸ These two conjoined texts precede a rough paraphrase of Isa. 44:6: Ἐγώ, φησὶν, πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ ἔσχατος καὶ μετ' ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς.⁸⁹ Immediately following his presentation of these Noetian prooftexts, Hippolytus states that “this is the way they are claiming to establish a single God” (οὕτω φάσκουσιν συνιστᾶν ἓνα Θεόν).⁹⁰ Given the centrality of this claim to their teaching, the Noetians almost certainly had more proof texts in their dossier to prove that there is only one God. Nevertheless, Hippolytus reproduces enough of their argument to make it clear that their first step was to argue that there is only one God and that passages from the Old Testament were critical pieces of their exegetical argument.⁹¹

The Noetian fixation on the claim that there is only one God is evidenced in numerous other places in *Contra Noetum*. It is clear that the Noetians accused Hippolytus (and probably the elders also) of being ditheists. Hippolytus twice clarifies his own

⁸⁷ Remember that this rigid interpretation of the uniqueness of God is what I take to be the common denominator of the different expressions of monarchianism and some forms of psilanthropism. Although they diverge about the best way to protect monotheism, the impulse to preserve a strong form of it motivated each of their theologies.

⁸⁸ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.1. These quotations are nearly verbatim from the LXX. In the LXX of both of the verses, the second person pronouns are singular. Butterworth identifies the first quotation as Ex. 3:6, but it is actually closer to Gen. 46:3.

⁸⁹ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.2. Again, this is not an exact quotation of the LXX.

⁹⁰ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.3. (trans. Butterworth, 44).

⁹¹ Mouraviev also identifies the assertion that there is only one God as the first postulate of the Noetian system. Mouraviev, “Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët,” 4379.

claims in order to state that he does not teach that there are two Gods.⁹² The response of the elders to Noetus in the introduction is particularly telling in this regard. They state, “We too have knowledge of a single God – in the true way” (Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἓνα Θεὸν οἶδαμεν ἀληθῶς).⁹³ It was necessary for them to restate that they believed in one God precisely because Noetus and his followers accused them of being ditheists.

The centrality of the Noetians’ concern with the oneness of God is again on display as Hippolytus begins his demonstration of the truth. He starts as follows, “There is one God, and we acquire knowledge of him from no other source, brethren, than the Holy Scriptures.”⁹⁴ Hippolytus’ choice to start his demonstration of truth this way is indicative of two prominent features of his conflict with the Noetians: (1) it focused on the proper understanding of monotheism, and (2) the conflict was thoroughly exegetical.⁹⁵ This emphasis on the proper understanding of monotheism is further borne out by the way in which Hippolytus refutes the Noetian claims before his demonstration of truth: “After all, would not everyone say that there is a single God? – but it is not everyone who would scrap the economy.”⁹⁶ For Hippolytus, the question is not whether

⁹² Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 11.1, 14.2-3. That the monarchians charged their opponents with being ditheists is well attested in the extant literature. I will highlight occurrences of this charge in the discussions of the other primary sources. The charge appears twice in the *Refutatio*.

⁹³ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.7 (trans. Butterworth, 44).

⁹⁴ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 9.1 (trans. Butterworth, 66): εἰς Θεός, ὃν οὐκ ἄλλοθεν ἐπιγινώσκουμεν, ἀδελφοί, ἢ τῶν ἁγίων γραφῶν.

⁹⁵ Again, contra Decker’s thesis, Hippolytus’ conflict with the Noetians was thoroughly exegetical. He complains numerous times about the bad exegetical practices of his opponents. See *Contra Noetum* 2.4, 3.1, 4.2, 9.3.

⁹⁶ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.4 (trans. Butterworth, 48): τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἐρεῖ ἓνα Θεὸν εἶναι; ἀλλ’ οὐ τὴν οἰκονομίαν ἀναιρήσει. Hippolytus’ use of economy is quite important, and I will discuss it later. Note also that economy is an important term in Tertullian’s *Adversus Praxean*, and the role of the term in both *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean* is one of the primary reasons that scholars think there is a relationship of dependence between the two works.

there is one God; everyone believes this. The question is how to interpret the statement that there is only one God. Hippolytus follows his commitment to monotheism by outlining his exegetical task against the Noetians: “So really, in view of all of this, the first of our two tasks must be to refute our opponents’ understanding of the passages quoted, and to show what they mean in the light of the truth.”⁹⁷ Again, the dual emphasis on monotheism and scriptural exegesis shows that both Hippolytus and the Noetians saw the question of monotheism as one best resolved through scriptural exegesis.⁹⁸

Visible

From this bedrock assertion that there is only one God, the Noetians moved to address passages wherein God is said to have been visible to humans. Oddly absent from the texts they marshal in support of their argument are *loci classici* such as the episode of the burning bush (Ex. 3) or the Sinai theophany (Ex. 19:16-25). It is not surprising that the next step of the Noetians’ argument was to address the visibility of God. By the late second century, it was an exegetical commonplace to identify the one manifest in the

⁹⁷ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.5 (trans. Butterworth, 48): ὄντως μὲν οὖν τὰ κεφάλαια διὰ ταῦτα πρότερον δεῖ ἀνατραπῆναι κατὰ τὸν ἐκείνων νοῦν· κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀλήθειαν δειχθῆναι. This passage particularly tells against Decker’s claim that the Noetian exegesis is the invention of Hippolytus. If Hippolytus did invent the exegesis, this passage shows how far he was willing to extend his ruse.

⁹⁸ It is very interesting to note that Hippolytus links the exegetical tendencies of the Noetians with those of Theodotus. He states, “And in this way they themselves, too, wish to explain these individual verses – using them in the way that Theodotus spoke in his attempt to establish that [Christ] was a mere man” (*Contra Noetum* 3.1 [trans. Butterworth, 48]). Therefore, it is very likely that psilanthropism and monarchianism were both responses to the same problem. Unfortunately, we do not have access to texts that preserve the exegetical proclivities of Theodotus and other second-century psilanthropists. Access to Theodotus’ exegesis of these passages could help us fill in details about the distinct ways these exegetes sought to defend monotheism. Hippolytus and Eusebius both accuse Theodotus of teaching the same thing: that Christ was ἄνθρωπον ψιλόν.

theophanies as the *Logos*.⁹⁹ This interpretation of the theophanies was driven by an attempt both to affirm the invisibility of God the Father (cf. Ex. 33:20) and to maintain that God did appear in the theophanies. The argument that it was the divine *Logos* who was seen in these manifestations allowed interpreters to uphold both claims. Justin Martyr is an early and strong example of this exegetical trend.¹⁰⁰ Because the Noetians had a strong reaction against anything they deemed to contradict a rigorous understanding of the uniqueness of God, this exegetical avenue was unpalatable.

Rejecting the prevailing interpretation of the OT theophanies, the Noetians argued that it was the one God who became visible in history. As noted earlier, Hippolytus' account has the Noetians sustaining their argument without reference to the classic OT theophanies. Perhaps they avoided these passages because they were precisely the ones used by those who argued that the *Logos* was present in the theophanies.¹⁰¹ The first passage the Noetians use to argue about the visibility of God is Baruch 3:36-8.¹⁰² They appear to have chosen this passage because it begins with an affirmation of the incomparability of God (a statement of God's uniqueness) before proceeding to speak of God becoming visible to humans. In the Noetian exegesis, we have here a clear example

⁹⁹ See Bogdan G. Bucur's recent article on the importance of the interpretation of theophanies in the second century: "Justin Martyr's Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies and the Parting of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism," *Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2014): 34–91.

¹⁰⁰ See especially Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 63.

¹⁰¹ Again, see Justin, *I Apology* 63, where he uses Ex. 3:6 as a major example.

¹⁰² On the use of Baruch 3:36, see Elena Cavalcanti, "Osservazioni sull'uso patristico di Baruch 3, 36-38," in *Mémorial Dom Jean Gribomont (1920-1986)*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 27 (Roma: Institutum Patristicum "Augustinianum," 1988), 145–65; Reinhard M. Hübner, "Der antivalentinianische Charakter der Theologie des Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 117–9; idem, "Εἰς θεὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστός," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 228–9. Cavalcanti is more concerned with later use of this verse but still has some helpful background.

of the one God becoming visible in human history. Hippolytus records Noetus as interpreting this passage as follows: “So you see... that this is the God who is one alone, and who subsequently was seen and conversed with men.”¹⁰³

Following the exposition of Baruch 3:36-38, Hippolytus presents Noetian interpretation of Isa. 45:14-5. This passage seems to have been chosen by the Noetians for the same reasons as the passage from Baruch. Like the Baruch passage, this passage contains an affirmation of the oneness of God (ἐποῦσιν Οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς πλὴν σοῦ) and the presence and manifestation of God among humans (ὅτι ἐν σοὶ ὁ θεός ἐστιν). Hippolytus again gives Noetus’ interpretation of the passage: “the scriptures proclaim one God—the one who is visibly revealed.”¹⁰⁴

The Noetian combination of affirmations about the oneness of God with affirmations about the same God’s visibility is no mistake. In the late second century, OT theophanies were often interpreted as an example of the place of the *Logos* alongside the Father, even if the specifics of the divinity of the *Logos* and the relationship of the *Logos* to the Father had not yet been worked out with the precision that would come in later centuries. By addressing together God’s oneness and visibility, the Noetians were offering an alternative exegesis to the dominant one which saw the *Logos* in the theophanies.

From these two exegetical movements, the main thrust of the Noetian argument becomes exceedingly clear. According to Hippolytus, their central claim is, without a

¹⁰³ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.5. (trans. Butterworth, 46): Ὁρᾷς οὖν, φησίν, ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς ὁ μόνος ὢν καὶ ὕστερον ὁφθείς καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συνανεστραφείς.

¹⁰⁴ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.6. (trans. Butterworth, 46): ἓνα θεὸν κηρύσσουσιν αἱ γραφαί, τούτου ἐμφανοῦς δεικνυμένου.

doubt, that there is only one God. Furthermore, their linkage of this affirmation to assertions about the visibility of God demonstrates that they considered exegesis that saw the *Logos* in the theophanies as a direct contradiction of the assertion of the oneness of God. Thus, in the Noetian exegesis presented by Hippolytus, the Noetians offer the *sine qua non* of their theology: the oneness of God. They follow this claim by offering exegesis of passages dealing with the visibility of God, for it is the frequent exegesis of these passages that they deem to be a critical threat to the oneness of God. Hippolytus records other passages that the Noetians used to support their arguments, but these passages are largely used to work out the implications of the particularly rigorous understanding of the oneness of God to which the Noetians adhered. I address exegesis of these passages in the following thematic analysis of Noetian teaching.

Both Father and Son

The next salient characteristic of the Noetian system is the stark identification of the Father and the Son. This assertion appears repeatedly in the first few chapters of *Contra Noetum*. Hippolytus reports that the Noetians retorted to questions about maintaining one God as follows, “If, therefore, I confess Christ as God, then he himself is the Father, if in fact he is God. But Christ himself, being God, suffered. Therefore, did not the Father suffer? For he himself was the Father.”¹⁰⁵ I will address the patripassianism of this passage later; but for now, there are several other interesting features to consider.

¹⁰⁵ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.3. Translation mine. Εἰ οὖν Χριστὸν ὁμολογῶ Θεόν, αὐτὸς ἄρα ἐστὶν ὁ Πατήρ, εἰ γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ Θεός. ἔπαθεν δὲ Χριστὸς αὐτὸς ὢν Θεός. ἄρα οὖν ἔπαθεν Πατήρ; <Πατήρ> γὰρ αὐτὸς ἦν.

The first notable thing about this statement is the tag on the end of the first sentence: “if in fact he is God at all.”¹⁰⁶ If this statement actually comes from the Noetians, it lends support to the hypothesis that monarchianism and psilanthropism were closely related. This quip implies that one way to deal with the trouble of maintaining monotheism is to deny the divinity of Christ. This is not the path the Noetians chose, but they seem to have been aware of it as a live option.

The psilanthropists did not need to identify the Father and the Son because they felt no compulsion to maintain the divinity of the Son. The Noetians, on the other hand, accepted the divinity of Christ as a fundamental premise (“But Christ himself, being God”). Their acceptance of Christ’s divinity then fed into their logic of monotheism: if Christ is God and the Father is God, then Christ must be the Father.¹⁰⁷ Hippolytus then gives us another Noetian excerpt: “You see, brethren, how rash and reckless a doctrine they introduced in saying quite shamelessly, ‘The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son; he himself was born, he himself suffered, he himself raised himself up!’”¹⁰⁸ This is another straightforward statement that the Father and the Son are the same.

¹⁰⁶ It is difficult to tell if this is an actual quotation or if this is merely Hippolytus’ reproduction of their position. If this is not an actual quotation, we must be wary of any less-than-generous additions Hippolytus might have made.

¹⁰⁷ Note that this is precisely what Evans is getting at in his discussion of the logic at work in monarchianism (“Introduction,” 8).

¹⁰⁸ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.2 (trans. Butterworth, 48): ὁρᾶτε, ἀδελφοί, πῶς προαλὲς καὶ τολμηρὸν δόγμα παρεισήνεγκαν ἀναισχύντως λέγοντες, Αὐτός ἐστι Χριστὸς ὁ Πατήρ, αὐτὸς Υἱός, αὐτὸς ἐγεννήθη, αὐτὸς ἔπαθεν, αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ἤγειρεν. Note the importance the pronoun αὐτός has in these statements. This use of the pronoun features prominently in all of the extant accounts of monarchianism. Butterworth is not always consistent with his translations of αὐτός. Sometimes he translates it as “in person.” I prefer in these cases to translate it as “himself” because I think it captures the thrust of the monarchian doctrine a bit better. The use of αὐτός here could also be translated as “the same,” which I still prefer to Butterworth’s translation. Where Butterworth uses “in person” or something similar, I have tried to modify the translation to reflect this preference. Also worth noting is the seeming redundancy in this statement: “The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son.” While we could have here nothing more than repetition, it could also reflect a technical usage of the terms Christ and Son. Note here Heine and Loofs’ observation that the monarchians almost always used Son to refer to the historical Jesus (Heine,

Although it seems as though the Noetians could have arrived at this identification of the Father and Son purely by means of the logic of the restrictive understanding of the oneness of God, they nonetheless bolstered their claim by means of scriptural exegesis, as we should expect by now. In order to do so, the Noetians appear to have used the two passages that recur in later stages of the monarchian controversy: Jn 10:30 and Jn. 14:8-10. Hippolytus does not give us direct quotations from the Noetians regarding these passages, but he presents the use of them somewhat hypothetically (ἐὰν δὲ λέγῃ).

Hippolytus writes, “And if he were to say, ‘He himself said: “I and the Father are one”’ (Jn 10, 30), let him apply his mind to the matter and learn that he did not say, ‘I and the Father *am* one’, but ‘*are* one’. ‘We are’ is not said with reference to the one, but with reference to the two. He revealed two persons, but a single power.”¹⁰⁹

The Noetians supplemented their exegesis of John 10:30 with exegesis of John 14:8-10. Hippolytus writes,

But supposing they were to try also to quote the fact that Philip asked about the Father: ‘Show us the Father and we shall be satisfied’ (Jn 14, 8); and the Lord answered him with the words: ‘Have I been with you so long, Philip, and yet you do not know me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?’ (Jn 14, 9-10) – and they want to

“The Christology of Callistus,” 71; Friedrich Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, 4th ed. [Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1906], 188). If this usage is in play here, we could be seeing the monarchians’ way of identifying the Father with the incorporeal, heavenly Son of their opponents as well as with the incarnate Son. The repetition of αὐτός could also be a subtle reaction against the use of ἕτερος to describe the Son, as in Justin.

¹⁰⁹ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 7.1 (trans. Butterworth, 60): ἐὰν δὲ λέγῃ, Αὐτὸς εἶπεν, Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἐν ἐσμέν, ἐπιστανέτω τὸν νοῦν καὶ μανθανέτω ὅτι οὐκ εἶπεν ὅτι ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἐν εἰμί, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἐσμέν. τὸ γὰρ ἐσμέν οὐκ ἐφ’ ἐνὸς λέγεται, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ δύο· <δύο> πρόσωπα ἔδειξεν, δύναμιν δὲ μίαν. Note that Hippolytus’ distinction between “am” and “are” here is a clear example of the anti-monarchian exegesis of these passages that Mark DelCogliano has highlighted. See his “The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 117–38.

say that thereby their doctrine prevails, since [Christ] maintains that he himself is the Father.¹¹⁰

Although Hippolytus does not provide us with any of the specifics of their exegesis of this passage, it is easy to see how it fit within their theological framework. This passage addresses the visibility of God; and because they used it to identify the Father and Son, it would have supported their contention that they believed in the one God who was visibly revealed.¹¹¹ As the monarchian controversy developed through the third century, John 10:30 and John 14:8-10 became centerpieces of their exegetical argument. While the Noetians appear to have used them before the time of Hippolytus, they seem not to have had yet the central role in the argument. Later authors, like Tertullian and Novatian, note that these two passages from the Gospel of John were fundamental for the monarchians.

Suffered and Died

The Noetians moved from their identification of the Father and the Son to what was for them the logical consequence of that identification: the attribution of suffering to the Father. If Hippolytus' fixation on this claim is an accurate indicator, this last phase of the Noetian system was quite irksome for him. He highlights this aspect of their teaching in the opening lines of the text: "[Noetus] said that Christ was the Father himself, and that the Father himself had been born and had suffered and died."¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 7.4 (trans. Butterworth, 62): εἰ δὲ καὶ Φίλιππον ἐπερωτᾶν περὶ Πατρὸς βούλοιντο λέγειν—Δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν Πατέρα καὶ ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν· πρὸς ὃν ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Κύριος λέγων, Τοσοῦτον χρόνον μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι, Φίλιππε, καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκάς με; ὁ ἑωρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακε τὸν Πατέρα· οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν; —καὶ θέλουσιν λέγειν διὰ τοῦτου κρατύνεσθαι τὸ δόγμα αὐτῶν, ὁμολογοῦντος αὐτοῦ ἑαυτὸν Πατέρα.

¹¹¹ Remember that they spoke of the one God who was visibly revealed in *Contra Noetum* 2.6.

¹¹² Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.2 (trans. Butterworth, 42 with modifications): ἔφη τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν Πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Πατέρα γεγεννησθαι καὶ πεπονθέναι καὶ ἀποτεθνηκέναι. In this

The same theme is restated a little later, with the Noetians reasoning, “But Christ himself, being God, suffered. Therefore, did not the Father suffer? For he himself was the Father.”¹¹³ Unlike the earlier passage, the logical flow of the Noetian argument is explicit here. Because the Noetians held that the Father and Son were the same, they attributed to the Father everything that was ascribed to the Son, including suffering. The Noetians’ sense of the logical necessity of their patripassian claim is again highlighted a bit later. Hippolytus has his opponent stating the following, “‘I am bound’, says he, ‘since the existence of a single one is maintained to submit this very one to suffering.’”¹¹⁴

Hippolytus repeatedly focuses on the same claims of the Noetians, and his short digests of their teaching punctuate the sections where he details their exegesis in depth. He produces one more example of the Noetian claim before demonstrating how they are in error: “You see, brethren, how rash and reckless a doctrine they introduced in saying quite shamelessly, ‘The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son; he himself was born, he himself suffered, he himself raised himself up!’”¹¹⁵ This passage shows that the Noetians extended their logic beyond suffering when attributing the Son’s experiences to the Father. They seem to have applied their logic to all aspects of the life of Christ.

digest of the Noetian teaching, Hippolytus does not mention their repeated assertions that they believed in only one God. Perhaps he does not mention it here because the Noetian claim that they believed in only one God was not problematic on the surface. After all, Hippolytus himself began his demonstration of the truth with the same claim.

¹¹³ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.3 (trans. mine): ἔπαθεν δὲ Χριστὸς αὐτὸς ὢν Θεός. ἄρα οὖν ἔπαθεν Πατήρ; <Πατήρ> γὰρ αὐτὸς ἦν.

¹¹⁴ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.7 (trans. Butterworth, 46): Τούτων οὕτως μαρτυρουμένων ἀνάγκην, φησίν, ἔχω, ἐνὸς ὁμολογουμένου, τοῦτον ὑπὸ πάθος φέρειν.

¹¹⁵ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.2 (trans. Butterworth, 48): ὁρᾶτε, ἀδελφοί, πῶς προαλὲς καὶ τολμηρὸν δόγμα παρεισήνεγκαν ἀναισχύντως λέγοντες, Αὐτὸς ἐστὶ Χριστὸς ὁ Πατήρ, αὐτὸς Υἱός, αὐτὸς ἐγεννήθη, αὐτὸς ἔπαθεν, αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ἤγειρεν.

Immediately preceding his demonstration of the truth, Hippolytus offers a final refutation of the Noetians' position, saying, "There is one God, in whom we must believe; but he does not become, cannot suffer, cannot die."¹¹⁶

In Hippolytus' treatment, the Noetians never use scripture to support their claims that the Father suffered. Hippolytus examines and refutes the exegetical underpinnings of all of the other Noetian claims, so it is probable that the Noetians made their assertions about the Father suffering without additional scriptural exegesis. This approach would be in line with the logical sequence in which the Noetians argued for the suffering of the Father: if the Father and the Son are the same, and the Son suffered, then the Father must have suffered. Thus is confirmed Heine's conclusion that the patripassian thesis of the Noetians was a logical conclusion to an exegetical argument.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

Despite being a short treatise, *Contra Noetum* gives us a clear window into the teachings of the Noetians. Furthermore, this treatise might be the earliest in-depth attestation we have to any monarchian teaching. The following are the salient points of the Noetian system according to *Contra Noetum*. (1) The Noetian teaching, with the exception of the patripassian thesis, was heavily based in scriptural exegesis.¹¹⁸ (2) Their

¹¹⁶ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 8.3 (trans. Butterworth, 64): εἷς γὰρ Θεός ἐστιν, ὃν δεῖ πιστεύειν, ἀλλ' ἀγέννητος ἀπαθὴς ἀθάνατος.

¹¹⁷ Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 83: "The monarchian thesis, in which the Noetians included Christ, is derived from their reading of Scripture, but the patripassianist thesis is supported solely by logic based on the monarchian thesis."

¹¹⁸ Again, Decker's claims that the scriptural references are interpolations seem implausible. See Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 156–7.

strict interpretation of the claim that there is only one God underwrote the rest of their theological system. (3) Their repeated contention that the one God was visible seems to have arisen as a response to interpretations that saw the *Logos* in the Old Testament theophanies. (4) The Noetians identified the Father and the Son, and they most likely used key passages from the Gospel of John to sustain this identification. (5) The patripassian thesis of the Noetians was the one aspect of their system that was not supported by exegesis. It appears to have been a logical conclusion drawn from the earlier exegetical premises.

Tertullian: *Adversus Praxean*

Introduction

Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* is one of the most important extant treatises for reconstructing the positions of the monarchians in the early third century. Although this work gives us valuable information about monarchian teaching, it still leaves many historical and biographical questions unanswered. It addresses the teachings of Praxeas, a character shrouded in mystery, but it tells us little about the origins of monarchianism. Despite all of the questions that *Adversus Praxean* leaves unanswered, scholars are relatively confident about dating the text to ca. 213 C.E.¹¹⁹ Tertullian's emphasis on the

¹¹⁹ See Evans' discussion of external evidence for this dating ("Introduction," 18). See also René Braun's suggestion that it was written in 213 or shortly after. Braun also gives a short summary of dating proposals by major scholars (*Deus Christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, 2nd ed., Collection des études augustinienes 70 [Paris: Études augustinienes, 1977], 576). Timothy David Barnes dates the text a bit earlier—to 210/11 (*Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985], 55). Andrew McGowan notes that the work certainly comes from Tertullian's Montanist period and places it sometime in the second decade of the third century ("Tertullian and the 'Heretical' Origins of the 'Orthodox' Trinity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14, no. 4 [2006]: 440).

Paraclete and prophecy throughout the text lets us confidently place it during the beginning of his Montanist phase.¹²⁰ Tertullian directs his ire against Praxeas because “he drove out prophecy and introduced heresy: he put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father.”¹²¹

Although there is relative certainty about the dating of the text to the earliest years of Tertullian’s Montanist phase, there are many basic questions that the text leaves unanswered. Chief among these is the question of the exact identity of Praxeas, for whom we have no further attestation beyond *Adversus Praxean* and works that seem to be dependent on it.¹²² Tertullian gives us two major pieces of data about Praxeas, neither of which does much to help us identify him with any precision. First, Tertullian recounts that Praxeas journeyed from Asia to Rome.¹²³ Given the paucity of other details about Praxeas’ life, his Asian origin does little to help us identify him.¹²⁴ Tertullian next

¹²⁰ For the role of Tertullian’s Montanism in his articulation of the Trinity against the monarchians, see McGowan, “Tertullian and the ‘Heretical’ Origins of the ‘Orthodox’ Trinity.”

¹²¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.5 (trans. Evans, 131): *prophetiam expulit et haeresin intulit, Paracletum fugavit et Patrem crucifixit*. Unless otherwise noted, all Latin of *Adversus Praxean* is from Tertullian, *Tertulliani Opera: Pars II*, ed. A Kroymann and Ernest Evans, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 2 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1954).

¹²² Praxeas is mentioned in Ps. Tertullian, *Adversus omnium haereses* 8.4. We know very little about the author of this text, although scholars have noted that it has some interesting similarities with the *Refutatio* ascribed to Hippolytus. See William Tabbernee, *Fake Prophecy and Polluted Sacraments: Ecclesiastical and Imperial Reactions to Montanism*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 78–9. The work itself does not add anything to our knowledge of Praxeas, so I will not treat it further.

¹²³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.4.

¹²⁴ This geographical information, however, is useful for trying to reconstruct different streams or schools of monarchianism. See, for example, Heine’s discussion of Roman and Asian schools of monarchianism discussed above (“The Christology of Callistus,” 78–89). Decker especially focuses on the fact that both Noetus and Praxeas are said to have come from Asia. He concludes, unconvincingly, that theologians from Asia Minor focused on the action of the one God in history, while theologians from the West were focused about differentiation between God and creatures and differentiation within the Godhead. See especially his “Die Monarchianer,” 203–5. Such sweeping assertions about differences between East and West with regard to Trinitarian theology were accepted when Decker wrote his dissertation, but they have since been criticized.

complains that Praxeas somehow gained the ear of the bishop of Rome and convinced him to reject Montanist teachings.¹²⁵ Tertullian's statements give the impression that Montanism had gained a favorable hearing in at least some sectors of the church in Rome and that the hierarchy of the church there had not formally rejected it.¹²⁶

Even with the scarcity of biographical information about Praxeas, scholars have ventured a number of theories about his identity and activity. Hermann Hagemann argued that Praxeas was a pseudonym for Callistus.¹²⁷ Others have argued that Praxeas was not a pseudonym. Bardy thought that the identification of Praxeas with Callistus faced "too many difficulties to be sustained."¹²⁸ Harnack noted the many "hazardous hypotheses" that had been advanced regarding Praxeas before arguing that Praxeas was operative in Rome during the episcopate of Victor. This brief sojourn in Rome, thought Harnack, was followed by Praxeas' journey to Carthage.¹²⁹ Like Harnack, La Piana and Bardy suggest that Praxeas was operative in Rome during the episcopate of Victor.¹³⁰ Evans, however, finds plausible the suggestions that Praxeas might have been a pseudonym.¹³¹ Moingt

¹²⁵ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.5.

¹²⁶ For a discussion of the question of Montanism in Rome at the beginning of the third century, see La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century," 244-251.

¹²⁷ See Hagemann's lengthy section "Wer war Praxeas" in his *Die römische Kirche und ihr Einfluss auf Disciplin und Dogma in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1864), 234-57.

¹²⁸ Gustave Bardy, "Monarchianisme," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, contenant l'exposé des doctrines de la théologie catholique, leurs preuves et leur histoire*, ed. Alfred Vacant, E. Mangenot, and Émile Amann, vol. 10.2 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1929), 2203.

¹²⁹ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3:59-60.

¹³⁰ Bardy, "Monarchianisme," 2197. Not surprisingly, Henri Leclercq adopts Bardy's conclusions in "Monarchianisme," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, vol. 11.2 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1934), 1953-5. La Piana further argues that Praxeas convinced Victor to drive out Montanism ("The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century," 246-7).

¹³¹ Evans, "Introduction," 10-11.

rejects the suggestion in older German scholarship and the work of Evans that Praxeas was really a pseudonym that Tertullian used to address the views of someone such as Callistus.¹³² He sees no reason for us to doubt the separate existence of a Praxeas. Stuart Hall has advanced the speculative claim that Praxeas is really a pseudonym for Irenaeus.¹³³ More recently, Allen Brent has taken up the old view that Praxeas is actually a pseudonym for Callistus.¹³⁴ Ronald Heine has proposed something of a hybrid theory. He argues that a real Praxeas was operative in Rome, but that Tertullian was also addressing the views of Callistus under the name of Praxeas.¹³⁵ There is scarcely enough data to determine with any certainty whether a Praxeas actually existed or was merely a pseudonym used by Tertullian. Our inability to know even this most basic fact about Praxeas does not, however, invalidate the usefulness of this treatise for reconstructing the monarchian position.

¹³² See, Joseph Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, vol. 1, Théologie 68 (Paris: Aubier, 1966), 91 n. 2.

¹³³ Stuart George Hall, "Praxeas and Irenaeus," *Studia Patristica* 14.3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1976), 145–47. Hall's suggestion is tenuous. It is based on an impressionistic reading of the texts, and he fails to produce strong evidence for his claims. The following quotation sums up his reasoning, which is quite abbreviated: "Irenaeus was a figure already revered in the whole Western Church. His great book had been put into Latin. Tertullian himself, in his early days, borrowed from him. But in the crucial issue of Tertullian's life, Irenaeus was on the wrong side. He had persuaded Rome against the new prophecy. So when Tertullian gets the chance, he pins theological heresy upon the honoured theologian of the Catholics. He had not only exiled the Paraclete; he had crucified the Father" (147).

¹³⁴ Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 525–9.

¹³⁵ Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 59–60. The identification of Praxeas with Callistus depends on a specific confluence of the rise of Callistus in Rome and the composition of *Adversus Praxean*. If we assume that *Adversus Praxean* was written in 213 and we accept the identification of Praxeas and Callistus, we must propose that Callistus had developed enough influence in Rome prior to 213 to attract the attention of Tertullian. The *Refutatio* does suggest that Callistus was already making his influence felt before his elevation to the episcopacy, but the exact chronology of this whole scenario is murky. If, however, we push the date of composition for *Adversus Praxean* later by a few years, the probability that Callistus was wielding power in Rome is substantially higher. Even this reasoning, however, relies on the hostile witness of the *Refutatio*. In the absence of more reliable evidence, theories about the identification of Praxeas and Callistus must remain conjecture, although this conjecture does seem probable.

Another question that this text leaves unanswered is how exactly the monarchian teaching made its way to Tertullian. Scholars have advanced numerous theories to account for the transmission of this teaching, and these are often drawn from scholars' imaginations as much as from concrete data. Harnack suggests that Praxeas journeyed from Rome to Carthage, evidence for which is nowhere found in the primary literature.¹³⁶ Moingt, on the other hand, believes that Praxeas' followers, not praxeas himself, carried his teaching to Carthage.¹³⁷ Again, none of these suggestions is supported by concrete data from the text. All we can say with certainty is that sometime prior to 213, Tertullian had encountered the monarchian teaching that he attributes to a certain Praxeas. Furthermore, this teaching seems to have been accepted by a large portion of the Roman population (the *simplices*). Any conclusions beyond these data must be provisional because of the lack of evidence.

Textual Analysis

Although *Adversus Praxean* offers little in the way of historical background of the monarchian position, it provides a store of data that is useful for reconstructing the monarchian teachings during the first quarter of the third century. Hippolytus' treatment

¹³⁶ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3:59–61; idem, "Monarchianism," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and George William Gilmore, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker, 1963), 459.

¹³⁷ Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 1:94. Moingt later proposes (p. 100) a chronology for the events in question: "Nous proposons en conséquence cette chronologie. Peu avant 200, venue et agitation de Praxéas à Rome; 200-202, arrivée de ses émissaires à Carthage, première crise et rétractation du docteur; 202-204, agnitio Paracleti (fin des écrits purement 'catholiques' de Tertullien vers 204-205, et apparition dès cette époque des écrits à tendances montanistes); vers 208, defensio Paracleti (ouvrages de propagande puis de polémique montaniste), suivie de la rupture avec l'église officielle (vraisemblablement antérieure aux prodromes de la persécution, soit à 211); 212-214, second crise et Adv. Praxean; 214-215 (au plus tard), De Pudicitia et fin de l'activité littéraire de Tertullien." Ibid., 1:100.

of monarchianism in *Contra Noetum* is frontloaded with a summary of core monarchian teachings and the exegesis of certain passages used to support these positions. After Hippolytus summarizes the monarchian positions, he offers alternative exegesis and an exposition of what he considers to be true teaching. Tertullian does not lay out the monarchian positions and scriptural passages quite as neatly as Hippolytus.¹³⁸

Monarchian positions and exegetical tendencies are scattered throughout the treatise. Tertullian also spends much more time than does Hippolytus offering alternatives directly opposed to those of the monarchians. For example, Tertullian expends a great deal of energy trying to wrest the term “monarchy” from his opponents and to show that it can be used without destroying distinction in the Godhead.¹³⁹ Simonetti argues that the treatise presents a more advanced version of monarchian teaching than *Contra Noetum*.¹⁴⁰

One God

Like Hippolytus, Tertullian spends a great deal of time addressing the monarchian assertion of the absolute unity of God. In the first words of *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian

¹³⁸ Simonetti notes that *Adversus Praxean* is often rambling and is not as well-organized as *Contra Noetum* (“Due note su Ippolito,” 126).

¹³⁹ For discussions of Tertullian’s positive use of *monarchia* and its background, see Kevin B. McCruden, “Monarchy and Economy in Tertullian’s *Adversus Praxeam*,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55, no. 3 (2002): 325–37; T. Verhoeven, “Monarchia dans Tertullien, *Adversus Praxean*,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 5, no. 1 (1951): 43–48. Verhoeven focuses on the background of the term. He argues that the major scholars who discuss its usage (Prestige, Lebreton, Evans) do not pay enough attention to the Hellenistic Jewish context in which it was used by the likes of Philo. Verhoeven argues that within Hellenistic Judaism, it was a defense against pagan polytheism. McCruden focuses a bit more attention on why the Monarchians might have been using the term.

¹⁴⁰ Simonetti, “Due note su Ippolito,” 128. See especially *Adversus Praxean* 27–29, where Tertullian’s testimony shows that there was an early impulse to move away from overt claims of patripassianism.

accuses the devil of making “a heresy out of the unity.”¹⁴¹ Shortly thereafter, Tertullian bemoans the fact that the Praxean profession holds that it is “impossible to believe in one God unless it says that both Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one and the same.”¹⁴² In his rendition of the *regula fidei* immediately preceding this complaint he, like Hippolytus, states explicitly that he believes in only one God.¹⁴³ Tertullian’s account of the monarchians starts with their assertions regarding the strict unity of God because this seems to have been their most foundational premise, the one that drove all of their other teaching and exegesis.

As I noted above, Tertullian’s presentation of the monarchian positions is not nearly as methodical and linear as that of Hippolytus in *Contra Noetum*. Accordingly, Tertullian does not here provide us with the core passages the Praxeans used to support their exclusive understanding of the unity of God. Perhaps one exception to the lack of exegetical underpinning in his presentation of the Praxean understanding of the unity of God is a brief reference to Isa. 45:5. Tertullian states, “Therefore there is one God, the Father, and *besides him there is no other*, and he himself who introduces this <statement> is denying, not the Son, but another god: whereas the Son is not another <god> than the Father.”¹⁴⁴ Tertullian is not explicit about how his opponents are using this verse, but his

¹⁴¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.1 (trans. Evans, 130): *ut et de unico haeresim faciat*.

¹⁴² Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3 (trans. Evans, 132): *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat*.

¹⁴³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.1-2. Because he wishes to differentiate his articulation of the one God from that of the monarchians, he quickly adds that his belief in this one God is subject to a *dispensation* that includes a Son through whom all things are made, a Son who comes from the Father.

¹⁴⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 18.3 (trans. Evans, 156): *Igitur unus Deus pater et alius absque eo non est. Quod ipse inferens non Filium negat sed alium deum. Ceterum alius a Patre Filius non est*.

emphasis makes it probable that they were using it in a way similar to the Noetians' use of Isa. 44:6.¹⁴⁵ While Tertullian argues that the verse is combatting polytheism, the Praxeans seem to have suggested that it ruled out Tertullian's understanding of the Son. Later in the treatise, Tertullian suggests that Isa. 45:5 was the monarchians' favorite passage from the Old Testament:

For as in the old <scriptures> they retain nothing else but, *I am God and other beside me there is not*, so in the Gospel they uphold the Lord's answer to Philip, *I and the Father are one*, and, *He that hath seen me hath also seen the Father*, and, *I am in the Father and the Father in me*. To these three citations they wish the whole appurtenance of both testaments to yield, though the smaller number ought to be understood in accordance with the greater.¹⁴⁶

Thus, while Tertullian is not as focused as is Hippolytus on detailing the exegesis used to underpin the monarchian articulation of the unity of God, he does make it clear that Isa. 45:5 was a key passage for their argument.

This monarchian interpretation of the oneness of God was particularly appealing for those whom Tertullian calls simple folks. For Tertullian, claims about the oneness of God must be balanced by assertions about the plurality of God in the economy, a balance that Tertullian's *simplices* seem unable to achieve. Tertullian states, "Simple people... not understanding that while they must believe in one only <God> yet they must believe in him along with his economy, shy at the economy."¹⁴⁷ Tertullian, in ways that parallel Hippolytus closely, argues that the unity of God is administered or distributed in the

¹⁴⁵ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.2.

¹⁴⁶ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 20.1-2 (trans. Evans, 159): *Nam sicut in ueteribus nihil aliud tenant quam Ego Deus et alius praeter me non est, ita in euangelio responsionem Domini ad Philippum tuentur: Ego et Pater unum sumus, et: Qui me uiderit, uidit et Patrem, et: Ego in Patre et Pater in me. His tribus capitulis totum instrumentum utriusque testamenti uolunt cedere cum oporteat secundum plura intellegi pauciora.*

¹⁴⁷ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.1 (trans. Evans, 132): *Simplices enim quique... non intellegentes unicum quidem sed cum sua oikonomia esse credendum, expauescunt ad oikonomiam.*

economy.¹⁴⁸ The monarchian emphasis on the unity of God does not allow for the admission of any plurality into the Godhead. Although Tertullian's discussion of the monarchian emphasis on the absolute unity of God is concentrated at the beginning of *Adversus Praxean*, he returns to the claim later in the treatise as well.¹⁴⁹

It appears as though the Praxeans used the term “monarchy” to signify an exclusive understanding of the unity of God. Tertullian sums up their position succinctly:

They claim that the plurality and ordinance of trinity is a division of unity—although a unity which derives from itself a trinity is not destroyed but administered. And so <people> put it about that by us two or even three <gods> are preached, while they, they claim, are worshippers of one God—as though unity irrationally summed up did not make heresy and Trinity rationally counted out constitute truth. “We hold”, they say, “to the monarchy”: and even Latins so expressively frame the sound, and in so masterly a fashion, that you would think they understood monarchy as well as they pronounce it: but while Latins are intent to shout out “monarchy”, even Greeks refuse to understand the economy.¹⁵⁰

Tertullian, however, does not surrender the term “monarchy” to his opponent. In fact, he places his own claim on the term and demands that it be coupled with a proper understanding of the economy.¹⁵¹ The fact that Tertullian claims the term “monarchy” for

¹⁴⁸ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, *Adversus Praxean* 12.1, where Tertullian tells us that the monarchians were offended by the plurality of the Trinity.

¹⁵⁰ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*: 3.1-2 (trans. Evans, 132-3): *Numerum et dispositionem trinitatis diuisionem praesumunt unitatis, quando unitas ex semetipsa deriuans trinitatem, non destruat ab illa sed administretur. Itaque duos et tres iam iactitant a nobis praedicari, se uero unius Dei cultores praesumunt, quasi non et unitas irrationaliter collecta haeresin faciat et trinitas rationaliter expensa ueritatem constituat. “Monarchiam, inquiunt, tenemus”, et ita sonum ipsum uocaliter exprimunt etiam Latini, et tam opifrice ut putes illos tam bene intellegere monarchiam quam enuntiant. Sed monarchiam sonare student Latini, oikonomiam intellegere nolunt etiam Graeci.*

¹⁵¹ See Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3-4. See also *Adversus Praxean* 9, where Tertullian argues that a proper balance must be maintained between the monarchy and the economy.

himself bears out the argument of Uríbarri, who thinks that Praxeas' use of the term is aberrant.¹⁵²

Also evident in the above quotation is the common accusation that the monarchians made against their opponents, the charge of ditheism. This charge is repeated later when Tertullian discusses how both the Father and Son were active in creation. Tertullian records the objection of the Praxeans, “‘Consequently’, you say, ‘if God spake and God made, if one God spake and another made, two gods are preached.’”¹⁵³ Shortly thereafter, Tertullian has them repeating the accusation, “I will challenge you, today, also by the authority of those scriptures consistently to preach two gods and two lords.”¹⁵⁴ Tertullian stridently denies that he has ever proclaimed two gods or two lords, but the monarchian accusation persists.¹⁵⁵

Tertullian suggests that the monarchians were offended by the Trinity because “it is not combined in a simple unity (*unitate simplici*).”¹⁵⁶ It is in the context of his

¹⁵² Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 148–50. If Uríbarri is correct, Tertullian here represents the traditional usage of the term. Given the absence of the term in many of the other monarchian works, I think Uríbarri is correct in proposing that Praxeas' usage is a distortion of the traditional sense.

¹⁵³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 13.1 (trans. Evans, 146): *Ergo, inquis, si Deus dixit et Deus fecit, si alius Deus dixit et alius fecit, duo dii praedicantur.*

¹⁵⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 13.5 (trans. Evans, 147): *prouocabo te ut hodie quoque ex auctoritate istarum scripturarum constanter duos deos et duos dominos praedices.* For another iteration of this charge, see *Adversus Praxean* 23.7, where Tertullian states, “Though it were the case that we spoke of two divided <from each other>, as you put it about that we do, yet it were more tolerable to preach two divided than one chameleon god” (trans. Evans, 166): *Vt sic duos diuisos diceremus, quomodo iactitatis, tolerabilius erat duos diuisos quam unum Deum uersipellem praedicare.* Tertullian, of course, argued strongly that the Father and Son were not divided in his understanding; they were distinct. With the chameleon image, Tertullian accuses them of positing a God who masquerades using different visages for which there is no underlying distinction.

¹⁵⁵ Tertullian repeatedly claims that the Father and Son are two. He qualifies this statement in a number of ways: two, but inseparable; two persons, not two things, indivisibly two, etc. For a dense cluster of these assertions, see *Adversus Praxean* 22.

¹⁵⁶ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 12.1 (trans. Evans, 145).

discussion of this “simple unity” that Tertullian mockingly asks if God speaks in the plural in the Genesis 1:26 because God is “father-son-spirit” (*pater filius spiritus*). The occurrence of this *pater filius spiritus* language here calls to mind the teachings about the $\nu\iota\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\rho$ often attributed to Sabellius.¹⁵⁷ If this *pater filius spiritus* language is fulfilling the same function as the allegedly Sabellian $\nu\iota\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\rho$, it is quite possible that Sabellius himself was pulling on an earlier tradition, perhaps that of Praxeas and his followers. Although he gives few details about the exegetical underpinnings of the Praxean claim that there is only one God, Tertullian’s responses to this claim are littered throughout the work. Tertullian repeatedly asserts that he too believes in one God, but he always qualifies his assertion to make it clear that his understanding of the unity of God is different from that of his opponents.

Father and Son

As in Hippolytus’ account of monarchianism, Tertullian bears witness to the fact that the bedrock claim that God is absolutely one was foundational for other core monarchian positions. Also like Hippolytus, Tertullian deals at length with one of the main conclusions the monarchians drew from this assertion: arguing for the absolute identity of the Father and Son. At the beginning of the treatise, Tertullian reproduces a classic expression of the identity, stating, “and in particular this [teaching/heresy] which supposes itself to possess truth unadulterated while it thinks it ought not to believe in one

¹⁵⁷ See, for example, Eusebius’ attribution of this teaching to Sabellius at *De ecclesiastica theologia* 1.1.2.

God unless it says that Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one and the same.”¹⁵⁸

Although the “one and the same” formula does not occur in *Contra Noetum*, it seems to have become a standard formula for the monarchian assertion of the identity of the Father and Son.¹⁵⁹ Tertullian repeats the formula often in *Adversus Praxean*.¹⁶⁰ In the above quotation, Tertullian adds a reference to the Spirit, which does not appear to have been a focus for the monarchians in the other extant witnesses. The vast majority of their claims were about the absolute identity of the Father and Son, without any reference to the Spirit.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3 (trans. Evans, 132 with my modification): *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum Deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat.*

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, the very formulaic use of it in the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.10.11-12, where the author reports on the teaching of Noetus: “For in this manner he thinks to establish the monarchy of God, alleging that Father and Son, so called, are one and the same, not one individual produced from a different one, but himself from himself; and that he is styled by name Father and Son, according to vicissitude of times” (οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ· ὀνόματι μὲν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καλούμενον κατὰ χρόνων τροπήν). Translation from ANF, 5.128 with modifications Greek from Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich, Patristische Texte Und Studien, Bd. 25 (New York ; Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1986), 348–349.

¹⁶⁰ See *Adversus Praxean* 14, 15, 18, 27.

¹⁶¹ Perhaps Tertullian has inserted the Spirit into a standard formula here. Another explanation is also possible. The author of the *Refutatio* argues that some of the Montanists were also followers of the doctrine of Noetus. See *Refutatio* 10.26. If there was actually a confluence of Montanists and Noetians, it is possible that it could have influenced a form of monarchianism that paid more attention, at least nominally, to the Spirit. For a discussion of the possible relationship between Montanists and Noetians, see Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “The Asian Context of the New Prophecy and of Epistula Apostolorum,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 51, no. 4 (1997): 432–3. However, nearly everywhere else that Tertullian interacts with monarchian charges, he is dealing with the Father and Son. He is constantly arguing that they are two while guarding against the charge of ditheism. While Tertullian certainly mentions the Spirit when he is articulating some of his own views, his engagement with the monarchians is largely binitarian, most likely because the monarchians framed their argument almost exclusively in terms of the Father and Son. Although I find his interpretation of monarchianism implausible, Daniel Boyarin also notes that the monarchian controversy was mainly focused on the Father and Son. See Daniel Boyarin, “Two Powers in Heaven: Or, the Making of a Heresy,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 346; idem, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Divinations (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 137.

Tertullian explicitly hypothesizes that the motivation behind the monarchian identification of the Father and Son was safeguarding the unity of God. He writes the following: “Therefore if their reason for thinking they must believe the identity of the Father and the Son has been that they may prove their case for the unity of God....”¹⁶² Tertullian was particularly troubled by this teaching of the identity of the Father and Son, and it is clear in his rebuttal that he finds it completely preposterous. Employing a mocking tone, Tertullian pushes his opponents regarding their formulations of the generation of the Son from the Father. He sallies, “Further, you who identify Father and Son, cause the same one both to have brought forth from himself that which is God, and as such to have come forth.”¹⁶³ Tertullian continues to challenge his opponents, saying, “If you will have me believe that the Father himself is also the Son, show me that it is stated elsewhere in this form, The Lord said to himself, I am my son, today have I begotten myself.”¹⁶⁴ In this quotation, Tertullian is employing what comes to be an important method for refuting the monarchian claims about the identity of the Father and the Son: the use of grammatical exegesis.¹⁶⁵

Within this grammatical exegesis, interpreters paid close attention to the persons (or speakers or actors) revealed in a given passage. At multiple points in *Adversus*

¹⁶² Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 19.7 (trans. Evans, 158): *Igitur si propterea eundem et Patrem et Filium credendum putauerunt ut unum Deum uindicent....*

¹⁶³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.1 (trans. Evans, 143): *porro qui eundem Patrem dicis et Filium, eundem et protulisse ex semetipso facis et prodisse.*

¹⁶⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.3 (trans. Evans, 143): *Si uelis ut credam ipsum esse Patrem et Filium, ostende sic pronuntiatum alibi, “Dominus dixit ad se: filius meus sum ego, ego hodie generaui me”.*

¹⁶⁵ Use of this method of reading during the monarchian controversy has been ably documented by Mark DelCogliano in his “The Interpretation of John 10:30.”

Praxean, Tertullian focuses his exegesis on who is speaking in a passage and to whom that person is speaking.¹⁶⁶ Another good example of this approach is Tertullian's exegesis of 1 Cor. 15:24-28., a passage that was also very important in later Trinitarian debates.

Tertullian argues,

By this one passage of the apostolic epistle we have already been able to show that Father and Son are two, besides <by deduction> from the names Father and Son, also from the fact that he who has delivered the kingdom and he to whom he has delivered it, as also he who has subjected it and he to whom he has subjected it, must of necessity be two.¹⁶⁷

In this passage, Tertullian identified two actors. If the Son delivered the kingdom to the Father, argued Tertullian, the Son and Father cannot be the same. As DelCogliano notes, this exegetical technique gained widespread usage and was a central feature in the refutation of monarchian positions. Tertullian and other users of this anti-monarchian technique had at their disposal a host of passages that spoke of action between the Father and Son.¹⁶⁸ Tertullian even codified this rule for interpreting scripture:

You however would make him a liar and a deceiver, a dissembler of this faith <of mine>, if being himself his own son he assigned the role of son to another, since all the scriptures display both the demonstration and the distinctness of the Trinity: and from them is derived also our standing rule, that speaker and person spoken of and person spoken to cannot be regarded as one and the same, for as much as neither wilfulness nor deception befits God as that, being himself the one spoken to, he should prefer to speak to another and not to himself.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, 120.

¹⁶⁷ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 4.4 (trans. Evans, 134): *Hoc uno capitulo epistolae apostolicae potuimus iam et Patrem et Filium ostendisse duos esse, praeterquam ex nominibus Patris et Filii etiam ex eo quod qui tradidit regnum et cui tradidit, item qui subiecit et cui subiecit duo sint necesse est.*

¹⁶⁸ For another notable example of this argument, see Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 12.1. There Tertullian writes, "If you are still offended by the plurality of the Trinity, on the ground that it is not combined in simple unity, I ask you how it is that one only single <person> speaks in the plural, Let us make man after our image and likeness, when he ought to have said, Let me make man after my image and likeness, as being one only single <person>... Or was he speaking to the angels, as the Jews explain it, because they, like you, do not recognise the Son?" (trans. Evans, 145).

¹⁶⁹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.4 (trans. Evans, 144): *Tu porro eum mendacem efficias et fallacem et deceptorem fidei huius si, cum ipse esset sibi filius, alii dabat filii personam quando scripturae*

For Tertullian, a responsible reading of the text could never collapse the distinct actors into one as the monarchians did. These grammatical reading techniques gave authors an arsenal of passages that became an important polemical tool against monarchianism.

Within a few generations, this reading technique had become commonplace.¹⁷⁰

In the passage I quoted in the previous section, Tertullian gave the three favorite passages of the Praxeans: Isa. 45:5, Jn 10:30, and Jn 14:9-11.¹⁷¹ Later, Tertullian further discusses their use of Jn 10:30 and shows that it was one of their favorite passages for arguing for the identity of the Father and Son:

Here then they wish to make a stand, these fools, yea blind, who see not, first, that 'I and the Father' is an indication of two; secondly, at the end <of the sentence>, that 'are' is not from the person of one, because it is spoken in the plural; and then, that he says 'are one <thing>', not 'are one <person>'. For if he had said 'are one <person>' he would have been able to assist their case: for 'one <person>' is apparently an indication of the singular number. Yet when he says that two, of the masculine gender are one <thing>, in the neuter—which is not concerned with singularity but with unity, with similitude, with conjunction, with the love of the Father who loveth the Son, and with the obedience of the Son who obeys the

omnes et demonstrationem et distinctionem trinitatis ostendant a quibus et praescriptio nostra deducitur non posse unum atque eundem uideri qui loquitur et de quo loquitur et ad quem loquitur, quia neque peruersitas neque fallacia deo congruat ut, cum ipse esset ad quem loquebatur, ad alium potius et non ad semetipsum loqueretur.

¹⁷⁰ Tertullian used other techniques to combat the identification of the Father and Son. One example can be seen in *Adversus Praxean* 10. There, Tertullian argues that the terms Father and Son necessarily imply two who are mutually distinguished from each other. He argues that the monarchians want one person to be both terms of the relationship, but that this is nonsensical. For an excellent discussion of Tertullian's use of Stoic logic in *Adversus Praxean* 10, see Gerald P. Boersma, "The Logic of the Logos: A Note on Stoic Logic in *Adversus Praxean* 10," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22, no. 4 (2014): 485–98. Boersma argues that chapter 10 is the heart of the treatise: "The heart of the treatise is to be found, I believe, in section 10. Here Tertullian establishes his guiding theological hermeneutic—the ground that sustains the rest of the treatise. Thus, in the rest of the work Tertullian mines the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of John, for all the key passages in which Christ distinguishes himself from the Father. As such, the guiding principles of logic and language that Tertullian lays down in *Adversus Praxean* 10 serve to aid in correctly understanding the scriptural distinction of Father and Son laid out in the rest of the work." (487) I also argue in my last chapter that subordinationism was another common anti-monarchian tool at the beginning of the third century.

¹⁷¹ See Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 20.1-2.

Father's will--when he says, *One <thing> are I and the Father*, he shows that those whom he equates and conjoins are two.¹⁷²

That the Praxeans focused on John 10:30 is not surprising. Remember that Hippolytus worked to counteract the Noetians' apparent use of this passage in *Contra Noetum*.¹⁷³

There are striking similarities between the rebuttals that Hippolytus and Tertullian give of this passage. Both focus on the fact that the verb (*sumus* in this case) is plural, not singular. Tertullian goes further in his analysis of John 10:30 and focuses on the fact that "one" (*unum*) is in the neuter. Tertullian focuses on this fact to show that the unity of Father and Son is not a personal unity. Although "one" (ἓν) is also neuter in the Greek, Hippolytus does not cite this fact as further evidence that the Father and Son are not one in the sense that the monarchians would have it. If Tertullian was drawing on *Contra Noetum*, he appears to have taken the basic argument of Hippolytus and added further proof to it. Since John 10:30 was so important for the monarchians, it would be little surprise if Tertullian sought to bolster a pre-existing anti-monarchian reading of the verse.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 22.10-11 (trans. Evans, 164). Note Tertullian's focus on the distinction between *unus* and *unum*: *Hic ergo iam gradum uolunt figere stulti, immo caeci, qui non uideant primo "ego et pater" duorum esse significationem, dehinc in nouissimo "sumus" non ex unius esse personae quod pluraliter dictum est, tunc quod "unum sumus", non "unus sumus" <dicunt>. Si enim dixisset: "unus sumus", potuisset adiuuare sententiam illorum, unus enim singularis numeri significatio uidetur. Adhuc cum duo masculini generis unum dicit neutrali uerbo (quod non pertinet ad singularitatem sed ad unitatem, ad similitudinem, ad coniunctionem, ad dilectionem patris qui filium diligit et ad obsequium filii qui uoluntati patris obsequitur): vnum sumus, dicens, ego et pater, ostendit duos esse quos aequat et iungit.*

¹⁷³ See especially *Contra Noetum* 7.1.

¹⁷⁴ Just following the passage I quoted, Tertullian notes that Jesus says "I and the Father are one" in order to show that he is the Son of God, not "God himself (*ipsum deum*)."¹⁷⁵ Although beyond the immediate scope of this chapter, it is interesting to note that when he wishes to call both the Father and Son "God" yet maintain their distinction, he will argue that the Father is *ipsum deum*. This understanding of the Father as *ipsum deum* fits well with Tertullian's conception of divine monarchy wherein the Father is God most fully and the Son is God derivatively or by ordinance. This approach is also, in many ways, similar to Origen's discussion of God with and without the article in *ComJn* 2.13-32. I discuss Origen's treatment of this issue at length in the last chapter.

Visible

Tertullian expends a great deal of energy discussing questions of the visibility and invisibility of God. As is clear from the earlier discussion of *Contra Noetum*, this question also occupied the Noetians. Whereas the Noetians focused on Baruch 3:36-38 and Isaiah 45:14-15, Tertullian's discussion is primarily concerned with the proper interpretation of Exodus 33:20.¹⁷⁵ Despite the difference in passages used, the same exegetical moves are present in both Hippolytus' and Tertullian's accounts of monarchianism.

Tertullian opens his section on the visibility and invisibility of God by offering an interpretation of Exodus 33:20 that is standard for the early third century. For Tertullian, this passage vindicates his claim about the duality of the Father and Son: "Once more, we have the support in our vindication of the duality of the Father and the Son, of that rule which has defined God as invisible."¹⁷⁶ The tension between the claim that Moses spoke to God face to face and lived (Ex. 33:11) and that none shall see God and live (Ex. 33:20) did not go unnoticed by Tertullian. He diffused this tension by repeating the already commonplace assertion that the God who was seen face to face by Moses was in fact the Son. He escapes the apparent difficulty in the following way:

¹⁷⁵ One expects to see Exodus 33:20 as the centerpiece of a debate about the visibility of God. Indeed, this verse is perhaps the *locus classicus* for discussing these matters. Hippolytus' discussion of visibility and invisibility, on the other hand, treats monarchian exegesis of passages that seem less directly related to the question at hand. The fact that Tertullian and Hippolytus do not include the same passages in their discussion of visibility and invisibility might suggest that there is not as strong of a relationship of dependence between the two as some have suggested. Alternatively, if a strong relationship is maintained, it could be that the specific opponents of each author used different passages to make common claims.

¹⁷⁶ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*: 14.1 (trans. Evans, 148): *Adhuc et illa nobis regula adsistit duos uindicantibus patrem et filium, quae inuisibilem deum determinauit.*

So then it will be another who was seen, for it is impossible for the same one who was seen, to be characterised as invisible: and it will follow that we must understand the Father as invisible because of the fulness of his majesty, but must acknowledge the Son as visible because of the enumeration of his derivation, just as we may not look upon the sun in respect of the total of its substance which is in the sky, though we can with our eyes bear its beam because of the moderation of the assignment which from thence reaches out to the earth.¹⁷⁷

Like many of his forebears and contemporaries, Tertullian argued that it was in fact the Son who was visible in the OT theophanies. Thus, for Tertullian, the apparent tension in this text becomes grounds to assert the duality of the Father and Son.

The monarchians against whom Tertullian was writing were also well aware of the tension presented in the biblical text. The monarchians apparently welcomed this tension within the text, for they attributed both visibility and invisibility to the same God.¹⁷⁸ In Tertullian's account, the first move the monarchians made was to consider the ways in which scripture speaks of the Son. Tertullian says that his opponents wish to claim that in addition to being visible in the incarnation, "the Son is also invisible as

¹⁷⁷ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.3 (trans. Evans, 149): *Iam ergo alius erit qui uidebatur, quia non potest idem inuisibilis definiri, qui uidebatur, et consequens erit ut inuisibilem patrem intellegamus pro plenitudine maiestatis, uisibilem uero filium agnoscamus pro modulo deriuationis, sicut nec solem nobis contemplari licet, quantum ad ipsam substantiae summam quae est in caelis, radium autem eius toleramus oculis pro temperatura portionis quae in terram inde porrigitur.* Tertullian's emphasis that it is the Son's derivation from the Father that allows him to be seen is important for my later examination of Origen's Trinitarian theology within the context of other third century theologians. Although Tertullian does not state it explicitly, it seems that whatever it was that prevented the Father from being visible was not transferred to the Son in the process of derivation.

¹⁷⁸ Note here that this is one of the same paired opposites that the author of the *Refutatio* attributes to his opponents in an attempt to show that they derive their teachings from the philosophy of Heraclitus. Not present in Tertullian's account, however, are any of the author of the *Refutatio*'s tendentious assertions of monarchian dependence upon Heraclitus. Given the centrality of discussions about the visibility and invisibility of God in the monarchian system, it is highly probable that the monarchians did claim that God is both visible and invisible. In an attempt to discredit their teaching, however, the author of the *Refutatio* constructed a link between this teaching and the philosophy of Heraclitus that probably was not actually present in the monarchian system. For an in-depth discussion of these antitheses, see Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët." Note also that the antitheses feature prominently in the general argument of Hübner. He claims that the antitheses are early snippets from an anti-Gnostic rule of faith. These claims run throughout all of his work on monarchianism. See the collection of his essays: Hübner, *Der Paradox Eine*.

Word and Spirit.”¹⁷⁹ With this move, the monarchians were able to argue that there is precedent for attributing both visibility and invisibility to the same one.

After claiming that the same one can be visible and invisible, the monarchians used their oft-repeated assertion of the identification of the Father and the Son. Tertullian rehearses their argument as follows:

For they also add this to their quibbling, that if on that occasion it was the Son speaking to Moses, he pronounced his own face visible to no man, because of course he was the invisible Father himself under the name of Son. And consequently they wish the visible one and the invisible one to be taken as identical, in the same way as <they wish> Father and Son <to be taken as> identical, because also a little earlier, before he refused Moses <the sight of> his face, it is written that the Lord spake to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend, and furthermore that Jacob says, *I have seen the Lord face to face*: consequently the same one is visible and invisible: and because the same one has both attributes, therefore also the invisible Father is himself visible as being also the Son.¹⁸⁰

Later, Tertullian restates the position of his opponents: “Our adversary will argue that both are rightly spoken, <since he was> visible in the incarnation but invisible before the incarnation; and that consequently the Father, invisible before the incarnation, is the same <Person> as the Son, visible in the incarnation.”¹⁸¹ Tertullian and the monarchians offered competing and opposite interpretations of the same passages. When Tertullian

¹⁷⁹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.4 (trans. Evans, 149): *Hic ex diuerso uolet aliquis etiam filium inuisibilem contendere, ut sermonem, ut spiritum.*

¹⁸⁰ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.5 (trans. Evans, 149): *Nam et illud adicient ad argumentationem quod, si filius tunc ad moysen loquebatur, ipse faciem suam nemini uisibilem pronuntiarit quia scilicet ipse inuisibilis pater fuerit in filii nomine. Ac per hoc sic eundem uolunt accipi et uisibilem et inuisibilem, quomodo eundem patrem et filium, quoniam et paulo supra, antequam faciem moysi neget, scriptum sit dominum ad moysen locutum coram uelut si quis loquatur ad amicum suum, non minus quam et iacob: ego uidi, inquit, deum facie ad faciem. "Ergo uisibilis et inuisibilis idem, et quia idem utrumque, ideo et ipse pater inuisibilis, quia et filius, uisibilis".*

¹⁸¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 15.3 (trans. Evans, 151): *Ad hanc diuersitatem uisi et inuisi in unum conferendam qui ex diuerso nobis argumentabitur recte utrumque dictum, uisibilem quidem in carne, inuisibilem uero ante carnem, ut idem sit pater inuisibilis ante carnem qui et filius uisibilis in carne.*

considered these passages together, he saw them as clearly demonstrating that the Father and Son must be two, the Father invisible and the Son visible. The monarchians, on the other hand, took these passages as manifesting that the same God was both visible and invisible, both Father and Son, one and the same.

Tertullian's discussion of the visibility of God and its implications for the distinction of the Father and Son is concentrated in *Adversus Praxean* 14-17. Noticeably absent from this concentrated discussion of the visibility of God, however, is any mention of John 14:9-11. The absence of this passage here is striking because Tertullian elsewhere indicates that this was one of the Praxeans' favorite passages.¹⁸² Even more, John 14:9 (he who has seen me has seen the Father) would seem to fit their argument perfectly here. There is a high probability that the Praxeans did use John 14:9-11 to argue that the same God is both visible and invisible, but for undisclosed reasons, Tertullian has omitted it from his most concentrated discussion of the visibility of God.

Became Incarnate, Suffered, and Died

Tertullian repeatedly attacked his opponents because of the consequences their views had on teaching about the incarnation. The monarchian position on the incarnation is straightforward: God "made himself his own Son."¹⁸³ As with some of their other claims, the testimony of Tertullian shows that the monarchians were aware that their position seemed to entail an impossibility. They responded to this difficulty as follows,

"But", <they say>, "to God nothing is difficult." Who does not know it? And who is not aware that *things impossible with the world are possible with God*? Also

¹⁸² Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 20.1-2.

¹⁸³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 10.1 (trans. Evans, 141): *Ipse se, inquit, Filium sibi fecit.*

*God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things that are wise. We have read it all. "Consequently", they say, "it was not difficult for God to make himself both Father and Son, contrary to the law traditional in human affairs: for it was not difficult for God, contrary to nature, to cause the barren woman to bear—or even the virgin."*¹⁸⁴

For the monarchians, the claim that the same God was Father and Son is of the same order as the claim that the same God is both visible and invisible. They did not shy away from teachings that ostensibly entailed contradiction.¹⁸⁵

Tertullian draws out the implications of the monarchian teaching on the incarnation in such a manner that the connections between this teaching and the claim of the identity of the Father and Son are clear. Tertullian states,

Yet these people bring [the Father] down into Mary's womb, and set him at Pilate's judgement seat, and shut him up in Joseph's sepulchre. Hence therefore it is evident that they are astray. For not knowing that from the beginning the whole course of the divine ordinance has come down through the Son, they believe that the Father himself both was seen and conversed and wrought, and suffered thirst and hunger, in spite of the prophet who says *The eternal God shall never thirst nor hunger at all*—and how much more shall he neither die nor be buried—and that thus the one God, that is, the Father, has always done those things which <in fact> have been performed by <the agency of> the Son.¹⁸⁶

For Tertullian, the claim that the Father became his own Son entailed a whole host of problems, including the attribution of every event in the life of Christ to the Father. If, as

¹⁸⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 10.7 (trans. Evans, 142): *Sed nihil deo difficile, quis hoc nesciat? et: impossibilia apud saeculum possibilia apud deum, quis ignoret? et: stulta mundi elegit deus, ut confundat sapientia. Legimus omnia. 'Ergo, inquiunt, difficile non fuit deo ipsum se et patrem et filium facere aduersus traditam formam rebus humanis. Nam et sterilem parere contra naturam difficile deo non fuit, sicut nec uirginem'.*

¹⁸⁵ There is also the possibility here that Tertullian is stylizing his opponents' position here in order to make them look foolish.

¹⁸⁶ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 16.6-7 (trans. Evans, 154-5): *quem isti in uulua mariae deducunt et in pilati tribunal imponunt et in monumentis ioseph recludunt. Hinc igitur apparet error illorum. Ignorantes enim a primordio omnem ordinem diuinae dispositionis per filium decucurrisse, ipsum credunt patrem et uisum et congressum et operatum et sitim et esuriem passum - aduersus prophetam dicentem: deus aeternus non sitiet nec esuriet omnino: quanto magis nec morietur nec sepelietur? - et ita unum deum, id est patrem, semper egisse quae per filium gesta sunt.*

the monarchians claimed, the Father and the Son are the same, one need not try to ascribe some things to the Son and some to the Father, for they could all be equally ascribed to Father and Son. For Tertullian, however, it is improper to attribute to the Father many of the things said of Christ in the gospels, as well as all the appearances of God in the Old Testament.

Tertullian argued that the attribution of suffering to the Father was improper. The monarchians, much to Tertullian's dismay, claimed precisely that the Father did suffer. Tertullian sums up the monarchian teaching at the beginning of his treatise: "And so, after <all this> time, a Father who was born, a Father who suffered, God himself the Lord Almighty, is preached as Jesus Christ."¹⁸⁷ The fact that Tertullian includes this digest of the most troublesome aspects of monarchian teaching at the beginning of the work is a close parallel to Hippolytus in *Contra Noetum*. Later in the work, he accuses the monarchians of crucifying the Father.¹⁸⁸ Tertullian again charges them with claiming that the Father was both crucified and died.¹⁸⁹

Although that they did not have trouble attributing things proper to the Son to the Father, some monarchians tried to avoid the bald assertion that the Father suffered. Tertullian states, "Further, if the Father is impassible he is of course impassible: or if he is compassible he is of course passible. So you do him no benefit by this fear of yours.

¹⁸⁷ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.1 (trans. Evans, 131): *Itaque post tempus pater natus et pater passus, ipse deus dominus omnipotens iesus christus praedicatur.*

¹⁸⁸ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 10.8.

¹⁸⁹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 29.3.

For you fear to call passible him whom you do call compassible.”¹⁹⁰ This distinction between passibility and compassibility is elucidated by Heine’s work on Callistus’ Christology. Heine argues that the introduction of the language of compassibility was meant to distance monarchians from overtly claiming that God suffered.¹⁹¹

By employing the techniques of grammatical exegesis, Tertullian seeks to show how problematic it was to claim that the Father suffered, was crucified, and died:

You have him [the Father] crying aloud at his passion, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Consequently either the Son was suffering, forsaken by the Father, and the Father did not suffer, seeing he had forsaken the Son: or else, if it was the Father who was suffering, to what God was he crying aloud?¹⁹²

Thus, for Tertullian, the monarchian claims that the Father suffered were brought about by a way of reading the text that could not account for all of the main actors. These problems derived from the monarchian identification of the Father and the Son, which itself was an outflowing of their strict understanding of the assertion that there is only one God.

¹⁹⁰ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 29.5-6 (trans. Evans, 177): *porro si impassibilis pater, utique et incompassibilis; aut si compassibilis, utique passibilis. Nihil ei uel hoc timore tuo praestas. Times dicere passibilem quem dicis compassibilem.*

¹⁹¹ Heine notes the tension between the claims at the beginning of *Adversus Praxean* that the Father suffered and the later claims that the Father was actually compassible. Heine has convincingly argued that Callistus and the Roman school developed their monarchian theology away from the patripassian implications that were readily accepted by early monarchians. Heine suggests that it is these views of the later Roman school that are represented in *Adversus Praxean* 27-29 (“The Christology of Callistus,” 59–60). This is the insight that underwrites Heine’s suggestion that there was actually a monarchian named Praxeas but that Tertullian was also addressing the theology of Callistus under the name of Praxeas. Although it is hard to prove definitively, Heine’s theory has the virtue of explaining the seeming contradiction between the theology attributed to Praxeas at the beginning and end of *Adversus Praxean*.

¹⁹² Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 30.1 (trans. Evans, 178): *habes ipsum exclamantem in passione: deus meus, deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti? ergo aut filius patiebatur a patre derelictus et pater passus non est qui filium dereliquit; aut si pater erat qui patiebatur, ad quem deum exclamabat?*

Conclusion

Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* exhibits a number of similarities with Hippolytus' *Contra Noetum*. It is clear that both Tertullian and the Praxeans were concerned with the unity of God. Like the Noetians, the Praxeans claimed that the Father and Son were one and the same (*ipsum eundemque*). Consequently, they claimed that the one God was seen in the theophanies, that this one God was both visible and invisible. *Adversus Praxean* does present some notable developments in comparison with *Contra Noetum*. Tertullian records that there were some monarchians who, like the Noetians, had no problem affirming that the Father suffered. Tertullian also bears witness to the fact that some other monarchians began to shy away from a straightforward claim that the Father suffered. In order to avoid this troublesome conclusion, they began to argue that the Father suffered *with* the Son, that he was *compassible* but not *passible*. Despite this development, a solid core of monarchianism is evident in both works. The monarchians defended a strong view of the unity of God using scriptural exegesis. Similarly, they identified the Father and Son, often using passages from the Gospel of John to support their claim. From the foundation of this identification of the Father and Son, they argued that the same one God was both visible and invisible. Views regarding the passibility of the Father shifted within monarchianism, but the stable, exegetically-supported core, remained.

CHAPTER THREE: THE *REFUTATIO OMNIUM HAERESIUM* AND NOVATIAN'S *DE TRINITATE*

In this chapter, I continue my analysis of contemporary texts that attest to monarchianism. The first of the texts I examine in this chapter, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, presents a host of difficulties. Not least among the difficulties is that the author (of whose identity we are uncertain) has distorted the positions of those whom he opposes. Therefore, evidence gleaned from this text must be used with caution. Novatian's *De Trinitate*, too, presents a clear, sometimes simplistic portrait of his opponents. His portrait of his monarchian opponents is almost certainly less subtle than their theology itself. However, his simplistic portrayal of their theology has the benefit of highlighting the most basic aspects of monarchian theology. After treating these two works, I offer a synopsis of the monarchian sources, summarize my conclusions, and reassess some of the scholarly views about monarchianism. My reconstruction of monarchianism in Part One of this dissertation provides the foundation for re-examining Origen's early Trinitarian theology in Part Two.

The *Refutatio*

Introduction

As my earlier discussions of the Hippolytan problem made clear, there is little scholarly consensus regarding the specifics of the *Refutatio*. Most scholars think it was written by a different author than the one who composed the *Contra Noetum*. Among those who think it was written by a different author, there is little agreement about when

it should be dated. Because I find Simonetti's arguments convincing, I think the most probable date for the *Refutatio* falls somewhere between 225 and 235 C.E.¹ My acceptance of this dating means that I think *Refutatio* postdates *Contra Noetum* and likely draws upon it.² Because of the gaps in knowledge surrounding the work, I will speak of "the author of the *Refutatio*" instead of Hippolytus. This somewhat cumbersome circumlocution indicates that I consider the work to be the product of a different author than the *Contra Noetum*.

One of the chief difficulties with the *Refutatio* is that it is fiercely polemical and often highly tendentious. In an attempt to discredit the teaching of his opponents, the author often resorts to *ad hominem* arguments. For instance, he details at length the alleged dishonesty and deception of Callistus.³ The reliability of these accusations is difficult to corroborate from external sources. Eusebius makes only a brief mention of Callistus in his *Ecclesiastical History*, noting that he succeeded Zephyrinus in the Roman see.⁴ Eusebius does not signal any major problems with the teaching or career of

¹ Simonetti's argument proceeds by first comparing *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*. Against Allen Brent, he concludes (with the majority of earlier scholars) that *Contra Noetum* represents an early, simple form of monarchianism and that *Adversus Praxean* draws on it. Since most scholars agree that the *Refutatio* postdates *Adversus Praxean*, Simonetti concludes that it also postdates *Contra Noetum*. This reconstruction of the dating of the texts makes the most sense of the data. See Manlio Simonetti, "Una nuova proposta su Ippolito," *Augustinianum* 36, no. 1 (1996): 13–46; idem, "Due note su Ippolito: Ippolito interprete di Genesi 49; Ippolito e Tertulliano," in *Ricerche su Ippolito*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 13 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1977), 121–36.

² I have chosen here not to address in any detail the question of the hypothetical relationship between the *Refutatio* and Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*. The overlap in specific vocabulary and analogies between *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean* is too great to ignore. This is not the case with the *Refutatio*, which has a completely different tenor and purpose. If the *Refutatio* does draw upon Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the reliance is obscured by the differing tendencies of the two authors.

³ *Refutatio* 9.12.1–19. In this section on the *Refutatio*, I use Marcovich's edition of the text and the translation in the ANF unless otherwise noted. Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 25 (New York; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986).

⁴ Eusebius, *EH* 6.21.

Callistus, and this lack stands in stark contrast to our author's overwhelmingly negative portrayal of him. Eusebius does not give any of Callistus' backstory or accuse him of dishonest dealings. Another example of the *Refutatio*'s overt anti-Callistan bias is his philosophical genealogy of Callistus' heresy. The author of the *Refutatio* is at pains to argue that Callistus derived his teaching from Heraclitus.⁵ Heine's thorough article has demonstrated that in order to make the connection between Callistus and Heraclitus, the author substantially modified some of the distinctive features of Callistus' teaching.⁶ Heine has drawn on Mansfeld, who has shown that the author of the *Refutatio* doctored the teaching of Heraclitus as well.⁷

Despite the polemical tone of the *Refutatio*, and the many unanswered questions surrounding Hippolytus, it remains the case that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are two of the most important extant sources for reconstructing the monarchian controversy. The importance of these polemically charged works illustrates acutely the difficult nature of

⁵ For an examination of the role of Heraclitus in the *Refutatio*, see Mouraviev's discussion. Mouraviev focuses on the use of Heraclitus with respect to the teaching of Noetus rather than Callistus. Because his study was published at roughly the same time as that of Jaap Mansfeld, Mouraviev did not have the benefit of access to Mansfeld's detailed argument about the distortions present in the *Refutatio*. Serge N. Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët (Commentaire d'Hippolyte, Refut. omn. haer. IX 8 - 10)," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, vol. 2.36.6, 1992, 4375–4402; Jaap Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context: Hippolytus' Elenchos as a Source for Greek Philosophy*, Philosophia Antiqua 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

⁶ Ronald E. Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 56–91.

⁷ Jaap Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context*, 231–42. Elsewhere, Mansfeld states regarding Hippolytus, "He is an intelligent and erudite person, an industrious Christian intellectual, but one without an interest in philosophy for its own sake. Philosophy is important to him insofar as, following in Irenaeus' footsteps, he can use it, or rather those of its ingredients which were most favoured in his own time, as powerful polemical tools.... Hippolytus must be considered guilty of doctoring the evidence concerned with the Greek philosophers" (ibid., xvi–xvii). Note the different tone of Mansfeld and Nautin. Nautin considered the *Refutatio* to be the work of Josipe, whom he viewed as a pretentious dilettante. See Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe: Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature chrétienne du troisième siècle*, Études et textes pour l'histoire du dogme de la Trinité 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1947), 103.

reconstructing the monarchian controversy. We have no extant primary sources from monarchian writers, and we are forced to reconstruct their positions from opponents who often misrepresented their views in an attempt to discredit them. The *Refutatio* seems to be more prone to this misrepresentation than, for example, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*. All of these anti-monarchian writings contain some quotations from monarchians, but it is difficult to judge the reliability of these quotations given the absence of any extant monarchian writings.

Textual Analysis

Genealogy of Heresy

Because the author of the *Refutatio* is so concerned with tracing the genealogy of the heresy of Noetus and Callistus, whom he repeatedly connects to each other, our first task is to reconstruct the family tree of the heresy as presented in the *Refutatio*.⁸ He regularly sees the heresy of Noetus and his successors as part of a complicated web, which can make a reconstruction difficult. His treatment of those whom he considers to be teaching aberrant doctrines follows a long survey of philosophers and their systems. These preceding philosophers provide part of the genealogy that the *Refutatio* is trying to

⁸ I use "heresy" here not as an evaluative tool of my own, but to represent the position of the author of the *Refutatio*, who unmistakably views monarchianism as a heresy. As I note elsewhere, drawing a sharp line between orthodoxy and heresy at the beginning of the third century is tricky business. See the clarifying essay of Rowan Williams and the extensive studies of Alain le Boulluec for more discussion of this matter: Rowan Williams, "Does It Make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy?," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Henry Chadwick and Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–23; Alain le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe-IIIe siècles*, 2 vols., Collection des études augustiniennes 110-111 (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1985); idem, "L'écriture comme norme hérésiologique dans les controverses des IIe et IIIe siècles (domaine grec)," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 23 (1996): 66–76.

trace.⁹ Books nine and ten of the *Refutatio* are the focus of my analysis, but I also highlight relevant sections from the earlier books.¹⁰

In the *Contra Noetum*, Hippolytus gives no information about the transmission of the teachings of Noetus.¹¹ He does tell us that Noetus was a Smyrnaean and that he lived recently.¹² The author of the *Refutatio* confirms that Noetus was from Smyrna.¹³ At the beginning of book nine of the *Refutatio*, the author traces the teaching of Noetus through to Callistus.¹⁴ He states that Epigonus learned the teaching of Noetus and passed it on to Cleomenes. He later reports that Zephyrinus learned the teaching from Cleomenes.¹⁵ Thus, the arrival of Noetus' teaching in Rome would have been by means of either Epigonus or Cleomenes.¹⁶

⁹ Again, note Heine's article that details how the author of the *Refutatio* distorts the theology of Callistus to make it align with Heraclitus' philosophical teaching. See notes 6-7 in this chapter.

¹⁰ My decision to focus on book nine and ten of the *Refutatio* is one of necessity. A fuller examination of the *Refutatio* would make the dissertation even longer than it already is. Furthermore, the *Refutatio* focuses on Noetus and Callistus in books nine and ten, making them the most important for my study. Callistus seems to be the main target of the author of the *Refutatio*, so he waits to report on his teaching until the culmination of the work.

¹¹ Without giving a detailed account of the genealogy of Noetus' teaching, Hippolytus signals at the beginning of *Contra Noetum* that Noetus' disciples are troublesome. He appears to focus on Noetus in an attempt to get to the root of the problem. See *Contra Noetum* 1.1.

¹² Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.1.

¹³ *Refutatio* 9.7.

¹⁴ See especially *Refutatio* 9.7, 10.27.

¹⁵ *Refutatio* 9.7.

¹⁶ The translator of the *Refutatio* in the ANF mistranslated 10.27.1 and took it to mean that Noetus learned his heresy from Epigonus. This is certainly not the case; the author of the *Refutatio* consistently traces the heresy from Noetus through Epigonus and Cleomenes. The passage should be translated roughly as follows: "Likewise Noetus... introduced such a heresy as this, which advanced from a certain Epigonus unto Cleomenes and thus until now it continued through successive teachers...." (Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Νοητός, τῷ μὲν γένει ὦν Σμυρναῖος, ἀνὴρ <δὲ> ἀκριτόμυθος καὶ ποικίλος, εἰσηγήσατο τοιάνδε αἵρεσιν—ἐξ Ἐπιγόνου τινὸς εἰς Κλεομένην χωρήσασαν καὶ οὕτως ἕως νῦν ἐπὶ τοῖς διαδόχοις διαμείναςαν).

This teaching that proved problematic for the author of the *Refutatio* appears to have been introduced to Zephyrinus through the influence of Cleomenes.¹⁷ This statement is interesting because it might shed light on a vague statement of Eusebius in the *EH*. Eusebius considered the teaching of the church in Rome to have been somehow corrupted during the time of Zephyrinus.¹⁸ Eusebius does not provide any details of how the teaching of the church was corrupted during this time, but he does tell us that Zephyrinus' predecessor, Victor, rejected the teaching of Theodotus.¹⁹ The author of the *Refutatio*, in one of his more polemically charged moments, informs us that Zephyrinus' successor, Callistus, at times subscribed to the teachings of Theodotus; but he does not disclose the details of how Theodotus' teaching gained a foothold with the successors of Victor.²⁰

If we take the testimony of Eusebius and the *Refutatio* in tandem, we can reasonably assume that one of the things that was probably accepted by the church during the episcopate of Zephyrinus was the teaching of Theodotus, which had previously been rejected by Zephyrinus' predecessor, Victor. Even more, Hippolytus briefly mentions Theodotus in the *Contra Noetum* and, like Eusebius, accuses him of teaching that Christ was a mere human (ἄνθρωπον ψιλόν). The connection of the teachings of Noetus and

¹⁷ *Refutatio* 9.7.

¹⁸ Eusebius, *EH* 5.28. Eusebius writes that Victor had repelled improper teachings but "that the truth had been corrupted from the time of his successor, Zephyrinus" (ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ διαδόχου αὐτοῦ Ζεφυρίνου παρακεχράσθαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν). Trans. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History: Books 1-5*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library 153 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926), 517.

¹⁹ Eusebius, *EH* 5.28. Decker devotes a good portion of his dissertation on monarchianism to reconstructing the theology of the Theodotians. See especially Michael Decker, "Die Monarchianer: Frühchristliche Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und Kleinasien" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1987), 66–130. On my narrower definition, the Theodotians are not properly monarchians.

²⁰ *Refutatio* 9.12.19, 10.27.4.

Theodotus is a common theme in both the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*.²¹ When the *Refutatio* is augmented by these other sources, it provides us with enough information to establish a rough genealogy of the teaching of Noetus, one that has it gaining a foothold among leaders of the church in Rome during the episcopate of Zephyrinus. With this established, we must move on to examine the teaching of Noetus and others whom the *Refutatio* often lumps with him.

Books nine and ten of the *Refutatio* have Callistus as their primary target; but before I discuss their presentation of Callistus, it will be fruitful to examine the *Refutatio*'s presentation of Callistus' predecessors. Doing so will help both to show the framework within which the *Refutatio* presents the theology of Callistus and to elucidate other teaching on the doctrines of God and Christ that the *Refutatio* views as aberrant. After giving this context, I examine the *Refutatio*'s accounts of the teaching of Zephyrinus and Callistus, giving special attention to similarities with, and divergences from, Noetus and the others the *Refutatio* examines.

The first person of interest for us in the *Refutatio* is Apelles. The author of the *Refutatio* accuses him of teaching that there are four gods, thus seeming to remove him from the orbit of monarchian teaching, which strongly held that there is only one God.²² Apelles is of interest here because he also shows up in Eusebius' *EH*. Both the author of the *Refutatio* and Eusebius include a section on Apelles directly following a discussion of Marcion, and the *Refutatio* states that Apelles was a disciple of Marcion.²³ Drawing from

²¹ See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.1.

²² For the primary discussions of Apelles, see, *Refutatio* 7.38 and 10.20.

²³ Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 10.20.1.

his source, Rhodo, Eusebius records that Apelles confessed that there was only one principle (μίαν ἀρχὴν ὁμολογεῖ).²⁴ Eusebius is obviously contrasting this position with the teaching of Marcion, whom he describes as teaching that there are two principles (δύο ἀρχὰς).²⁵ Eusebius goes on to say that Apelles could not explain his reasons for holding that there was only one principle, but that he held it nonetheless. If Rhodo's account of Apelles' teaching is correct, it lines up well with the monarchian emphasis; but Eusebius' account of Apelles teaching does not agree with the *Refutatio*. It is possible that Apelles managed to both affirm that there was only one principle and that there were multiple gods, but this possibility seems unlikely. Presenting him as a disciple of Marcion, the *Refutatio* suggests that he took Marcion's teaching a step further and argued for more than two gods. This emphasis in the *Refutatio* fits well with its placement shortly after discussions of various Gnostic figures. Given the absence of an arbitrating source, it is difficult to determine which source for Apelles' teaching is more accurate.

The next figure of interest in the *Refutatio* is Cerinthus.²⁶ It begins its discussion of Cerinthus by noting that he taught that the world was not made by the "first [god], but by a certain power (δυνάμεώς) which had been separated (κεχωρισμένης) from the power (ἐξουσίας) which is above all and which is ignorant of the God who is above all."²⁷ In many ways, this teaching resembles Gnostic formulations wherein the demiurge is

²⁴ Eusebius, *EH* 5.13.2.

²⁵ Eusebius, *EH* 5.13.3.

²⁶ Eusebius mentions Cerinthus a few times in the *Ecclesiastical History*. See *EH*, 3.28, 4.14, 7.25. With regard to Cerinthus, Eusebius is not concerned with any of the same issues as the author of the *Refutatio*. Eusebius' overriding concerns regarding Cerinthus have to do with issues of chiliasm and the proper conception of the Kingdom of Christ.

²⁷ *Refutatio* 7.33.1. Translation mine.

ignorant of the fact that there is a higher God. However, it is interesting to note that Cerinthus does not appear to have argued that another god created the world; rather a “power” did so. Although the account is too brief to offer anything definitive, the fact that Cerinthus calls the creator a “power” could be the result of his impulse to protect monotheism.²⁸

The *Refutatio* accuses Cerinthus of denying the virgin birth and teaching that Jesus was born of Mary and Joseph in a way similar to all humans.²⁹ Cerinthus held that the Christ descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove at the baptism. Furthermore, he allegedly taught that this Christ left Jesus after the passion but that the Christ did not suffer because he was πνευματικόν.³⁰ This sort of teaching is what Harnack wishes to identify by his “dynamistic monarchian” label.³¹ Immediately after this treatment of Cerinthus, the *Refutatio* claims that the Ebionites held views of Jesus that were similar to those of Cerinthus.³² Although the *Refutatio* does not alert us to the motivations of his teaching about Christ, Cerinthus’ teaching effectively protects a strict understanding of the uniqueness of God. He does not use the exact wording, but Cerinthus’ teaching is

²⁸ What I mean by this is that certain strands of Gnosticism had an impulse to be monotheistic, or at least monistic. By saying a power created, Cerinthus is able to avoid positing the existence of another god, if that was his intention. See John Dillon, “Monotheism in the Gnostic Tradition,” in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1999), 69–79. Note also that in 10.21.1, the *Refutatio* reports that Cerinthus thinks the demiurgic power is “angelic.”

²⁹ *Refutatio* 10.21.2: Τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν λέγει μὴ ἐκ παρθένου γεγεν<ν>ῆσθαι, γεγονέναι δὲ αὐτὸν ἐξ Ἰωσήφ καὶ Μαρίας υἱὸν, ὁμοίως τοῖς λοιποῖς <ἅπασιν> ἀνθρώποις. See also 7.33.1.

³⁰ *Refutatio* 10.21.3; 7.33.2.

³¹ For Harnack’s naming schema of “modalistic” and “dynamistic” monarchianism, see *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 3.13; idem, “Monarchianism,” in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and George William Gilmore (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker, 1963), 7.454.

³² *Refutatio* 10.22.1; 7.34.

almost identical to the “mere man” Christologies I discussed earlier. In his scheme, Jesus is nothing more than a human upon whom Christ descends. Jesus is certainly not presented as divine.³³ This scheme, too, may be the result of an impulse to protect monotheism.

Immediately following its discussion of the Ebionites, the *Refutatio* examines the teachings of Theodotus, who is important for its later discussions of Zephyrinus and Callistus. According to the *Refutatio*, Theodotus taught that Jesus was similar to all humans, except that he was born of a virgin by the will of God. Like Cerinthus, he is accused of teaching that the Christ descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism. The *Refutatio* then reports that the followers of Theodotus expanded on this doctrine and taught that before the descent of the Christ onto Jesus, the latter’s “powers” were inoperative. The *Refutatio* takes Theodotus’ position to be a denial of the divinity of Christ.³⁴

After Theodotus, the *Refutatio* examines the teachings of the Montanists. At first it gives a standard account of Montanism springing from Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla; but then it states that there were other Montanists who followed the teachings of Noetus.³⁵ It states that these Noetian Montanists held that the same one is both Son and

³³ The *Refutatio* does not clarify whether the descending Christ is divine or what the precise relationship between the Christ and Jesus is.

³⁴ *Refutatio* 10.23.1-2: Θεόδοτος (δὲ) ὁ Βυζάντιος εἰσηγήσατο αἵρεσιν τοιάνδε, φάσκων τὰ μὲν ὅλα ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄντως θεοῦ γεγονέναι, τὸν δὲ Χριστὸν, ὁμοίως τοῖς προειρημένοις γνωστικοῖς, φάσκει τοιοῦτῳ τινὶ τρόπῳ πεφηνέναι. Εἶναι μὲν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἄνθρωπον κ(οι)νὸν πᾶσιν, ἐν δὲ τούτῳ διαφέρειν, ὅτι κατὰ βουλὴν θεοῦ γεγένηται ἐκ παρθένου, ἐπισκιάσαντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος <τ>ὸν ἐν τῇ παρθένῳ σαρκωθέντ(α)· ὕστερον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος κατεληλυθέναι τὸν Χριστὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐν εἵδει περιστερᾶς. ὅθεν φησὶ μὴ πρότερον «τὰς δυνάμεις <ἐν> αὐτῷ ἐνεργηθῆναι». θεὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν θέλει. καὶ τοιαῦτα <δὴ καὶ> Θεόδοτος. See also 7.35.

³⁵ Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 10.25.1.

Father, seen and unseen, begotten and unbegotten, etc.³⁶ Antithetical pairings of this sort recur in the *Refutatio*'s accounts of Heraclitus, Noetus, and Callistus. There is some question about the relationship of monarchianism and Montanism, but a full exploration of this matter is beyond the scope of the current chapter.³⁷

The *Refutatio* often mentions Zephyrinus in its accounts of the theology of Noetus and Callistus, but it seldom describes what Zephyrinus actually taught. In its account, Zephyrinus is portrayed as a dull and servile man: an “ignorant and illiterate individual, and one unskilled in ecclesiastical definitions.”³⁸ The author of the *Refutatio* also reports that Zephyrinus was bent to the will of Callistus by means of bribes.³⁹ Later, he expands this portrait of Zephyrinus and presents him as oblivious to the designs of Callistus.⁴⁰ According to the author of the *Refutatio*, Zephyrinus is merely an instrument in the transmission of the Noetian teaching. As the author of the *Refutatio* presents it, it is because of his weakness that Noetian teaching gained a foothold in the church in Rome.⁴¹

³⁶ Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 10.26.1: <τὸν> αὐτὸν εἶναι υἱὸν καὶ πατέρα λέγοντες, ὁρατὸν καὶ ἀόρατον, γεννητὸν καὶ ἀγέννητον, θνητὸν καὶ ἀθάνατον, τούτων τὰς ἀφορμὰς ἀπὸ Νοητοῦ τινος λαβόντες.

³⁷ For a short discussion about similarities between Montanism and the teaching of Noetus, see Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “The Asian Context of the New Prophecy and of *Epistula Apostolorum*,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 51, no. 4 (1997): 432–3. Note also that one of Tertullian's main complaints against Praxeas was that he was instrumental in getting Montanism expelled from Rome. He writes, “Thus Praxeas at Rome managed two pieces of the devil's business: he drove out prophecy and introduced heresy: he put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father.” See *Adversus Praxean* 1.5 (trans. Evans, 131). If Tertullian can be trusted here, monarchianism and Montanism appear to be incompatible. We should thus proceed with caution when assessing the *Refutatio*'s claims here.

³⁸ *Refutatio* 9.11.1 (trans. ANF 5:128): ἄνδρα ιδιώτην καὶ ἀγράμματον καὶ ἄπειρον τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ὄρων.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ *Refutatio* 9.12.14.

⁴¹ The author of the *Refutatio* is never clear about the extent to which monarchian teaching pervaded the church in Rome. He does not clarify whether it was actively propounded by the leaders of the church in Rome or whether those leaders merely let it thrive as a popular movement.

It is difficult to isolate monarchian teachings in the *Refutatio* because of the highly polemical and tendentious nature of the work. Furthermore, the author of the *Refutatio* has placed these portraits of monarchianism near the end of his genealogy of heresy. This placement of key sections on monarchianism at the end of the work enables the author of the *Refutatio* to stylize the monarchians so that they appear to be derivative from the philosophers and “heretics” surveyed earlier in the work. Nevertheless, there are a few dense sections where the *Refutatio* addresses monarchianism directly. The tenor of these passages is quite different than similar passages in *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*. There are brief glimpses into monarchian teaching, but they are planted in a forest of *ad hominem* caricatures. Even this fragmentary evidence is important because it gives us a view into a Roman monarchianism that probably postdates *Contra Noetum* by some twenty years.

One God

As in the earlier accounts, the monarchian concern to defend the unity of God is readily apparent in the *Refutatio*. The first indication of this fact is seen an episode in the *Refutatio* where Callistus urges Zephyrinus to confess, “I know that there is one God, Jesus Christ; nor except Him do I know any other that is begotten and amenable to suffering.’ And on another occasion, when he would make the following statement: ‘The Father did not die, but the Son.’”⁴² Whether we should trust the *Refutatio* regarding the machinations of Callistus, the statement it attributes to Zephyrinus rings true because the

⁴² *Refutatio* 9.11.3 (trans. ANF 5:128): «ἐγὼ οἶδα ἓνα θεὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ πλὴν αὐτοῦ ἕτερον οὐδέν· γεν<v>ητὸν καὶ παθητὸν», ποτὲ δὲ λέγειν· «οὐχ ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέθανεν, ἀλλὰ ὁ υἱός».

statement so neatly encapsulates the central concern that the monarchians tried to address: the maintenance of a strict view of monotheism while simultaneously confessing that Jesus is God.

The second statement that the *Refutatio* attributes to Zephyrinus, that the Son died, not the Father, also seems possible, even though it appears to contradict the earlier claim that the one God was “amenable to suffering.” Already in Tertullian’s *Adversus Praxean* we saw variance about whether the Father suffered—a seemingly necessary consequence of arguing that the Father and Son are one and the same.⁴³ In the above quotation, it appears as though Zephyrinus was willing to admit a certain (albeit limited) distinction between Father and Son in order to protect the Father from suffering.

Immediately following this passage, the author of the *Refutatio* notes that both Zephyrinus and Callistus accused him of being a ditheist (δίθεοί ἐστε) because he would not consent to their teaching.⁴⁴ Despite the seeming concession to protect the Father from suffering, the monarchians continued to maintain that their opponents were ditheists. A short while later, the *Refutatio* gives what appears to be a direct quotation from Callistus: “‘I will not,’ he says, ‘say two gods, Father and Son, but one.’”⁴⁵ Callistus here is protecting himself against the very things he accuses his opponents of.

The author of the *Refutatio* even works this strict understanding of the uniqueness of God into his claims about monarchian teachings being derived from the philosophy of Heraclitus. He has Heraclitus urging that it is proper to believe that “all things are one”

⁴³ See *Adversus Praxean* 27-29. Note again that this equivocation could reveal different chronological strata of monarchianism as well as possible geographical variation.

⁴⁴ *Refutatio* 9.12.16.

⁴⁵ *Refutatio* 9.12.18 (trans. mine): Οὐ γάρ, φησίν, ἐρῶ δύο θεούς, πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, ἀλλ’ ἓνα.

(ἐν πάντα εἶναι).⁴⁶ According to the *Refutatio*, Heraclitus teaches that the oneness of all things includes contrary pairs such as visible and invisible: “In this manner, Heraclitus assigns to the visible an equality of position and honour with the invisible, as if what was visible and what was invisible were confessedly some one thing.”⁴⁷ It is probably no mistake that the author of the *Refutatio* claims that Heraclitus taught that the invisible and visible were one thing, for this assertion is commonly attributed to monarchians.⁴⁸

Although the term μοναρχία does not appear in *Contra Noetum*, it makes a single perplexing appearance in the *Refutatio*, where the latter reports that Noetus “thinks to establish the monarchy, saying that the Father and Son are one and the same....”⁴⁹ There are a few possible reasons for this appearance. First, as Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao has suggested, the term might not occur in *Contra Noetum* because it was not a key term for those whom we now call monarchians. It could have been a pejorative label that was mockingly applied to groups for whom it was not an important term.⁵⁰ On the other hand, I think Simonetti’s hypothesis about the absence of the term in Novatian’s *De Trinitate* also gives a plausible explanation of the absence of the term in *Contra Noetum*. Simonetti argued that the term was absent from *De Trinitate* because Novatian knew how important

⁴⁶ *Refutatio* 9.9.1.

⁴⁷ *Refutatio* 9.10.1 (trans. ANF 5:126): Οὕτως <οὖν> Ἡράκλειτος ἐν ἰσῇ μοίρᾳ τίθεται καὶ τιμᾷ τὰ ἐμφανῆ τοῖς ἀφανέσιν, ὡς ἓν τι τὸ ἐμφανὲς καὶ τὸ ἀφανὲς ὁμολογουμένως ὑπάρχον.

⁴⁸ See Mouraviev’s detailed discussion of the relationship between Heraclitus’ teaching and the successors of Noetus: Mouraviev, “Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët,” 4386–4402.

⁴⁹ *Refutatio* 9.10.11 (trans. mine): οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν....

⁵⁰ See Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico “monarchia” en la controversia “monarquiana,”* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie I: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996), 236ff, 247, 279. See also my earlier discussion of Uríbarri’s work in the introduction.

them term was for his opponents and, therefore, intentionally avoided it.⁵¹ Whether the term enjoyed widespread (or any) use by all of those whom I label monarchians, the author of the *Refutatio* suggests that Noetus at least used it to signify a strong conception of the unity of God.⁵²

The *Refutatio* presents Callistus as having a concern, like Noetus and Zephyrinus, to maintain the unity of God. After saying that Callistus corroborated the heresy of the Noetians, the *Refutatio* claims that he “confesses that there is one God, the Father and creator of all.”⁵³ This statement parallels the beginning of the *Refutatio*’s demonstration of truth and its portrayal of Jewish beliefs. Concerning the Jews, it says, “And they affirm that there is one God, and that He is Creator and Lord of the universe: that He has formed all these glorious works which had no previous existence; and this, too, not out of any coeval substance that lay ready at hand, but wishing to create, He did create.”⁵⁴ The author of the *Refutatio* begins his own demonstration of truth similarly: “The first and only (one God), both Creator and Lord of all, had nothing coeval with Himself; not infinite chaos, nor measureless water, nor solid earth, nor dense air, not warm fire, nor refined spirit, nor the azure canopy of the stupendous firmament. But He was One, alone

⁵¹ See, for example, Manlio Simonetti, “Monarchia e Trinità: Alcune osservazioni su un libro recente,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33, no. 3 (1997): 628. Simonetti articulated this theory in response to Uríbarri Bilbao’s thesis. Note also that if Simonetti is right about Novatian, the latter takes the approach opposite to that of Tertullian, who seeks to wrest his opponents’ key terms and verses from them and to use them to support his own position.

⁵² This attribution is not nearly as striking as that in *Adversus Praxean* 3.1-2, where the Praxeans seem to use it as a battle cry: “We hold to the monarchy” (monarchiam tenemus).

⁵³ *Refutatio* 10.27.3: ἓνα εἶναι θεὸν τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν δημιουργὸν τοῦ παντός;

⁵⁴ *Refutatio* 9.30.1 (trans. ANF 5:138 with my modifications): καὶ τὸν μὲν θεὸν ἓνα εἶ(ν)αι λέγουσι, δημιουργόν τε τοῦ παντός καὶ κ(ύριον), ποιήσ(α)ντα πάντα οὐ πρότερον ὄντ(α), οὐδὲ ἐκ τινος ὑποκειμένης συγχρόνου οὐσίας, ἀ(λ)λ(ὰ) θελήσαντα καὶ κτίσαντα.

in Himself.”⁵⁵ Nothing about the above claim attributed to Callistus is necessarily offensive for the author of the *Refutatio*. The problem for the author is the way the monarchians parsed this claim out, as will become clear in the next section. Although it is not uncommon for statements of faith to start with an affirmation of belief in one God, the strength and repetition of our author’s claims is striking. These strong affirmations of the unity of God countered the frequent monarchian accusation of ditheism.

Father and Son

As in the previous accounts, the identification of the Father and Son was one of the key byproducts of the monarchian affirmation of the unity of God. The *Refutatio*’s account of Noetus’ teaching expresses this identification poignantly and is worth quoting fully:

Now, that Noetus affirms that the Son and Father are the same, no one is ignorant. But he makes his statement thus: "When indeed, then, the Father had not been born, he yet was justly styled Father; and when it pleased him to undergo generation, having been begotten, he himself became his own Son, not another's." For in this manner he thinks to establish the monarchy, alleging that Father and Son, are one and the same, not one individual produced from a different one, but himself from himself; and that he is styled by name Father and Son, according to vicissitude of times. But that he is one who has appeared, both having submitted to generation from a virgin, and as a man having held converse among men. And, on account of the birth that had taken place, he confessed himself to those beholding him a Son, no doubt; yet he made no secret to those who could comprehend him of his being a Father. That this person suffered by being fastened to the tree, and that he commended his spirit unto himself, having died, and not having died. And he raised himself up on the third day, after having been interred in a sepulchre, and wounded with a spear, and perforated with nails. Cleomenes asserts, in common with his band of followers, that this person is God and Father

⁵⁵ *Refutatio* 10.32.1 (trans. ANF 5:150): Θεὸς εἷς, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ μόνος καὶ πάντων ποιητὴς καὶ κύριος, σύγχρονον ἔσχεν οὐδέν· οὐ χάος ἀπειρον, οὐχ ὕδωρ ἀμέτρητον, οὐ γῆν στερρὰν, οὐκ ἀέρα πυκνόν, οὐ πῦρ θερμόν, οὐ πνεῦμα λεπτόν, οὐκ οὐρανοῦ μεγάλου κυανέαν ὀροφὴν· ἀλλ’ ἦν εἷς, μόνος <ἐφ’> ἑαυτοῦ.

of the universe, and thus introduces among many an obscurity (of thought) such as we find in the philosophy of Heraclitus.⁵⁶

In *Contra Noetum* and some sections of *Adversus Praxean*, the Father and Son were clearly identified; and their identification was strongly grounded in exegesis. In the *Refutatio*'s account of Noetus, however, the identification of the Father and Son is more complex.⁵⁷ The *Refutatio* claims that the Noetians taught that God appeared differently depending on the “changing of the times” (κατὰ χρόνων τροπήν). In this schema, the names are merely convenient descriptors, and they all refer to the one, undivided God.⁵⁸ There is no underlying reality within the Godhead that corresponds to the different names. There is one God who appears in different ways at different times, and this is precisely the sort of teaching that prompts many scholars to use the term “modalism.”

Although this focus on the applicability of names being determined by the changing of the times adds a new dimension to the monarchian position, there are still vestiges of a simple identification of the Father and Son. Here, as in the preceding

⁵⁶ *Refutatio* 9.10.11-12 (trans. ANF 5:127-128 with my modifications): Ὅτι δὲ καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν υἱὸν εἶναι λέγει καὶ πατέρα, οὐδεὶς ἀγνοεῖ· λέγει γὰρ οὕτως· ὅτε μὲν οὖν μὴ <γε>γένητο ὁ πατήρ, δικαίως πατήρ προσηγόρευτο· ὅτε δὲ ἠυδόκησε γένεσιν <ἐκ παρθένου> ὑπομεῖναι, γεν<ν>(η)θεὶς ὁ <πατήρ> υἱὸς ἐγένετο αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ, οὐχ ἑτέρου. οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ· ὀνόματι μὲν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καλούμενον κατὰ χρόνων τροπήν, ἓνα δὲ <ὄντα καὶ> τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν φανέντα, καὶ γένεσιν ἐκ παρθένου ὑπομείναντα, καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώπο(ις) ἄνθρωπον ἀναστραφέντα· υἱὸν μὲν <γὰρ> ἑαυτὸν τοῖς ὁρῶσιν ὁμολογοῦντα διὰ τὴν γενομένην γένεσιν, πατέρα δὲ <ὄντα> [εἶναι] καὶ τοῖς χωροῦσιν (μ)ὴ ἀποκρύψαντα. <καὶ> τοῦτον <εἶναι τὸν> πάθει <προσελθόντα καὶ> ξύλῳ προσπαγ(έ)ντα καὶ ἑαυτῷ τὸ πνεῦμα παραδόντα· <τὸν> ἀποθανόντα καὶ μὴ ἀποθανόντα καὶ ἑαυτὸν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστήσαντα· τὸν ἐν μνημείῳ ταφέντα καὶ λόγχῃ τρωθέντα καὶ ἡλοῖς καταπαγέντα. τοῦτον <οὖν> τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεὸν καὶ πατέρα <υἱὸν> εἶναι λέγει Κλεομένης καὶ ὁ τοῦτου χορὸς, Ἡρακλείτειον σκότος ἐπεισάγοντες πολλοίς.

⁵⁷ Mouraviev's detailed analysis of the difference between the *Refutatio*'s presentation of the theology of Noetus and that of his followers is helpful here. Mouraviev, “Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët.”

⁵⁸ The scheme that the *Refutatio* presents here is what is typically referred to as “modalism,” and it is easy to see how the term developed to describe this theology. The Greek τρόπος comes from the verb τρέπω, which can mean “to turn.” The Latin *modus* translates the Greek τρόπος. Thus, the development of the term Modalism by scholars is not completely without foundation. The problem with the term, however, is that we do not see it used in any of the contemporary texts.

accounts, we see the nearly ubiquitous monarchian phrase asserting that the Father and Son are “one and the same” (ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν). The phrase continues with a further clarification that uses the same sort of language present in the earlier treatises. We are told that the names Father and Son, especially with regard to the incarnation, do not reveal two, but rather the same one: “not one coming to be from another, but himself from himself” (γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ).

This explicit denial that the incarnation entails two, one and another, draws together strands that we have already seen in monarchian theology. First, the rejection of “one and another” could be an allusion to the passages from Exodus and Isa. 44-45 that featured prominently in the monarchian theology in *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*. *Contra Noetum* claims that the Noetians use an amalgam of passages from Exodus as follows, “He said in the law, ‘I am the God of your fathers; you shall not have any gods other than me’” (Εἶπεν ἐν νόμῳ, Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν· οὐκ ἔσονται ὑμῖν θεοὶ ἕτεροι πλὴν ἐμοῦ).⁵⁹ The strong rejection of the use of ἕτερος when discussing the names Father and Son echoes the biblical expressions of monotheism that deny the existence of θεοὶ ἕτεροι.⁶⁰ Thus, while the author of the *Refutatio* has tried to expunge any trace of scripture from the theology of his opponents, this usage of ἕτερος might very well bear the marks of the earlier interpretive trajectory.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.1. This quotation is a combination of Gen. 46:3 (or Ex. 3:6) with Ex. 20:3.

⁶⁰ Note also that this approach could be a reaction to Justin’s theology in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Justin unabashedly referred to the Son as another God. See, for example, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.4.

⁶¹ Hübner has also argued that there is an allusion to Baruch 3:36-38 in *Refutatio* 9.10.11, where God is said to have conversed with humans (καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώπο(ις) ἀνθρώπων ἀναστραφέντα). Hübner has a

Second, this rejection of the assertion that Father and Son are “one thing and another” might be directly aimed at the sort of expression we find in the demonstration of truth in *Contra Noetum*. There, Hippolytus argues that when the Logos was made manifest in the creation of the world, “another stood beside the Father” (καὶ οὕτως αὐτῷ παρίστατο ἕτερος).⁶² Hippolytus quickly goes on to clarify, “but when saying ‘another,’ I am not saying two gods” (ἕτερον δὲ λέγων οὐ δύο θεοὺς λέγω).⁶³ For Hippolytus, the use of ἕτερος was important to ensure proper distinction between the Father and Son. He did not use ἕτερος indiscriminately, and his immediate qualification was probably meant to affirm with the passages from Exodus and Isaiah that there are not ἕτεροι θεοὶ. Insofar as this formulaic use of ἕτερος in the *Refutatio* responds directly to the theology of the early anti-monarchian writers, it seems to be authentic.

The *Refutatio*’s report on Noetus’ teaching at times seems to suggest the absurdity of the claims of the Noetians. It is unclear if this absurdity was in fact part of the Noetian teaching, or if it is the work of our author’s imagination. For example, the claim that the Father became his own Son in the incarnation gives the whole account a farcical feel.⁶⁴

solid case here, as there is a strong similarity with συναναστραφεῖς in the quotation of Baruch 3:36-38 in *Contra Noetum* 2.5. See Reinhard M Hübner, “Der antivalentinianische Charakter der Theologie des Noët von Smyrna,” in *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999), 115–8. See also Elena Cavalcanti’s brief discussion of the use of Baruch 3:36-38 prior to the Arian controversy: “Osservazioni sull’uso patristico di Baruch 3, 36-38,” in *Mémorial Dom Jean Gribomont (1920-1986)*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 27 (Roma: Institutum Patristicum “Augustinianum,” 1988), 145–9. The fact that this seeming verbal parallel has made it into the *Refutatio* shows how difficult it would have been for the author of the *Refutatio* to remove any traces of the biblical exegesis that underwrote monarchian theology. Furthermore, the presence of this apparent allusion to Baruch 3:36-38 in the *Refutatio* is particularly damaging to Decker’s claim that the Monarchian exegesis in *Contra Noetum* is a polemical invention of Hippolytus. This apparent allusion demonstrates that it was woven into the fabric of their theology. See Decker, “Die Monarchianer,” 156–7.

⁶² Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 11.1.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See *Refutatio*, 9.10.11-12.

Perhaps this was the actual teaching of the Noetians. It seems more likely, however, that this sentence is the product of our author's tendentious imagination, even if it was built upon actual monarchian theology.⁶⁵

Visible and Invisible

The issue of God's visibility was still a prominent feature in monarchian teaching when the *Refutatio* was written, probably because, as I suggested earlier, questions about the visibility of God were important for those who argued that it was the *Logos* who was visible in the theophanies of the Old Testament.⁶⁶ The importance of these questions for the *Refutatio*'s opponents is clear in the section where the *Refutatio* explicitly seeks to show that the Noetians derive their teaching from the philosophy of Heraclitus. It states,

For they advance statements after this manner—that one and the same God is the Creator and Father of all things; and that when it pleased him, he nevertheless appeared, (though invisible,) to just men of old. For when He is not seen He is invisible; and He is incomprehensible when He does not wish to be comprehended, but comprehensible when he is comprehended.⁶⁷

The author of the *Refutatio* is clearly presenting the Noetian teaching in pairings of contraries, which he views as absurd. Although the author of the *Refutatio* is clearly

⁶⁵ The reports about monarchian positions in the *Refutatio* lack the sort of subtlety such positions probably would have had in their original form. The author of the *Refutatio* seems determined to show that his opponents were ridiculous, even if it means distorting some of the details.

⁶⁶ In some contexts, the claim that the *Logos* appeared in the theophanies could be used to support claims that the *Logos* was divine and that the *Logos* was distinct from the Father.

⁶⁷ *Refutatio* 9.10.9-10 (trans. ANF 5:127): λέγουσι γὰρ οὕτως· ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν θεὸν εἶναι <τὸν> πάντων δημιουργὸν καὶ <τὸν> πατέρα, εὐδοκήσαντα μὲν πεφηνέναι τοῖς ἀρχῇθεν δικαίοις, ὄντα <δὲ> ἀόρατον. ὅτε μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ὁρᾶται, ἐστὶν ἀόρατος, <ὅτε δὲ ὁρᾶται, ὁρατός· καὶ> ἀχώρητος μὲν ὅτε μὴ χωρεῖσθαι θέλει, χωρητὸς δὲ ὅτε χωρεῖται· Note here that we see the use of Father without any correlation to a son. As in *1 Clement* in the first chapter, this usage of the title Father seems tied to creation rather than a specific Father-Son relationship.

reshaping the Noetian teaching to fit it into a Heraclitean paradigm, the core assertions about visibility and invisibility match up with earlier accounts of monarchianism.⁶⁸

In the *Refutatio*'s later discussion of Noetus' teaching, similar notions about the visibility of God are reported; but this time, they do not seem to be forced into the Heraclitean paradigm of paired contraries. The *Refutatio* states, "Noetus asserts that there is one Father and God of the universe, and that He made all things, and was imperceptible to those that exist when He might so desire. Noetus maintained that the Father then appeared when He wished; and He is invisible when He is not seen, but visible when He is seen."⁶⁹ Like the earlier discussion of the names Father and Son, whether God is visible seems to depend on the vicissitudes of the times or the will of the deity. There is no distinction between God and the *Logos* on the basis of visibility as there was for someone like Justin.

The author of the *Refutatio* records some of Callistus' teaching regarding the visibility of God. In the first passage of interest, the *Refutatio* states,

And he adds, that this is what has been declared by the Saviour: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" For that which is seen, which is man, he considers to be the Son; whereas the Spirit, which was contained in the Son, to be the Father. "For," says (Callistus), "I will not profess belief in two Gods, Father and Son, but in one. For the Father, who comes to be out of Himself, after He had taken unto Himself our flesh, raised it to the nature of Deity, by bringing it into union with Himself, and made it one; so that Father and Son must

⁶⁸ Hübner claims that the sort of antitheses we see in this passage were part of Noetus' early anti-Gnostic rule of faith and that they were then adopted by Ignatius, Melito, Tertullian, and others who post-dated Noetus. Hübner's contention that monarchian use of antithetical statements about God might be anti-Gnostic seems possible, but his revisionist dating of Noetus and Ignatius is untenable. See especially Hübner's two essays on Melito and Ignatius in relation to Noetus: Reinhard M Hübner, "Melito von Sardes und Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 1–37; idem, "Die Ignatianen und Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 131–206.

⁶⁹ *Refutatio* 10.27.1-2 (trans. ANF 5:148): λέγων ἓνα <εἶναι θεόν> τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν τῶν ὅλων <δημιουργόν> [τοῦτον πάντα πεποιηκότα]· ἀφανῆ μὲν <γὰρ> τοῖς ἀνθρώποις γεγονέναι ὅτε ἠβούλετο, φανῆναι δὲ τότε ὅτε ἠθέλησε. καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι ἀόρατον <μὲν> ὅταν μὴ ὁρᾶται, ὁρατὸν δὲ ὅταν ὁρᾶται.

be styled one God, and that this Person being one, cannot be two, and thus that the Father suffered with the Son.⁷⁰

The most interesting feature about his passage is the fact that the author of the *Refutatio* has shown that his opponent used Scripture to support his positions. Even though nearly all of the biblical exegesis of his opponents has been expurgated, this one key passage (John 14:11) manages to make an appearance.

In this passage, Callistus espouses a view that is more akin to psilanthropist views than the sort of monarchianism we see in *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*. Instead of the traditional monarchian assertion that the Father *is* the Son, Callistus reportedly says that the Father was *in* the Son. He even qualifies and says that the Son is the human (ἄνθρωπος). The passage quoted above is immediately followed by an attempt to guard the Father from the bald assertion that he suffered and died, and it appears that the concern with the suffering of the Father is what drives Callistus' position on the visibility of the Son and seeming invisibility of the Father. Here, the visible Son is not properly divine; he is, rather, an ἄνθρωπος who is deified by the Father. This passage clearly demonstrates the ways in which Callistus modified earlier and simpler monarchian teaching.⁷¹

⁷⁰ *Refutatio* 9.12.17-18 (trans. ANF 5:130 with my modifications): καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ εἰρημένον· «οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί;» τὸ μὲν γὰρ βλέπόμενον, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸν υἱόν, τ(ὸ) δὲ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ χωρηθὲν πνεῦμα, τοῦτ<ο> εἶναι τὸν πατέρα. οὐ γάρ, φησὶν, ἐρῶ δύο θεούς, πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, ἀλλ' ἓνα· ὁ γὰρ ἐξ <ἐ>αυτοῦ γενόμενος πατήρ, προσλαβόμενος τὴν σάρκα ἐθεοποίησεν <αὐτήν> ἐνώσας ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἐποίησεν ἓν, ὡς καλεῖσθαι πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἓνα θεόν. καὶ τοῦτο, ἐν ὃν πρόσωπον, μὴ δύνασθαι εἶν(αι) δύο, καὶ οὕτως τὸν πατέρα συμπεπονθέναι τῷ υἱῷ.

⁷¹ The theology present here could also be motivation for the *Refutatio*'s depiction of Callistus as wavering between the theology of Sabellius and Theodotus in 9.12.19.

Despite the allegedly Noetian underpinnings of his theology, Callistus' distinctive developments of monarchian theology appear in another passage. The *Refutatio* states that Callistus believes

that He who was seen in the flesh and was arrested is Son, but that the Father is [the Spirit] who dwells in Him. Callistus thus at one time branches off into the opinion of Noetus, but at another into that of Theodotus, and holds no sure doctrine. These, then, are the opinions of Callistus.⁷²

This belief offers a sharp contrast to the teaching that the *Refutatio* earlier ascribed to Noetus. For Noetus, the one God was visible, sometimes revealed as Father, sometimes as Son. Callistus, as in the passage in the immediately preceding paragraph, seems to be making some sort of distinction between the Father and Son. Callistus distinguishes between God (the Father) and a human (the Son), so this distinction does not imperil Callistus' commitment to the uniqueness of God. The fact that the visibility of God is again closely tied to the suffering of the Son indicates some of the potential motivations for the development. As Heine has argued, Callistus had a strong aversion to the straightforward patripassianism of the earlier monarchians.⁷³ He suggests that Callistus used Stoic mixture theory in order to argue that the Father was in the (human) Son in such a manner that he could separate himself before the crucifixion and death of the (human) Son. Consequently, people see the flesh (body) of the human Jesus, not the Father himself. Callistus' solution regarding the visibility of the Son allows him to say that the Father was invisible without having to sacrifice his strong claims about the unity of God. The resulting development is something of a hybrid of pure monarchianism and

⁷² *Refutatio* 10.27.4 (trans. ANF 5:148 with my modifications): καὶ τὸν μὲν κατὰ σάρκα ὁρώμενον καὶ κρατούμενον υἱὸν εἶναι θέλει, τὸ δὲ <αὐτῷ> ἐνοικοῦν <πνεῦμα> πατέρα, ποτὲ μὲν τῷ Νοητοῦ δόγματι προσρηγν(ύ)μενος, ποτὲ δὲ τῷ Θεοδότου, μηδὲν <τε> ἀσφαλὲς κρατῶν. ταῦτα τοίνυν <καὶ> Κάλλιστος.

⁷³ Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 70-71.

psilanthropism. This development also seems to avoid the critique by the *Refutatio* that it is unintelligible to say that the one God is both visible and invisible, passible and impassible. Within Callistus' teaching, at least as presented in the *Refutatio*, Jesus can only be said to be divine in a qualified sense. For Callistus, Jesus would have been divine only as long as the Father continued to remain with or in him.

Suffered and Died

My discussion of *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean* has shown that the question of whether the Father suffered became increasingly acute in the development of monarchianism. Callistus' teaching on the visibility of God and its linkage to issues of patripassianism shows that the concern with patripassianism instigated development away from the simpler forms of monarchian teaching. The changing attitude toward straightforward patripassianism is evident within the account of the *Refutatio*. In order to make the development explicit, I will reexamine the *Refutatio*'s account of the Noetians before analyzing how Callistus modifies this earlier view.⁷⁴

The first instance where the *Refutatio* discusses Noetus' view of the suffering of the Father is of questionable reliability because it is in a section where the Noetian teaching is clearly being distorted to fit into the mold of Heraclitean philosophy. The *Refutatio* accuses the Noetians of teaching that the one God is "immortal and mortal" (ἀθάνατος καὶ θνητός), clearly the sort of antithetical statement that the *Refutatio*

⁷⁴ Note again that Mouraviev analyzes this development in detail in his "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët."

suggested was representative of Heraclitus' philosophy.⁷⁵ The teaching itself does not seem too far afield for the Noetians, but the distinctly Heraclitean phrasing is suspect.

Just after the overtly Heraclitean wording, the *Refutatio* elaborates on Noetus' teaching without forcing it into the philosopher's alleged paradigm. Noetus claims that the one God underwent generation and became his own son; the one God was then crucified and handed his spirit over to himself; this same one who died did not die (<τὸν> ἀποθανόντα καὶ μὴ ἀποθανόντα) and raised himself on the third day.⁷⁶ Here, Noetus allegedly attributes the full range of Christ's human experience to the one God: birth, suffering, death, resurrection. Although he says that God died and did not die, he does not try to parcel this out between the Father and the Son. Noetus does not appear to have any aversion to saying that the Father suffered and died. In this regard, the *Refutatio*'s account squares with that of *Contra Noetum*. Later, the *Refutatio* similarly reports that Noetus taught that the Father was at one time unbegotten and at another begotten, at one time suffered and died while at another time did not suffer and die.⁷⁷ While there seems to be contradiction here, Noetus does not hesitate to say that the Father, at certain times, did suffer.

The *Refutatio*'s presentation of Callistus' teaching about the suffering of the Father is more complex than that of Noetus. The *Refutatio* reports that Callistus was willing to say that the Father became incarnate from the virgin: "And he affirms that the Spirit, which became incarnate in the virgin, is not different from the Father, but one and

⁷⁵ *Refutatio* 9.10.10.

⁷⁶ *Refutatio* 9.10.11-12.

⁷⁷ *Refutatio* 10.27.2. It is possible that these two texts share a common distortion of Noetus' doctrine, but without any primary Noetian sources, we cannot be certain.

the same.”⁷⁸ In the Noetian schema, where there is a simple identification of the Father and Son, subjecting the Father to birth from the virgin would seem necessarily to entail the suffering of the Father. Callistus, however, employs a Stoicized conception of spirit in attempt to guard against the suffering of the Father.⁷⁹

The *Refutatio* continues to lay out Callistus’ teaching, and I include the fuller context in the quotation here:

Callistus alleges that the Logos Himself is Son, and that Himself is the Father; and that though denominated by the names “Son” and “Father,” yet that in reality He is one indivisible spirit. And he maintains that the Father is not one [thing] and the Son another, but that they are one and the same spirit; and that all things are full of the Divine Spirit, both those above and those below. And he affirms that the Spirit, which became incarnate in the virgin is not different from the Father, but one and the same. And he adds that this is what has been declared: “Believest though not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?” [Jn 14:11] For that which is seen, which is man, he considers to be the son; whereas the Spirit, which was contained in the Son, to be Father. “For,” says (Callistus), “I will not profess belief in two Gods, Father and Son, but in one. For the Father, having come to be from himself, after He had taken flesh, he deified it, bringing it into union with Himself, and made it one; so that Father and Son are styled one God, and that this Person being one, cannot be two.” And in this way Callistus contends that the Father suffered along with the Son; for he does not wish to assert that the Father suffered, and is one Person, being careful to avoid blasphemy against the Father. The senseless and knavish fellow, who improvises blasphemies in every direction, only that he alone might seem to speak according to the truth, and is not abashed at being at one time betrayed into the tenet of Sabellius, whereas at another into the doctrine of Theodotus.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Refutatio* 9.12.17. Heine rightly suggests that Callistus’ emphasis on Spirit in this passage probably indicates that it was a central concept for his linkage of the Father and Son (“The Christology of Callistus,” 64).

⁷⁹ See Manlio Simonetti’s discussion of Callistus’ use of a Stoic understanding of spirit in order to avoid patripassianism: “Il problema dell’unità di Dio a Roma da Clemente a Dionigi,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 22, no. 3 (1986): 455–6.

⁸⁰ *Refutatio* 9.12.16–19 (trans. ANF 5:130 with my modifications): λέγων τὸν Λόγον αὐτὸν εἶναι υἱόν, αὐτὸν καὶ πατέρα, ὀνόματι μὲν <υἱὸν καὶ πατέρα> καλοῦμενον, ἐν δὲ ὄν<τα>, τὸ πνεῦμα ἀδιαίρετον· οὐ <γάρ> ἄλ<λ>ο <μὲν> εἶναι πατέρα, ἄλλο δὲ υἱόν, ἐν δὲ καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ <πνεῦμα> ὑπάρχειν. καὶ τὰ πάντα γέμειν τοῦ θείου πνεύματος, τὰ τε ἄνω καὶ <τὰ> κάτω. καὶ εἶναι τὸ ἐν τῇ παρθένῳ σαρκωθὲν πνεῦμα οὐχ ἕτερον παρὰ τὸν πατέρα, ἀλλὰ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτό. καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ εἰρημένον· «οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί;» τὸ μὲν γὰρ βλέπομενον, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸν υἱόν, τ(ὸ) δὲ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ χωρηθὲν πνεῦμα, τοῦτ<ο> εἶναι τὸν πατέρα. οὐ γάρ, φησὶν, ἐρῶ δύο θεούς, πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, ἀλλ’ ἓνα· ὁ γὰρ ἐξ <ἐ>αυτοῦ γενόμενος πατήρ, προσλαβόμενος τὴν σάρκα ἐθεοποίησεν <αὐτήν> ἐνώσας ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἐποίησεν ἓν, ὥς καλεῖσθαι πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἓνα θεόν. καὶ τοῦτο, ἐν ὃν πρόσωπον, μὴ δύνασθαι εἶν(αι)

This is a dense passage and needs to be analyzed carefully. The aspect of Callistus' teaching that helps bring the above quotation into focus is that Callistus thought that the one God was "one indivisible spirit" (ἐν δὲ ὄν<τα>, τὸ πνεῦμα ἀδιαίρετον).⁸¹ For Callistus, the names Father and Son were both ways of referring to this one indivisible spirit. The incarnation, then, was a joining of this spirit to human flesh.⁸² As the discussion continues, it appears as though Callistus did not use the name "Son" consistently. At one point, the names Father and Son are both used to refer to the one divine spirit, and the particular name used is determined by the exigencies of the situation. In the quotation above, however, Callistus seems to use "Son" also to refer to the human Jesus, the flesh. Callistus says that the Father "suffered with the Son" (συμπεπονθέναι τῷ υἱῷ).⁸³ This is motivated by the fact that Callistus did not want to say that the Father suffered (οὐ γὰρ θέλει λέγειν τὸν πατέ(ρα) πεπονθέναι). The operative difference here is that Callistus appears willing to admit that τὸν πατέ(ρα) συμπεπονθέναι, but not that τὸν πατέ(ρα) πεπονθέναι. For Callistus, suffering and

δύο, καὶ οὕτως τὸν πατέρα συμπεπονθέναι τῷ υἱῷ. οὐ γὰρ θέλει λέγειν τὸν πατέ(ρα) πεπονθέναι καὶ ἐν εἶναι πρόσωπον, <οὕτως νομίζων> ἐκφυγεῖν τὴν εἰς τὸν πατέρα βλασφημίαν ὁ ἀνόητος καὶ ποικίλος· ὁ<ς> ἄνω κάτω σχεδιάζων βλασφημίας, ἵνα μόνον κατὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγειν δοκῇ, ποτὲ μὲν εἰς τὸ Σαβελλίου δόγμα ἐμπύπων, ποτὲ δὲ εἰς τὸ Θεοδότου οὐκ αἰδεῖται. This passage raises a number of questions that must be bracketed for later: why do we see the introduction of πρόσωπον language in this passage? Was this language introduced by the author of the *Refutatio* or by Callistus? What does Callistus mean when he speaks of the Father bringing flesh into union with himself and making it one? Questions like these will require a treatment beyond the scope of this chapter.

⁸¹ *Refutatio* 9.12.16.

⁸² In other contexts, such an understanding of the incarnation was not problematical. For example, Tertullian considered spirit to be divinity. For him, the statement that spirit was joined to flesh was nothing more than an affirmation that divinity was joined to flesh.

⁸³ *Refutatio* 9.12.18.

suffering *with* were two different things; the former was inappropriate for God, while the latter did not pose as much of a problem.

Although he does not explicitly state it, the implication is that it was the Son who suffered. If Callistus were using “Son” consistently to refer to τὸ πνεῦμα ἀδιαίρετον,⁸⁴ the attribution of suffering to the Son but not the Father would be self-defeating, for the Father and the Son would be just different names for the same spirit. The equivocation in Callistus’ usage of “Son” elucidates the developments that were taking place within monarchianism. On the one hand, he uses traditional monarchian affirmations that the Father and the Son are the same.⁸⁵ On the other hand, he wants to argue, in the manner of the psilanthropists, that the Son was only human in order to guard against the charge of patripassianism. Thus, Callistus uses traditional language to argue that the Father and Son were the same while moving away from the earlier claim that this argument meant that the Father suffered. Perhaps when he refers to the suffering of the Son, he is talking about the human Jesus to whom the indivisible spirit was joined, and from whom this same spirit could be separated to avoid suffering.

The *Refutatio* accuses Callistus of vacillating between the teaching of Sabellius and Theodotus.⁸⁶ If we can trust the account of the *Refutatio*, there is some truth to this accusation. At the same time, however, this alleged vacillation throws the enduring concern of the monarchians into stark relief: the protection of the unity and uniqueness of

⁸⁴ *Refutatio* 9.12.16.

⁸⁵ The phrase he consistently uses for this idea is some variation of “ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτό.” Note the repetition of this phrase in 9.12.16-18.

⁸⁶ As I note shortly, it is very difficult to know what Sabellius taught. Our main reliable reference to him is Novatian, but he gives us a picture of Sabellian teaching that differs little from the core of monarchianism we have established thus far.

God. At one time, Callistus can espouse simple monarchian teachings; at another, he can utilize psilanthropist elements to guard against accusations of patripassianism; but the impulse to protect a strong understanding of the unity and uniqueness of God underlies both of these Callistan theological positions.

Novatian: *De Trinitate*

Introduction

Novatian's *De Trinitate* (*De Trin.*) was most likely composed between 240 and 250 C.E.⁸⁷ Because it postdates the other works considered in this chapter by twenty to thirty years, it provides valuable testimony regarding the perdurance of monarchian teaching in Rome. *De Trin.* was most likely written as a commentary on the local *regula fidei*, but Novatian spends a substantial amount of time defending the *regula* against any teachings that jeopardize its central tenets.⁸⁸ Novatian's primary concerns are to refute teachings that deny either the divinity or humanity of Christ and to refute monarchianism,

⁸⁷ Russell J. DeSimone, "Introduction," in *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish Foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters*, The Fathers of the Church 67 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1974), 14; idem, *The Treatise of Novatian, the Roman Presbyter on the Trinity: A Study of the Text and the Doctrine*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 4 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1970), 43–4. In an earlier work, James Leonard Papandrea dates the work to the 240s C.E.: *The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome: A Study in Third-Century Orthodoxy* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2008), 43. Later, he suggests that it might have been written as early as the late 230s: *Novatian of Rome and the Culmination of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 175 (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012), 57–8.

⁸⁸ *De Trin.* begins with a reference to the "rule of truth," and Novatian states explicitly in chapter 21 that his purpose is to explain the "rule of truth" concerning Christ. DeSimone notes that *De Trin.* was almost certainly not the original title of the work. See Novatian, *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish Foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters*, 23, n. 1. See also Geoffrey D. Dunn's warning against reading later Trinitarian concerns back into Novatian's text: "The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's *De Trinitate*," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 78, no. 4 (2002): 389–90.

which rejects what he regards as proper distinction between the Father and the Son.⁸⁹ Of particular interest for my discussion are the sections that Novatian devotes to those who collapse distinction between the Father and the Son and confuse them. Sabellius is the only “heretic” mentioned by name in *De Trin.*, but the monarchianism that Novatian is combatting is little developed from that which is present in Tertullian and Hippolytus.⁹⁰

On the whole, the monarchianism opposed by Novatian seems to have been built upon the simple propositions that we also find in *Contra Noetum*, *Adversus Praxean*, and the *Refutatio*.⁹¹ However, unlike the *Refutatio*, Novatian presents the positions of the monarchians as a product of the exegesis of the same cluster of passages that appeared in *Adv. Prax.* Even more, Novatian makes explicit some of the reasoning that funded the exegetical conclusions peculiar to the monarchians. Novatian reproduces the arguments of the monarchians in a simple and straightforward manner. He is by no means a sympathetic witness, but his account is less tendentious than the accounts in *Refutatio* 9-10, which distort the monarchian positions to demonstrate that they derive from the teaching of Heraclitus.

⁸⁹ Unlike Tertullian and Hippolytus, Novatian’s *De Trin.* does not use any of the language of monarchy to describe the positions of those who denied the distinction between the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that he is addressing positions very similar to those with which Tertullian and Hippolytus concerned themselves. See Simonetti’s discussion (contra Uríbarri Bilbao) of possible reasons the term *monarchia* is not present in *De Trin.*: Simonetti, “Monarchia e Trinità,” 628.

⁹⁰ Sabellius is mentioned in *De Trin.* 12.7 and 12.9.

⁹¹ See, for example, my summary of the Noetian positions at the end of my section on *Contra Noetum*.

One God

Towards the end of his work, Novatian asserts that the teachings regarding Christ he has been combatting all derive from mistaken attempts to understand the claim that there is only one God. Because this passage demonstrates the lens through which Novatian approaches all the arguments of his opponents, it is worth quoting at length. He states,

They are scandalized by Christ because the Scriptures assert that He is also God and we believe this. Therefore, that all heretical calumny against our Faith may cease, it is right that we should discuss the fact that Christ is also God (in such a way that it will not interfere with the truth of Scripture or with our faith) because the Scriptures assert and because we maintain and believe that there is only one God. In fact, the heretics who say that Jesus Christ is Himself God the Father, as well as those who would have him to be only a man, have drawn from Scripture the elements and the reasons for their error and perversity. For when they observed that it was written that God is one, they thought that they could not hold such a belief unless they thought they should believe that Christ was a mere man or that He was really God the Father.⁹²

In Novatian's account, his opponents are attempting to preserve the fundamental claim that there is only one God. They first do so by identifying the Father and Son so that there are not two to whom divinity is attributed. They seek to salvage the divinity of Christ by denying that there is any distinction between Christ and the Father. The second group of

⁹² Novatian, *De Trinitate* 30.2-3 (trans. FC 67.104-105). Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of *De Trinitate* are from this translation. *scandalizati in christum, quod etiam deus et per scripturas asseratur et a nobis hoc esse credatur, merito a nobis, ut omnis a fide nostra auferri possit haeretica calumnia, de eo quod et deus sit christus sic est disputandum, ut non impediatur scripturae ueritatem, sed nec nostram fidem, qua unus deus et per scripturas promittitur et a nobis tenetur et creditur. Tam enim illi qui iesum christum ipsum deum patrem dicunt quam etiam illi qui hominem illum tantummodo esse uoluerunt, erroris sui et peruersitatis origines et causas inde rapuerunt, quia cum animaduernerent scriptum esse quod unus sit deus, non aliter putauerunt istam tenere se posse sententiam, nisi aut hominem tantum christum aut certe deum patrem putarent esse credendum.* Unless otherwise noted, all Latin for Novatian's *De Trinitate* is from Novatianus, *Opera, quae supersunt nunc primum in unum collecta ad fidem codicum, qui adhuc extant*, ed. G. F. Diercks, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 4 (Turnholti: Brepols, 1972).

Novatian's opponents attempts to solve the problem by arguing that Christ was a mere man, thereby scrapping any attempts to maintain the divinity of Christ.⁹³

The above quotation demonstrates that both Novatian and his opponents viewed the preservation of monotheism as a first-order question. Elsewhere, he summarizes his opponents' positions, saying, "They express themselves in this manner: Scripture teaches that there is one God. But Christ is God. Therefore, say the heretics, if the Father and Christ are the one God, Christ will be called the Father."⁹⁴ Note again that the fundamental premise on which their argument is built is that there is only one God.

Like his opponents, Novatian seeks to preserve the oneness of God. In his discussion of God as creator near the beginning of the work, he echoes the strong assertion of monotheism from Isaiah 45: "I am God, and there is none beside me."⁹⁵ Tertullian also dwells on this passage and states that it is directed against the idolatry of the Gentiles and does not, therefore, deny that the Son is God with the Father.⁹⁶

⁹³ By the time of Novatian, the identification of the Son with the Father and the denial of the divinity of the Son were fairly common ways of attempting to preserve the core teaching that there is only one God. Both Hippolytus and Eusebius report that Theodotus taught that Christ was a mere human (ἄνθρωπον φίλον). See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.1 and Eusebius, *EH* 5.28. The *Refutatio* accuses Callistus of wavering between the teaching of Sabellius and Theodotus. While the *Refutatio* no doubt includes this note in order to show that his opponent is inconsistent, this alleged inconsistency is much more intelligible if we remember that the distinct positions of Sabellius and Theodotus were designed to protect the oneness of God. See *Refutatio* 9.12.19. Whatever other shortcomings they might have, Harnack's terms "modalistic" and "dynmasitic" monarchianism at least show that the two positions are related. Decker, however, rejects Harnack's label and thinks that psilanthropism and monarchianism are entirely distinct phenomena. He claims that Novatian distorts the evidence in order to argue that there is some sort of family resemblance between psilanthropism and monarchianism. See Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 4–5, 53. There is enough linkage between monarchian and psilanthropist positions in other works to surmise that the two might have been related in some way.

⁹⁴ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.2 (trans. FC 67:90): *Sic enim inquit: si unus esse deus promitur, christus autem deus, ergo, inquit, si pater et christus est unus deus, christus pater dicitur.*

⁹⁵ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 3.2 (trans. FC 67:29). Rather than a direct quotation, he offers a pastiche of phrases from Isa. 45:5, 18–22.

⁹⁶ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 18.

Tertullian's opponents also utilized passages like Isa. 45 that assert that there is only one God in order to deny any distinction between the Father and the Son.⁹⁷ Since strong assertions of monotheism drawn from Isa. 45 are prominent in the accounts of both Tertullian and Novatian, which are separated by roughly thirty years, it seems that neither the fundamental assertions of the monarchians nor the dossier of scriptural passages they used to support these assertions had substantially changed during that span of thirty years.

Novatian, like earlier anti-monarchian writers, was apparently accused of being a ditheist by his monarchian opponents. He states, "First of all, then, we must refute the argument of those who presume to make against us the charge of saying that there are two gods."⁹⁸ Following a chain of passages where Christ is referred to in the same manner as the Father (good, Lord, etc.), Novatian rejects the accusation of his opponents and turns it against them: "Let them acknowledge, then, by the same line of reasoning that the truth that there is one God is not hindered in any way by the other truth that Christ is also declared to be God."⁹⁹ The fact that Novatian had to combat the charge of ditheism as late as the mid-third century clearly demonstrates both that monarchianism was persistent and that its central teachings remained fairly consistent throughout the first

⁹⁷ Passages from Isaiah 45 feature prominently in second- and third-century theologies. Irenaeus places words from Isa. 45 on the lips of the Valentinian demiurge, who is ignorant of the fact that there are, in fact, many other gods, and others who are higher than he (*Adversus haereses* 1.5.4). There are other indications that monarchianism was, at least in part, a reaction to the tendency of Gnosticism to multiply divine figures in the Pleroma. Thus, passages like Isa. 45 became theological battlegrounds. Those authors who found the positions of Gnosticism and monarchianism unpalatable had to carefully chart a course between the two extremes: a heavily populated Pleroma that bordered on polytheism and a strict understanding of monotheism that rejected distinction in the one God.

⁹⁸ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 30.21 (trans. FC 67:94): *Et in primis illud retorquendum in istos qui duorum nobis deorum controuersiam facere praesumunt.*

⁹⁹ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 30.25 (trans. FC 67:107 with modifications): *eadem ratione intellegant officii non posse ab illo quod unus est deus ei quod deus pronuntiatus est et christus.*

half of the third century. Attempts by Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Novatian to distinguish the Father and Son were consistently seen by the monarchians as a confession that there were two gods.

Excursus: Sabellius Outside of *De Trinitate*

As I noted in my discussion of naming the monarchian controversy in the introduction, one of the commonly used names for this theology is “Sabellianism.” There, I argued that calling this theology “Sabellianism” adds little to our understanding of it. In order to support that contention, I offer here a brief excursus on our knowledge of Sabellius. In its brief discussion of Sabellius, the *Refutatio* paints a murky picture. First, it suggests that Callistus perverted Sabellius even though Callistus had the power to set him straight.¹⁰⁰ This statement seems to suggest that Callistus corrupted Sabellius (to his own teaching?). Later, however, the *Refutatio* tells us that Callistus drove Sabellius away (ἀπέωσεν) as someone not thinking rightly (ὥς μὴ φρονοῦντα ὀρθῶς), an odd statement given the *Refutatio*’s earlier assertion that Callistus corrupted Sabellius.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the *Refutatio* suggests that Callistus distanced himself from Sabellius in order to prove his own orthodoxy in response to the *Refutatio*’s accusations against him. The *Refutatio*’s account of Sabellius grows even more complicated when it tells us that Sabellius accused Callistus of having passed beyond his first faith.¹⁰² Finally, after describing the mutual animosity between Callistus and Sabellius, it claims that Callistus waivers between the

¹⁰⁰ *Refutatio* 9.11.1.

¹⁰¹ *Refutatio* 9.12.15.

¹⁰² *Refutatio* 9.12.16.

dogma of Sabellius and that of Theodotus.¹⁰³ Despite the repeated linkage between Sabellius and Callistus in the *Refutatio*, its account does not allow us to form a coherent picture. The *Refutatio* alternately accuses Callistus of corrupting Sabellius, falling into the error of Sabellius, and publicly distancing himself from Sabellius. All of these references to Sabellius occur in one of the *Refutatio*'s most venomous attacks on Callistus, and it seems that Sabellius appears in the scene only to besmirch the reputation of Callistus. The *Refutatio* gives us precious little about the content of Sabellius' teaching.

By the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, the mere invocation of the name of Sabellius was all that was needed to pillory an opponent. Following Harnack, Bienert notes that the name "Sabellianism" had become the general name for "modalistic monarchianism" in the East at the end of the third century.¹⁰⁴ Despite the widespread use of Sabellius' name to designate monarchianism, we still have very little information on the distinctive features of Sabellius' teaching. Scarcely more is known about the details of his biography. The author of the *Refutatio* places Sabellius in contact with Callistus in Rome, but later writers place him outside of Rome.¹⁰⁵ Basil of

¹⁰³ *Refutatio* 9.12.19. This might be an indication that even in the time the *Refutatio* was being written, monarchianism and psilanthropism were both live options for protecting the uniqueness of God.

¹⁰⁴ Wolfgang A. Bienert, "Sabellius und Sabellianismus als historisches Problem," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993), 124–39. Bienert is drawing from Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Mohr, 1886), 674. Bienert later reiterates his position: "Vor diesem Hintergrund wird der Name Sabellius schließlich zur Chiffre für einen in Rom zu Beginn des 3. Jahrhunderts verurteilten Modalismus im Sinne des Patripassianismus, von dem sich auch Kallist abzugrenzen versucht" ("Wer war Sabellius?" *Studia patristica* 40 [Leuven: Peeters, 2006], 364).

¹⁰⁵ Bienert, "Sabellius und Sabellianismus als historisches Problem," 130. Bienert suggests that Methodius of Olympus is the earliest author to place Sabellius outside of Rome, but his argument seems to be a bit of a stretch. His contention is not based on any geographical epithet in Methodius, but rather on the fact that Methodius accuses Sabellius of teaching that the Father suffers. See Methodius of Olympus, *Symposium* VIII, 10.

Caesarea, for example, identifies Sabellius as having been from Libya.¹⁰⁶ The *Refutatio* and Novatian, our earliest witnesses to Sabellius, suggest that Sabellius was active in Rome during the beginning of the third century. Since later authors seem to have little firsthand knowledge of Sabellius' teaching, there is little reason to doubt that Sabellius was present in Rome in the early third century.

One might think that Ephiphanius' section on Sabellius in the *Panarion* would shed valuable light on the teaching of Sabellius. Sadly, it does not. Lienhard notes that Hübner has convincingly demonstrated that Epiphanius' primary source for his section on Sabellius is the *Contra Sabellianos* of Pseudo-Athanasius.¹⁰⁷ Lienhard then goes on to note that "the 'Sabellius' of this work is actually Marcellus."¹⁰⁸ The *Contra Sabellianos* actually reproduces the theology of Marcellus under the name of Sabellius.¹⁰⁹ Although Epiphanius heavily employed a source that wrongly attributed Marcellan teaching to Sabellius, that teaching still bears some resemblance to the fundamental tenets of the monarchianism of the beginning of the third century. Near the beginning of his discussion, Epiphanius tells us that the Sabellians taught that the Father and the Son and

¹⁰⁶ Bienert, "Sabellius und Sabellianismus als historisches Problem," 136. See, for example, Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle* 9.2.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph T. Lienhard, "Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and 'Sabellius,'" *Church History* 58, no. 2 (1989): 166. Lienhard cites Reinhard M Hübner, "Die Hauptquelle des Epiphanius (Panarion, haer 65) über Paulus von Samosata: Ps-Athanasius, *Contra Sabellianos*," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 90, no. 2–3 (1979): 201–20. See also Andrew Radde-Gallwitz's discussion on this text, at least part of which he thinks sheds light on Sabellius' actual teaching: "The Holy Spirit as Agent, Not Activity: Origen's Argument with Modalism and Its Afterlife in Didymus, Eunomius, and Gregory of Nazianzus," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 3 (2011): 233–5.

¹⁰⁸ Lienhard, "Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and 'Sabellius,'" 166.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

the Spirit are the same—one ὑπόστασις with three names.¹¹⁰ He next recounts that the Sabellians used a dossier of biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments.¹¹¹ As in the earliest accounts of monarchianism, this dossier of texts begins with those that assert that there is only one God. Also included in this dossier are key texts from John's Gospel that feature prominently in third-century accounts of monarchianism. As in Tertullian's account of monarchianism, Epiphanius suggests that Sabellius and his followers preyed on the simple people in the church:

Then, when they encounter simple or innocent persons who do not understand the sacred scriptures clearly, they give them this first scare: 'What are we to say, gentlemen? Have we one God or three gods?' But when someone who is devout but does not fully understand the truth hears this, he is disturbed and assents to their error at once, and comes to deny the existence of the Son and the Holy Spirit.¹¹²

It seems, therefore, that there is little in Epiphanius' account that is of use for clarifying details about the life and teaching of Sabellius. We must be wary of anything in Epiphanius that reflects a substantial change from the earlier sources, as it likely reflects the teaching of Marcellus more than the teaching of Sabellius. The elements in Epiphanius' account that comport well with the the third-century accounts of

¹¹⁰ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62.1. Given the paucity of references to Sabellius that are reliable at the requisite level of detail, it is difficult to know if Sabellius actually used terms like ὑπόστασις to denote the oneness of God.

¹¹¹ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62.2.

¹¹² Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62.2. Translation from Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, trans. Frank Williams, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 36 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), 122. The clear Trinitarian focus of this passage is indicative that it postdates the earliest phases of the monarchian controversy. Recall that the debates of the early stage of the monarchian controversy were largely couched in binitarian terms.

monarchianism tell us little more than that some key features of monarchianism survived until at least 377, when Epiphanius most likely completed the *Panarion*.¹¹³

It turns out, then, that the attestation to Sabellius that postdates the third century is of little use for reproducing the details of Sabellius' life and teaching. First, we do not even have a detailed explication of his teachings from contemporary sources. Second, shortly after his lifetime, his name became a watchword used by the opponents of monarchianism and its continued influence. When his name became used as a general cypher for monarchianism, as Bienert suggests, there was little hope that any later author would add nuance to accounts of his teaching.

Novatian Continued

While the *Refutatio* focuses on the political relations between Callistus and Sabellius to the exclusion of any of Sabellius' specific doctrines, Novatian cursorily makes mention of Sabellius' teaching without going into the details of his life. What exactly was it about Sabellius that warranted him being the only "heretic" mentioned by name in Novatian's *De Trinitate*? Certainly it was not merely the erroneous doctrine that Novatian attributed to him. As I noted in the quotations above, Novatian twice accused Sabellius of teaching that Christ is the Father. There is nothing spectacular or novel about this teaching that Novatian ascribes to Sabellius. By the time of Novatian's writing, such statements identifying the Father and the Son were commonplace, little more than garden-variety monarchianism in the middle of the third century. Since there is nothing

¹¹³ For the dating of the *Panarion*, see Frances M. Young and Andrew Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2010), 196.

especially noteworthy about the teaching that Novatian attributes to Sabellius, there must be something else that makes him notable. The most likely reason Novatian mentions Sabellius by name is that he had become the most public and influential monarchian in Rome by Novatian's day. Sabellius deserved to be mentioned by name not because his teaching was any worse than that of other monarchians but because Novatian wished to attack the leader of the monarchian cause in Rome.¹¹⁴

Father and Son

As in the earlier accounts of monarchianism, Novatian portrays his monarchian opponents as still claiming that the same [one] was both Father and Son. He writes,

They want to show that Christ is God the Father by the very fact that He is declared to be not only Man but also God. They express themselves in this manner: Scripture teaches that there is one God. But Christ is God. Therefore, say the heretics, if the Father and Christ are the one God, Christ will be called the Father. In this syllogism they are proved to be in error, not knowing Christ, but rather favoring the mere sound of a name. For they want Him not to be the Second Person after the Father, but the Father Himself.¹¹⁵

This passage highlights one of the idiosyncrasies of Novatian's depiction of monarchianism: their identification of the Father and the Son appears to flow only in one

¹¹⁴ DeSimone claims that Novatian is concerned with Sabellius because he "came to Rome and introduced a second, more refined form of Monarchianism called *Modalist Monarchianism*" (*The Treatise of Novatian*, 74, italics in original). DeSimone's use of "modalist Monarchianism" here, as opposed to "crass Monarchianism" is not standard usage of the term; and it does not add any clarity to the discussions. As I argued above, it is difficult to see anything distinctive about Sabellius' teaching in *De Trin.* Uríbarri Bilbao suggested that Novatian was directly addressing the theology of Sabellius in *De Trin.* and that this is one of the reasons Novatian does not use the term *monarchia* (*Monarquía y Trinidad*, 429). As I note elsewhere, I do not find Uríbarri's views convincing in this case.

¹¹⁵ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.1-2 (trans. FC 67:90): *hoc ipso patrem deum uolentes ostendere christum esse, dum non homo tantum asseritur, sed et deus promitur. Sic enim inquiunt: si unus esse deus promitur, christus autem deus, ergo, inquiunt, si pater et christus est unus deus, christus pater dicetur. In quo errare probantur christum non noscentes, sed sonum nominis approbantes; nolunt enim illum secundam esse personam post patrem, sed ipsum patrem.*

direction. Almost every time Novatian rehearses his opponents' position, he records that they say that Christ is the Father, never that the Father is the Christ. This tendency is elucidated by other, clearer passages. The following passage is especially helpful:

The Scriptures so clearly teach that Christ is also God that many heretics, deeply moved by the reality and the grandeur of His divinity, stressed His glories to such an extent that they did not hesitate to declare (or at least were of the opinion) that He was not the Son, but God the Father Himself. Though this opinion of theirs is contrary to the truth of the Scriptures, it is, nevertheless, a weighty and excellent argument for the divinity of Christ. He is so indisputably God—that is, as Son of God, born of God—that many heretics, as we have said, took Him to be God in such a manner that they thought that He must be called the Father, not the Son.¹¹⁶

Novatian reiterates his point in this passage when he says, “Hence, though they read in Scripture that He is the Son, they think that He is the Father because they readily perceive that the Son is God.”¹¹⁷ For Novatian’s monarchian opponents, the Father is God; and divinity appears to reside exclusively with the Father.¹¹⁸ For them, any admission that the Son is God necessarily entails that he is the Father.¹¹⁹ Since the monarchians, unlike the psilanthropists, had no reservations about affirming the divinity of Christ, they did not hesitate to identify Christ with the Father.

¹¹⁶ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 23.2-3 (trans. FC 67:84): *Nam usque adeo hunc manifestum est in scripturis et deum tradi, ut plerique haeticorum diuinitatis ipsius magnitudine et ueritate commoti, ultra modum extendentes honores eius, ausi sint non filium, sed ipsum deum patrem promere uel putare. Quod etsi contra scripturarum ueritatem est, tamen diuinitatis christi argumentum grande atque praecipuum est, qui usque adeo deus, sed qua filius dei natus ex deo, ut plerique illum, ut diximus, haeretici ita deum acceperint, ut non filium, sed patrem pronuntiandum putarent.*

¹¹⁷ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 23.4 (trans. FC 67:84): *ad hoc illos manifesta christi diuinitate cogente ut, quem filium legerent, quia deum animaduenterent, patrem putarent.* Novatian repeatedly claims that his opponents argued that Christ was the Father himself throughout the remainder of ch. 23.

¹¹⁸ This teaching in itself is not necessarily troubling. Recall that for many first- and second-century authors the one God is said to be the Father.

¹¹⁹ This is an interesting similarity to Origen’s schema in *ComIn* 2.13ff. There, Origen argues that the Father is ἀντόθεος. In the context, Origen’s unique construction seems to mean that the Father is properly God. Origen also held that the Son was divine, but only by participation in the divinity of the Father. Both Origen and Novatian’s monarchian opponents agreed that divinity is preeminently (or in the case of the monarchians, exclusively) the Father’s.

Novatian also depicts his opponents as expressing the identity of Christ and the Father with syllogistic reasoning.¹²⁰ Novatian repeats a condensed version of this same reasoning later in the treatise, writing, “Now the heretics who say that Jesus Christ is the Father argue as follows: If God is one and Christ is God, then Christ is the Father, because God is one.”¹²¹ The frequency with which Novatian addresses the monarchian contention that the Son was the Father shows how central he thought this claim was to monarchian theology. Such an emphasis prompts Novatian to devote substantial energy to showing that the Father and Son are not the same.¹²²

Sabellius receives brief mention in the *Refutatio*, but we learn very little about what he actually taught.¹²³ As noted above, Sabellius is the only opponent whom Novatian mentions by name in *De Trinitate*.¹²⁴ Novatian briefly discusses his teaching, but this discussion does not reveal too much distinctive about his theology. It is evident, however, that one of Novatian’s chief problems with him is that he claims that Christ is the Father. Novatian writes, “Thus the sacrilegious heresy of Sabellius, as we said, takes

¹²⁰ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.1-2.

¹²¹ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 30.4 (trans. FC 67:105): “Et quidem illi qui iesum christum patrem dicunt ista praetendunt: si unus deus, christus autem deus, pater est christus, quia unus deus.” Whatever distortions Novatian might make to his opponents’ positions, his depiction of their syllogistic reasoning is not intended to present their positions as devoid of scriptural backing. He writes, “In fact, the heretics who say that Jesus Christ is Himself God the Father, as well as those who would have him to be only a man, have drawn from Scripture the elements and the reasons for their error and perversity.” *De Trinitate* 30.3 (trans. FC 67:105): *Tam enim illi qui iesum christum ipsum deum patrem dicunt quam etiam illi qui hominem illum tantummodo esse uoluerunt, erroris sui et peruersitatis origines et causas inde rapuerunt.*

¹²² See, for example, *De Trinitate* 26.21, where Novatian claims that the Son cannot be the Father because the Son is obedient to the Father.

¹²³ *Refutatio* 9.11-12.

¹²⁴ Novatian *De Trinitate*, 12.7-9.

concrete form because of these men who believe that Christ is not the Son but the Father.”¹²⁵ Later, he states again that Sabellius “says that Christ is the Father.”¹²⁶

Toward the end of the treatise, Novatian claims to have disarmed his opponent, saying, “Now that he has been deprived of those two passages, he is like a man who has had his two eyes gouged out; he is completely overcome by the blindness of his own doctrine.”¹²⁷ In this comment, Novatian is referring to John 14:9ff and John 10:30. As I noted in the discussion of *Adversus Praxean* and *Contra Noetum*, these passages were two of the favorite scriptural warrants of the monarchians.¹²⁸ In his treatment of John 10:30, Novatian makes a very familiar argument:

For if Christ were the Father, as the heretics think, He should have said: 'I, the Father, am one [*unus*].' But when He says 'I' and then introduces the Father, by saying 'I and the Father,' He thereby distinguishes and separates the individuality of His own Person, viz. that of the Son, from the authority of the Father, not only as regards the mere sound of the name [Son] but also in regard to the order of power in the divine economy.¹²⁹

Novatian makes a grammatical point here that is almost exactly the same as the move Hippolytus makes in *Contra Noetum*. Hippolytus states there,

¹²⁵ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 12.7 (trans. FC 67:51): *Et iam per istos, ut diximus, sabelliana haeresis sacrilega corporatur, siquidem christus non filius, sed pater creditur.*

¹²⁶ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 12.9 (trans. FC 67:52): *Si patrem, quid dubitant cum sabellii temeritate misceri, qui christum patrem dicit?*

¹²⁷ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 28.30 (trans. FC 67:99): *quandoquidem duobus istis locis quibusdam effossis luminibus orbatus totus sit in doctrinae suae caecitate superatus.*

¹²⁸ It is hardly surprising that neither of these passages occurs in the *Refutatio*. To be sure, it has been well documented that this work distorted the positions of its opponents in order to make them fit its genealogy of heresy. In order to show that its opponents' views derived from the teaching of Heraclitus, it represented the views of its opponents without any reference to scripture. All of the other witnesses to the monarchian positions show, however, that scriptural exegesis was essential to the monarchian contentions.

¹²⁹ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.2 (trans. FC 67:92-3): *Si enim erat, ut haeretici putant, pater christus, oportuit dicere 'ego pater unus sum'. At cum ego dicit, deinde patrem infert dicendo ego et pater, proprietatem personae suae, id est filii, a paterna auctoritate discernit atque distinguit, non tantummodo de sono nominis, sed etiam de ordine dispositae potestatis.*

And if he were to say, “He himself said: ‘I and the Father are one,’” let him apply his mind to the matter and learn that he did not say “I and the Father am one”, but “are one”. “We are” is not said with reference to one, but with reference to two. He revealed two persons, but a single power.¹³⁰

Both of these passages are clear examples of the grammatical exegesis that became the common defense against the monarchian interpretation of these passages.¹³¹ Novatian thought that these passages were so important to the monarchians that he was able to claim that he had defeated them once he had successfully refuted the monarchian interpretation.

Visible and Invisible

Further along in the *De Trinitate*, Novatian addresses another of the major emphases of monarchianism: the visibility and invisibility of God. As I highlighted in my examination of the earlier texts, questions of visibility and invisibility were major pieces of the monarchian contention that there is only one God. Novatian sets the problem up by juxtaposing texts that claim God appeared to Abraham with Ex. 33:20, which states that none shall see God and live.¹³² For Novatian, God was seen in the biblical theophanies; but to uphold the invisibility of the Father, he argues, “Accordingly, this can only mean that it was not the Father, who never has been seen, that was seen, but the Son, who is wont both to descend and to be seen, for the simple reason that He has descended. In fact,

¹³⁰ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 7.1 (trans. Butterworth, 60).

¹³¹ Again, see Mark DelCogliano, “The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 117–38.

¹³² Novatian, *De Trinitate* 18.1.

He is ‘the image of the invisible God.’”¹³³ Novatian’s argument here seems to be directed against something like the monarchian contention that when the Father wishes to be seen, he is visible; and when the Father wishes to remain unseen, he is invisible.¹³⁴

Commenting on the Sermon on the Mount, Novatian takes up the theme of visibility and invisibility again:

When Christ Himself is seen and touched by the crowd and yet promises and declares that he who is clean of heart shall see God, He proves by this very fact that He, who was then present, was not the Father because He promised, while actually present to their gaze, that whoever was clean of heart would see the Father.¹³⁵

The monarchians consistently maintained that the one God is sometimes visible and other times invisible. Novatian’s position above functions as a ready-made rebuttal of the position we see in the *Refutatio*: God appeared as Son but told those who were able to receive it that he was also the Father.¹³⁶ Novatian, on the other hand, takes the passage he interprets here to be a clear demonstration that there is a distinction between the Father and the Son, and that it is the Son who is now seen. Throughout the treatise, Novatian

¹³³ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 18.2-3 (trans. FC 67:67): *Ex quo intellegi potest quod non pater uisus sit, qui numquam uisus est, sed filius, qui et descendere solitus est et uideri, quia descenderit. Imago est enim inuisibilis dei.* Note the discussion of Novatian’s exegesis here and elsewhere to uphold the invisibility of the Father at Adhémar d’Alès, *Novatien, étude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du IIIe siècle*, Études de théologie historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1924), 90–1. When Novatian himself is speaking, he tends to refer to the Son, whereas he has his monarchian opponents speak of Christ. This fact might be significant, but Novatian does not draw attention to this difference.

¹³⁴ See, for example, the treatment of the theme of visibility and invisibility in *Contra Noetum* 2 and *Adversus Praxean* 14.

¹³⁵ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 28.28 (trans. FC 67:99): *Quando autem dum contingitur ipse christus et uidetur, repromittit tamen et dicit quoniam qui mundo fuerit corde deum uidebit, hoc ipso probat se non esse, qui tunc praesens cum uideretur repromittebat quod patrem uisurus esset quisquis mundo corde fuisset.*

¹³⁶ *Refutatio* 9.10.11-12.

asserts that gazing upon the visible Son is preparation for the presumably eschatological vision of the Father, which will come after purification.¹³⁷

Because a group of Novatian's opponents argued that the Son and the Father were the same, he goes to great lengths to demonstrate that they are distinct. Although the central aim of this section is to add detail to our account of monarchianism by means of Novatian's depiction of his opponents, a brief examination of his responses to them is useful. In the following discussion, Novatian's concern to explain another theophany shows that the proper interpretation of these theophanies was one of the most contested points between the monarchians and their opponents.

Novatian's assertion that the Son is both God and angel is one of the more interesting moves that he makes in order to prove the distinction between the Father and the Son. Novatian's discussion of the Son as an angel follows directly upon the heels of his examination of the Old Testament theophanies. Novatian sets up the problem by analyzing Gen. 31:11-13, where an angel says to Jacob, "I am the God who appeared to you in the place of God."¹³⁸ This passage merits Novatian's attention precisely because he has just argued that the Father was not seen in the theophanies. Novatian needed to

¹³⁷ See, for example, *De Trinitate* 28.4, 14, 25. Novatian does not clarify what exactly this vision of the Father will be like. He also does not spend too much time trying to explain how the Father is invisible but will later be seen by the pure in heart. The image of God plays an important part in this discussion: "The Lord, therefore, would never have used all these arguments, especially after having already given so many that clearly bear witness that He is not the Father but the Son, if He had been mindful that He was the Father or wished that He be considered the Father. His sole purpose in these words was to make it clear to us that every man should henceforth account it to be the same thing to see the image of God the Father through the Son, as if he had seen the Father. Every man, by believing in the Son, exercises himself in the contemplation of the image, that he may advance and grow even to the perfect contemplation of God the almighty Father, after he has grown accustomed to see the divinity in the Image" (*De Trinitate* 28.25 [trans. FC 67:98]). D'Alès comments about the vision of the Father, "seul le Fils, image du Dieu invisible, a été vu, parce que seul il est descendu. Par lui la fragilité humaine se fortifie peu à peu et s'accoutume par degrés à voir enfin le Père" (*Novatien*, 90).

¹³⁸ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 19.2 (trans. FC 67:73). See also Justin's assertions that the Son was also an angel, when he interprets Gen. 31:11-13 (*Dialogue with Trypho* 58-9).

explain how the Father remained invisible when this angel, claiming to be God, was seen by Jacob. In order to maintain the invisibility of God, Novatian argues that we must preserve a distinction between “Him who is called simply God and Him who is declared to be not simply God, but an angel as well.”¹³⁹ He continues and states that while the Father is simply God, the Son is both God and angel, thus using the interpretation of theophanies as a means of distinguishing Father and Son.¹⁴⁰

Suffered and Died

Although there are signs in *Adversus Praxean* and the *Refutatio* that some monarchians were moving away from asserting that the Father suffered, Novatian’s testimony demonstrates that by the middle of the third century, he thought it still worthwhile to oppose the monarchian assertion that the Father suffered, or at least that accusing people of having made such an assertion was an effective polemical tool. He writes, “Well then, say the heretics, if Christ is not only Man but also God, and Scripture says that Christ died for us and rose again, surely Scripture is teaching us to believe that God died.”¹⁴¹ In his attempts to refute this teaching, he states it again in a much simpler form: “If scripture had declared that Christ was only God and there was no association of

¹³⁹ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 19.3 (trans. FC 67:73): *distinctio sit inter eum qui tantummodo deus dicitur et inter eum qui non deus simpliciter, sed et angelus pronuntiatur.*

¹⁴⁰ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 19.4. Novatian also argues this in *De Trinitate* 18.22.

¹⁴¹ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 25.1 (trans. FC 67:88): *Ergo, inquiunt, si christus non homo est tantum, sed et deus, christum autem refert scriptura mortuum pro nobis et resuscitatum, iam docet nos scriptura credere deum mortuum.*

human frailty traceable in him, then their twisted syllogism would have had some force here: 'If Christ is God, and Christ died, then God died.'"¹⁴²

Novatian constantly reiterates that Christ is both human and divine, which allows him to affirm that Christ suffered and to avoid affirming that the Father suffered. If Novatian can be trusted in the passage above, the monarchians used syllogistic logic to claim bluntly that the Father suffered.¹⁴³ Novatian later claims that the psilanthropists used the sufferings and human frailties of Christ to prove that he was only human. They could have used syllogistic reasoning similar to what Novatian outlines above: God does not suffer; Christ suffered; therefore, Christ is not God.¹⁴⁴ In order to counter psilanthropist claims that Christ was only human, Novatian points out that the miracles he performed demonstrate that he was also divine. By his insistence that Christ was both divine and human, Novatian sought to meaningfully say that Christ suffered and at the same time to avoid having to predicate suffering of God.¹⁴⁵

Scholarly Theories Reconsidered

Monarchian theology came from Asia Minor to Rome at the end of the second and beginning of the third century. It quickly gained a following in Rome among both the

¹⁴² Novatian, *De Trinitate*: 25.3 (trans. FC 67:88): *Si enim scriptura proponeret christum tantummodo deum et nulla in illo fragilitatis humanae sociatio esset permixta, merito illorum hic aliquid ualuisset sermo contortus: 'si christus deus, christus autem mortuus, ergo mortuus est deus'.*

¹⁴³ It is difficult to determine here if Novatian's opponents were this direct about the death of the Father or if this is a polemical amplification of something he thought followed from other monarchian premises.

¹⁴⁴ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 11.3-4.

¹⁴⁵ Novatian likewise wants to protect God from the charge of being changeable: "He never changes or transforms Himself into other forms, lest through change he should appear to be also mortal" (*De Trinitate* 4.4 [trans. FC 67:31]).

leaders, such as Callistus, and other members of the community. As far as the extant witnesses indicate, Rome became the epicenter of monarchian theology, but monarchianism elicited rebuttals from theologians from Asia Minor (Hippolytus, the author of *Contra Noetum*), North Africa (Tertullian), Alexandria (Origen),¹⁴⁶ and Rome (the author of the *Refutatio* and Novatian). By all accounts, monarchianism was a theological force to be reckoned with in the early-third-century church.

Early Third Century Orthodoxy?

Despite its notable influence in the early-third-century church, it is difficult to sustain claims that monarchianism was the majority position in the church, or something like an early-third-century orthodoxy. Reinhard Hübner is the most recent proponent of this theory, and he suggests that monarchianism was the overwhelming majority position in Christianity until the middle of the third century.¹⁴⁷ Hübner's theory is built upon a number of suppositions, the most problematic of which requires a revisionist reading of virtually all second-century theology and a revisionist chronology of some major figures.

Although he dismisses *Contra Noetum* as a product of the fourth century, Hübner claims that Noetus antedated a number of major figures in the second century and that

¹⁴⁶ Although I have not included Origen in any of the analysis up to this point, the final two chapters are devoted to demonstrating his interaction with, and rejection of, monarchianism.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, his introductory remarks to his collection of essays on monarchianism, *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), vii. See also Daniel H. Williams' interaction with Hübner's theories: "Monarchianism and Photinus of Sirmium as the Persistent Heretical Face of the Fourth Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 99, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 188–91.

these figures, including Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Melito, drew on his theology.¹⁴⁸ Because he does not consider *Contra Noetum* a reliable attestation of Noetus' thought, Hübner bases his portrait of Noetus' theology almost exclusively on the accounts contained in the *Refutatio*. He spends substantial time examining the antithetical statements about God contained in the *Refutatio*'s account of Noetus. These, he claims, were excerpted from an anti-Gnostic rule of faith or paschal homily of Noetus.¹⁴⁹ Hübner then surveys other second-century authors who use such antithetical statements about God before concluding that all of these authors must have been drawing on Noetus' allegedly earlier theology.¹⁵⁰

Unfortunately, the connection Hübner draws between Noetus and the other second-century authors is tenuous. The main point of contact Hübner alleges is antithetical statements about God.¹⁵¹ Whenever he sees these sorts of statements in second-century writers, he concludes that they are drawing on Noetus. If, in fact, the antithetical statements are authentically Noetian and not the distortions of the author of the *Refutatio*, Hübner's theory does not necessarily follow. Noetus could just as easily

¹⁴⁸ For Hübner's dismissal of *Contra Noetum* as a product of the fourth century, see his "Melito und Noët," 6–9.

¹⁴⁹ Hübner, "Die antignostische Glaubensregel des Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 39–94.

¹⁵⁰ Hübner concludes that the Ignatian epistles are late, most likely between 165–175. See his, "Die Ignatianen und Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 203–4. Hübner also claims that Ignatius' statements are rendered more intelligible if they are considered as responses to Gnosticism (ibid., 194). He is well aware of the bold nature of his revision, and he explicitly argues that Ignatius should no longer be considered an "Apostolic Father" but rather an Apologist (ibid., 204).

¹⁵¹ Further difficulty arises because Hübner draws on the *Refutatio* to establish that such antitheses were one of the distinguishing characteristics of Noetus' theology. Although he is aware of the polemical distortions in the *Refutatio*, he brushes them aside too easily. Another reason he dismisses *Contra Noetum* as an unreliable witness to Noetus' thought is that it does not contain these sorts of statements (Hübner, "Melito und Noët," 8–9).

have been speaking about God in a manner common to second-century writers from Asia Minor. There is no evidence that demands (or even suggests) that Noetus was the source on which other second-century theologians drew for such antitheses.

Hübner never explains why one of the most distinctive elements of Noetus' theology, the explicit identification of the Father and Son and concomitant denial of any distinction between them, is absent from all of these authors who allegedly rely on Noetus. Second-century writers were concerned with maintaining that there was only one God, and they often left the precise relationship between the Father and Son unexplored. Even though they did not carefully define the distinction between the Father and Son, they did not overtly identify the Father with the Son as did Noetus. Recall the *Refutatio*'s summary of Noetus' teaching in one of the passages Hübner deems trustworthy: "For in this manner he thinks to establish the sovereignty (μοναρχίαν) of God, alleging that Father and Son, so called, are one and the same, not one individual produced from a different one, but himself from himself; and that he is styled by name Father and Son, according to vicissitude of times."¹⁵²

All of the extant accounts of monarchianism that I have studied thus far have shown that the explicit identification of the Father and Son was at the core of monarchian theology. The absence of such strong statements about the Father and Son being identical in second-century texts is an insurmountable obstacle for Hübner's theory. Were Noetus as influential as Hübner contends, one would surely find this central aspect of his teaching mirrored in those writers who allegedly relied on him. It is more probable that

¹⁵² *Refutatio* 9.10.11 (trans. ANF 5:128 with modifications): οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ· ὀνόματι μὲν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καλούμενον κατὰ χρόνων τροπήν.

Noetus' antithetical statements about God were drawing on traditional ways of speaking about God in Asia Minor.¹⁵³ He added to this traditional phraseology the monarchian postulate, that the Father and the Son are one and the same.

Once Hübner's assertions in favor of an early date for Noetus have been problematized, his theories about monarchianism as the overwhelming majority position until the mid-third century lose their firm basis. There is evidence that monarchianism gained a strong following in Rome at the beginning of the third century. However, there is scarcely enough information to determine the extent to which monarchianism was adopted in other regions. Monarchianism was a conscious reaction to the varieties of Christian theology (like that of Justin) that were perceived as destroying the uniqueness of God. Although authors like Melito and Ignatius do not seem concerned to sharply distinguish the Father and Son, we see nothing in them like the conscious, reactive assertion that the Father and Son are "one and the same." Pace Hübner, monarchianism cannot be found in nearly all second-century authors. In fact, there is little evidence for the conscious identification of the Father and Son before the beginning of the third century.

An Exegetically-Based Theology?

All of the extant witnesses to monarchianism show that monarchian theology was thoroughly exegetical. Even though the author of the *Refutatio* tried to expunge all references to scripture in his accounts of monarchianism, scriptural exegesis was so

¹⁵³ See, for example, those occurrences in the corpus of Ignatius of Antioch, which I discussed in the first chapter.

thoroughly entwined with this theology that he was unsuccessful.¹⁵⁴ The monarchians relied on classic proclamations of monotheism from Deutero-Isaiah, Genesis, and Exodus to establish their fundamental commitment to protecting the uniqueness of God.¹⁵⁵

Decker claims that the biblical exegesis attributed to the Noetians in *Contra Noetum* is a distorting insertion of Hippolytus.¹⁵⁶ His argument, however, is belied by the other witnesses to monarchianism from the early third century. The biblical exegesis Hippolytus attributes to his opponents addresses the same topics as versions of monarchian exegesis reported by the anti-monarchians (especially Old Testament theophanies), and it uses some of the same passages, such as John 10:30 and John 14:8-10. In his source-critical reconstruction of monarchianism, Decker has discarded what appears to be authentic content in an attempt to find the core of monarchianism.¹⁵⁷

East vs. West?

Michael Decker has also argued that monarchian theology and the responses to it are symptomatic of a divide between East and West in early Christianity. He contends that theologians from Asia Minor emphasized the unity of God in response to the

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, the quotation of John 14:11 in *Refutatio* 9.12.17-18. Note also that Hübner has shown some suggestive verbal parallels to Baruch 3:36-38 in *Refutatio* 9.10.11.

¹⁵⁵ For a dense cluster of these passages, see Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.1-3.

¹⁵⁶ Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 156-7.

¹⁵⁷ Note that my rejection of Decker's claim is supported by Heine, who writes concerning the bias of the author of the *Refutatio*, "The selection itself of what to include and what to omit may reflect his bias. This is most obvious in the omission of the scriptural texts from which Callistus drew his views to make it appear that his doctrine was not derived from Scripture. That the modalists made abundant and effective use of Scripture is evident from (a) the account of Noetus' teachings in *CN* ..., (b) Hippolytus' own remark about how Callistus supported his doctrine of the nature of the Church from Scripture (*Ref.* 9.12.22-23), and (c) the lengthy scriptural debates in which Tertullian and Origen engage against them" (Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 60).

theology of the Gnostics.¹⁵⁸ Although he does not call Irenaeus an outright monarchian, he notes that Irenaeus' theology has a number of similarities with the monarchians and is a good example of the theology of Asia Minor. Decker further characterizes theology from Asia Minor as being almost exclusively concerned with the action of God in salvation history, economic theology.¹⁵⁹ Rome serves as the epicenter of Western theology in Decker's narration. When the monarchians came to Rome from Asia Minor, he argues, they found theologians engaged in speculation about differentiation within the Godhead and accused them of being ditheists.¹⁶⁰ Rather than focusing on the unity of God in the economy of salvation, Decker avers, Roman theologians were preoccupied with ontological questions about the Godhead.¹⁶¹

Decker's geographical theory has a number of problems. In the first place, if there was such a large difference between the theologies of the East and West, how did Asian monarchian theology gain such a large following in Rome? Had the divide between East and West been as strong as Decker contends, monarchian theology would have gained no following in Rome. The primary sources paint a picture of a theology that found ready acceptance from both leaders and the "simple" Christians in Rome. In the second place, *Contra Noetum*, perhaps the earliest of the anti-monarchian treatises, was probably written in Asia Minor.¹⁶² This probability complicates Decker's picture and suggests that

¹⁵⁸ Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 203–204.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 204.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 204–5, 208.

¹⁶² See Manlio Simonetti, "Aggiornamento Su Ippolito," in *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, *Studia ephemeridis "Augustinianum"* 30 (Roma: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1989), 124–5; J. A.

there was within the theology of Asia Minor the type of diversity that Decker wants to split between East and West: both monarchian and anti-monarchian theologies arose in Asia Minor.

Was Monarchianism the Privileging of Jewish Theology?

Several scholars have suggested that monarchianism is best understood as a privileging of Jewish theology and a Jewish understanding of monotheism. Uríbarri Bilbao, for example, understands monarchianism as a “Judaizing tendency” and an “attempt to maintain the monotheism inherited from the Jewish tradition.”¹⁶³ More recently, Daniel Boyarin has pushed the alleged relationship between Judaism and monarchianism even further. He argues that monarchianism’s defeat was Judaism being cast out of Christianity.¹⁶⁴ For Boyarin, the expulsion of monarchianism was one of the main ways that borders between Judaism and Christianity were “inscribed” and solidified.

Much of Boyarin’s narration presupposes his understanding of Christianity and Judaism as an undifferentiated mass of “Judaean-Christianity” in the second century.¹⁶⁵ Such a characterization is difficult to sustain in the monarchian controversy—if only on

Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 116–23.

¹⁶³ Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 502. See also his list of four reasons he thinks Monarchianism is a return or defense of Jewish monotheism at p. 499.

¹⁶⁴ Daniel Boyarin, “Two Powers in Heaven: Or, the Making of a Heresy,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 331–70; idem, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Divinations (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); idem, “Justin Martyr Invents Judaism,” *Church History* 70, no. 3 (2001): 427–61.

¹⁶⁵ See Boyarin’s discussion of “Judaean-Christianity” and his argument for its usefulness as a descriptor: “Justin Martyr Invents Judaism,” 460–1.

the basis of which texts were cited as authoritative. Both monarchian and anti-monarchian writers cited texts from the New Testament as authoritative, and both considered Jesus to be divine. Neither of these practices would have been acceptable for second-century Jews who did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Boyarin's theory also seems to presuppose some type of connection between monarchianism and rabbinic Judaism, but he never explains how such contact between Asian monarchians and early, Palestinian rabbis occurred. Furthermore, there are no clear textual or exegetical linkages between monarchianism and rabbinic Judaism.¹⁶⁶

Uribarri Bilbao's suggestion that monarchianism represents a Judaizing tendency within early Christianity is never elaborated. He merely claims that it is the defense of monotheism inherited from Judaism. His statements suggest a monolithic conception of monotheism within first- and second-century Judaism, but such characterizations of Jewish monotheism have been problematized by scholars since at least the late 1980s.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ For a further discussion and deconstruction of Boyarin's theory, see my forthcoming article in *Vigiliae Christianae*, "Monarchianism and Two Powers: Jewish and Christian Monotheism at the Beginning of the Third Century."

¹⁶⁷ See especially the work of Hurtado, Bauckham, Stuckenbruck, and Fossum, a full discussion of which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. For the major works of Jarl Fossum on these issues, see: Jarl E. Fossum, "Jewish-Christian Christology and Jewish Mysticism," *Vigiliae Christianae* 37, no. 3 (1983): 260–87; Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 36 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985); Jarl E. Fossum, "The New Religionsgeschichtliche Schule: The Quest for Jewish Christology," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 30 (1991): 638–46; Jarl E. Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology*, *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus* 30 (Freiburg; Göttingen: Universitätsverlag; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995). See also Carey C. Newman, Gladys S. Lewis, and James R. Davila, eds., *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*, *Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism* 63 (Leiden: Brill, 1999). See, among many others, Larry W. Hurtado, "What Do We Mean by 'First-Century Jewish Monotheism,'" *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, no. 32 (1993): 348–68; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* 70 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995); Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*, *Didsbury Lectures* 1996 (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998).

Tertullian does call the Praxeian theology “Jewish,” but that fact proves only that Tertullian found the accusation of “Judaism” to be effective in anti-monarchian polemics.¹⁶⁸ Whether monarchian theology was underwritten by a specific stream of Jewish theology is an open question, but sweeping categorizations of monarchianism as “Jewish” or “Judaizing” are methodologically problematic and do little to advance our understanding of monarchianism.¹⁶⁹

The Development of Monarchianism and Geographical Schools

Noting the differences in monarchian texts with regard to patripassianism, some scholars have suggested that there was a development within monarchianism. Heine, for example, argues that the early, Asian school of monarchianism readily accepted patripassian conclusions while the later, Roman school rejected patripassianism.¹⁷⁰ The move away from patripassianism in the *Refutatio* and parts of *Adversus Praxeian* suggests that there was diversity regarding the acceptance of patripassianism within monarchianism. In the latest text, Novatian’s *De Trinitate*, we see unabashed statements of patripassianism.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ See Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeian* 31.1, where Tertullian writes, “Moreover this matter is of Jewish faith, so to believe in one God as to refuse to count in with him the Son, and after the Son the Spirit” (trans. Evans, 179).

¹⁶⁹ The monotheism of early-third-century Christians was, of course, originally inherited from Judaism. Christian worship of Jesus as divine, however, caused it to develop in ways different from its Jewish roots.

¹⁷⁰ Heine, “The Christology of Callistus,” 89.

¹⁷¹ See, for example, Novatian, *De Trinitate* 25.1.

Unfortunately, we do not have enough extant data to determine the cause of the variations regarding patripassianism in presentations of monarchianism by its opponents. To determine if the acceptance of patripassianism was a persistent, particularly Asian phenomenon, we would need a later Asian source to show that the acceptance of patripassianism survived in Asian monarchianism. To prove that the rejection of patripassianism by some monarchians was a peculiarly Roman phenomenon, we would either need to show that Novatian's testimony is incorrect or have other Roman sources that corroborated the portrait of Callistus in the *Refutatio*. As it stands, perhaps the most we can say is that there was variation within monarchianism, especially with regard to patripassianism. Whether this variation was geographically or chronologically characterized requires more data than we have.

Summary of Monarchianism

Monarchianism was a powerful theological movement that began in the late second century and continued well past the middle of the third. Although it seems to have originated in Asia Minor, it quickly gained influence in Rome. It was an important enough theological movement to merit rebuttals from several theologians in the third century. These anti-monarchian treatises give us our only glimpse into monarchian theology, and their polemical portrait leaves us with a meager amount of data from which to reconstruct that theology. Despite this lack of data, the few scholars who have treated monarchianism in any depth have advanced a number of broad theories.

As my appraisal of these theories has shown above, I consider many of them to be misguided or incomplete. They push the evidence too far or assume things for which

there is no witness in the primary texts. Once these theories and narratives are stripped away, however, we are still able to ascertain a stable core of monarchian theology, which then allows us to determine what parts of monarchianism might have been variable. The establishment of this stable core of monarchianism is crucial for understanding the role monarchianism played in theological development and polemics in the early third century.

The most foundational tenet of monarchian theology, and the one that remains stable across all witnesses, is the strong affirmation that there is only one God. At the beginning of the third century, such claims were common. Both the monarchians and their opponents claimed to believe in only one God. The distinctive thing about the monarchian commitment to belief in only one God was that it interpreted the oneness of God in a manner that rejected the position held by their opponents, namely, that Jesus and the father were distinct realities and both God. The monarchians supported their understanding of the oneness of God with references to classic biblical affirmations of monotheism, like Isaiah 44:6.

The second core component of monarchian theology was the unwavering confession that Jesus was divine. The acceptance of the divinity of Jesus demarcated them from the psilanthropists, who also sought to preserve the oneness of God by denying that Jesus was God. Because the monarchians had an interpretation of monotheism that did not allow for two distinct realities to be God, they argued that the Father and Son were one and the same. In their monotheistic reasoning, if the Father was God, and the Son was God, then they were necessarily the same. Any argument affirming that both were distinct and divine was tantamount to ditheism in the eyes of the

monarchians. Using this same logic, the monarchians focused on biblical theophanies and argued that one and the same God was both invisible and visible. This approach was a stark rejection of the way someone like Justin interpreted the Old Testament theophanies.

Despite the stable core of teachings just outlined, there was variety within monarchianism. Even from the limited attestation that we have, we know that monarchians after Noetus had mixed feelings about arguing that the Father suffered. Patripassianism can be seen as a necessary byproduct of the assertion that the Father and the Son are one and the same, and the anti-monarchian writers did not hesitate to point out this entailment. For reasons unknown to us, however, some monarchians rejected this conclusion and sought to preserve the impassibility of the Father.

As I demonstrate in the remaining chapters, the struggle against monarchianism catalyzed development in the language theologians used to speak about the distinction between the Father and Son. If only for this reason, the monarchians deserve a more prominent place in narrations of Trinitarian theology in the early third century than they now have. The monarchians, though, were more than a foil for the development of “proto-orthodox” theology. Their distinctive theology represents an earnest attempt to harmonize the claim that there is only one God with the affirmation that Jesus was also God.

CHAPTER FOUR: MONARCHIANISM, ORIGEN'S *COMMENTARY ON JOHN*, AND WISDOM CHRISTOLOGY¹

Reading Origen *in Situ*: Origen and Monarchianism

Many modern accounts of Origen's Trinitarian theology present him as moving along this or that trajectory toward the Nicene debates. The focus on Origen's legacy in the Nicene debates brings with it questions that are foreign to the period in which Origen actually wrote, such as one of the main sorts of questions scholars like to ask regarding Origen: Did he teach that the Father and the Son were equal (with regard to divinity, power, substance, etc)? The work of Bruns and Ramelli is a good example of this tendency.² Origen's surroundings thus are only a blur receding into the distance. My approach to Origen in these final two chapters is an attempt to slow him down, an attempt to arrest his motion toward Nicaea so that his immediate, contemporary surroundings can come into sharper focus. A densely contextual reading is necessary to achieve this sharp focus. I undertake this reading by making three choices.

First, I attempt to isolate as much as possible one part of his polemical context in my examination of Origen: the monarchian controversy that spanned the first half of the third century.³ The spate of anti-monarchian texts produced at the beginning of the third

¹ Portions of this chapter are forthcoming in the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, in an article entitled, "Wisdom Christology and Monarchianism in Origen's *Commentary on John*."

² Christoph Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos: zur Gotteslehre des Origenes*, Adamantiana 3 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2013); Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 1 (2011): 21–49.

³ As will become clear, it is not possible to completely isolate this controversy by considering Origen's thought only with reference to it. Origen did not write any exclusively anti-monarchian works like *Contra Noetum* or *Adversus Praxean*. His *Dialogue with Heraclides* is the closest he comes to doing so, but it is difficult to date precisely. The main work I consider, Origen's *Commentary on John*, was requested by

century demonstrates that monarchianism was perceived to be a serious threat by some notable theologians at the beginning of the third century.⁴ The interplay between the monarchian controversy and the development of Origen's thought has not received its due attention from scholars.⁵ One of the ways I bring monarchianism into focus is by reading Origen alongside other anti-monarchian writers from the early third century.⁶ As I noted above, mine is a conscious decision to read Origen with his contemporaries rather than with his heirs in the Nicene debates.

Second, I focus my analysis almost exclusively on *ComJn* 1-2, books which Origen composed during the height of the monarchian controversy. These opening books of *ComJn* survive in well-preserved Greek.⁷ This fact is important because even the transmission and preservation of Origen's works bears the mark of concern about

his patron, Ambrose, as a response to the Valentinian Heracleon's commentary on the Gospel of John. Origen interacts with monarchian ideas in books 1-2 of *ComJn*, but the Valentinian polemical context is never too far out of view.

⁴ As the preceding reconstruction of monarchianism shows, these theologians included Hippolytus, Tertullian, the author of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, and Novatian. I should note here that there is a substantial difference between the passages of Origen I examine and those of the other anti-monarchian writers. Origen was not writing an anti-monarchian treatise. He addresses monarchian theology within the context of a larger biblical commentary and so does not give a detailed account of many of the monarchian positions we saw in the other works.

⁵ There are a few notable exceptions to this trend: Antonio Orbe, "Orígenes y los monarquianos," *Gregorianum* 72, no. 1 (1991): 39–72; Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la controversia "monarquiana,"* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie I: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996); Ronald E. Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 56–91. As I noted in the introduction, Christoph Bruns makes a nod in this direction but never follows through on considering the full impact of monarchianism (or modalism, as he calls it) on Origen's thought. See Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*. Bilbao's account focuses on Origen's interaction with monarchianism in the *Dialogue with Heraclides*, but he does not give too much attention to *ComJn* 1-2.

⁶ In the last chapter, I read Origen alongside Tertullian and Novatian.

⁷ By "well-preserved Greek," I mean to highlight the fact that after the first two books of *ComJn*, the surviving text becomes very fragmentary. Compared to the later books of *ComJn*, there are relatively few *lacunae* in books 1-2.

Origen's relationship to post-Nicene orthodoxy.⁸ The fact that these books are extant in a mostly complete Greek text, untouched by the editorial hand of Rufinus, makes them particularly valuable for reconstructing Origen's thought.⁹ Further motivating my choice to use these two books is the fact that I accept an early dating for their composition, beginning around 217 C. E. This dating means that these two books were composed in the middle of the monarchian controversy, with *Contra Noetum* (ca. 200-210) and *Adversus Praxean* (ca. 213) antedating them and the *Refutatio* (ca. 225-235) and *De Trinitate* (ca. 240-250) postdating them. This dating of the text, coupled with Origen's probable contact with monarchianism during his trip to Rome, suggests that the anti-monarchian polemical context is important for interpreting works he composed while still in Alexandria.¹⁰

Third, I explore one key theme in Origen's theology that, I argue, was formed through contact and conflict with monarchianism: the distinction of the Father and Son.¹¹

⁸ I discuss this matter at length in my section on the reliability of the Trinitarian sections in Rufinus' translations of Origen's works in my final chapter. I conclude that, especially with regard to Trinitarian matters, Rufinus' translation renders Origen inoffensive to post-Nicene Latin readers.

⁹ Origen's *De principiis* is his most well-known work; and for this reason, many scholars privilege it in their accounts of Origen's Trinitarian theology. See, for example, how extensively Henri Crouzel relies on it: *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 181–204. Charles Kannengiesser argues that the structure of *De principiis* itself shows the Trinitarian focus of the work: "Divine Trinity and the Structure of Peri Archon," in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William Lawrence Petersen, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 1 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 231–49. As I argue at length in my later section on Rufinus the translator, Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* distorts Origen's Trinitarian theology to make it conform to post-Nicene orthodoxy. Therefore, I use *De principiis* only when it agrees with what we see in the *ComIn*. Also motivating my decision regarding *De principiis* is the fact that it is something of an outlier with regard to genre. The vast majority of Origen's extant works are biblical commentaries, and it is only fitting to start with one of his earliest to begin an exploration of his Trinitarian theology.

¹⁰ I discuss the dating of the text and Origen's Roman travels in detail in the sections below.

¹¹ The narrowing of the scope of this project to the relationship between the Father and Son in Origen's early works is meant to suggest neither that Origen had no substantial Pneumatology, as scholars like Harnack argue, nor that Origen's later works are of no importance. See Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 358. The length of my reconstruction of monarchianism in part one of the dissertation precluded me from undertaking a pan-

One of the most distinctive characteristics of monarchianism was its identification of the Father and the Son, the claim that they are “one and the same.”¹² In the face of this identification of Father and Son, a careful articulation of their distinction was a pressing matter for anti-monarchian theologians at the beginning of the third century.¹³ This imperative to distinguish the Father and Son was further complicated by the fact that early third-century theologians felt the need to avoid the kind of division of the Godhead they perceived in the Valentinian Pleroma.¹⁴ They needed to determine how to speak of distinction without implying polytheistic separation.

My examination of the distinction of the Father and Son in Origen’s early works consists of two dense examinations of passages from his *ComJn*.¹⁵ Before these studies, I discuss the dating of *ComJn*, its Alexandrian milieu, and the anti-Valentinian context set

oeuvre study of Origen’s Trinitarian theology in the present work. I hope that my focused study on Origen’s early works here might serve as a good *Ausgangspunkt* for such a fuller study in the future.

¹² For this claim, see especially *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.10.11-2 and Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3: *maxime haec quae se existimat meram veritatem possidere dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum dicat.*

¹³ The anti-monarchian theologians thought the distinction of the Father and Son was a pressing matter for a number of reasons. As we see in *Contra Noetum* 2.4, 3.1, 4.2, and 9.3, Hippolytus thought that the distinction of the Father and Son was required by a proper reading of scripture. Hippolytus was also concerned to stress that the Father did not suffer. See *Contra Noetum* 1.7, 8.3. Also motivating the anti-monarchian theologians was the fact that the *regula fidei* or *veritatis* spoke of one God and three (somethings), Father, Son, and Spirit. As will become clear in my discussion of Origen, he was concerned to protect the individuality (ιδιότης) of the Son. Note also that Novatian’s *De Trinitate* is really more of an exposition and defense of the *regula veritatis* than a treatise on the Trinity.

¹⁴ This dual concern with monarchianism and Valentinianism is very evident in *Adversus Praxean* 3. There, Tertullian presents the monarchians and Valentinians as two poles on the spectrum of error regarding the relationship between the Father and Son. Note also that prior to its discussion of monarchianism, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* has already surveyed a number of different Gnostic systems. At the beginning of the third-century, Gnosticism was still very much a live issue for Christian theologians. I have elsewhere treated the question of whether there was any relationship, antagonistic or otherwise, between monarchianism and Gnosticism. See my conference paper “Isaiah 44-45 and Competing Conceptions of Monotheism in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries,” presented at the Oxford International Patristics Conference, August 11, 2015. This essay is under review at *Studia Patristica*.

¹⁵ My analysis here does not seek to be exhaustive. In each case, I focus on one major passage and note parallels when needed.

by the request of his patron, Ambrose. In the first study, I analyze the ways in which monarchianism influenced Origen's interpretation of ἀρχή and λόγος in the opening verses of John's Gospel. I argue that Origen used the term ἀρχή to develop a Wisdom Christology that responded to the difficulties created by stoicized monarchian understandings of *Logos*. In the second study, I take up the question of Origen's subordinationism in relation to other anti-monarchian writers in the first half of the third century. I conclude that Origen, like his contemporaries, intentionally deployed a subordinationist model of the relationship between the Father and Son in order to safeguard the distinction of the Father and the Son.¹⁶

Dating the *Commentary on John*

Although scholars agree that Origen began his *ComJn* while he was still in Alexandria, they do not agree about precisely when this work was written. Dating *ComJn* is not made easier by the fact that “there are no cross-references between the *Commentary on John* and the other Alexandrian writings.”¹⁷ This lack of references to his other Alexandrian works problematizes any attempts to determine where *ComJn* fits in the sequence of Origen's work; and thus, we cannot feel secure in any judgments regarding the relation of dependence between *ComJn* and Origen's other writings. The one thing we can be relatively certain about regarding Origen's literary activity in

¹⁶ Thus I continue to use the term “subordinationist;” but my usage seeks to disentangle it from the negative evaluative freight of post-Nicene orthodoxy.

¹⁷ Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*, Christian Theology in Context (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 86.

Alexandria is that it came to a close in 231-232. Eusebius tells us that Origen left Alexandria during the tenth year of the reign of Alexander Severus.¹⁸

Despite the lack of any explicit dating by Origen or cross-references to other works, a few pieces of data can at least help us to narrow down the timeframe in which *ComJn* was most likely composed. Origen notes at the beginning of book six of *ComJn* that the previous five books had been composed in Alexandria.¹⁹ Origen also makes two references at the beginning of book one that give us some hints for dating the work. First, he speaks of the fittingness of starting a commentary on the firstfruits of the Gospels immediately following a physical (κατὰ τὸ σῶμα) separation.²⁰ Origen then elaborates and speaks of his return to Alexandria.²¹ While these statements seem to hint at some concrete events relative to which we can date the work, they are not as helpful as one would hope. Indeed, Origen made multiple trips while that he lived in Alexandria. Unless we can determine to which of Origen's trips he is referring here, these references are not truly helpful in clarifying the date of the work.

¹⁸ Eusebius, *EH* 6.26.

¹⁹ Origen, *ComJn* 6.1-12. Eusebius also recounts this fact in *EH* 6.23.1-24.2.

²⁰ Origen, *ComJn* 1.12 (Greek from Origen, *Commentaire sur Saint Jean*, ed. Cécile Blanc, vol. 1 (livres I - V), Sources chrétiennes 120 (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 64).

²¹ Origen, *ComJn* 1.13. In *ComJn* 1.12-3, he writes, "What more excellent activity ought there be after our physical separation from one another, than the careful examination of the gospel? For, indeed, one might dare say that the gospel is the firstfruits of all the scriptures. What other firstfruits of our activities ought there to have been, then, since we have come home to Alexandria, than that devoted to the firstfruits of the Scriptures?" (ποῖαν ἔχρῃν εἶναι μετὰ τὸ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα κεχωρίσθαι ἡμᾶς ἀλλήλων διαφέρουσιν ἢ τὴν περὶ εὐαγγελίου ἐξέτασιν; Καὶ γὰρ τολμητέον εἰπεῖν πασῶν τῶν γραφῶν εἶναι ἀπαρχὴν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. Ἀπαρχὴν οὖν πράξεων, ἐξ οὗ τῇ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ἐπιδεδημήκαμεν, τίνα ἄλλην ἢ τὴν εἰς τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τῶν γραφῶν ἔχρῃν γεγόνεσθαι;). Translation from Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 80 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 34. Greek from SC 120:64.

To which physical separation and journey is Origen referring in *ComJn* 1.13?

There are two possibilities for identifying the absence that preceded Origen's work on *ComJn*. Both of these possibilities hinge on interpretations of Eusebius' rather laconic, enigmatic, and imprecise description of "no small warfare breaking out in the city" (οὐ μικροῦ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἀναρριπισθέντος πολέμου).²² Nautin identifies this "warfare" with Origen's conflict with his bishop, Demetrius *La 'guerre' qui l'a contraint à quitter Alexandrie n'était probablement rien d'autre que cette hostilité qui s'était déclarée contre lui dans l'entourage de l'évêque*²³ Eusebius recounts amicable relations between Origen and Demetrius earlier in Origen's career, even claiming that Demetrius installed Origen alone as the head of the catechetical school in Alexandria.²⁴ Nautin's interpretation of the "warfare" would push Origen's work on *ComJn* toward the end of his Alexandrian period when his relationship with Demetrius seems to have deteriorated.²⁵ From this assumption, Nautin gives the following dating proposal: 229 – *De Prin.* composed; 230 – Origen takes a trip to Palestine; 231 – Origen composes books 1 – 4 of *ComJn*; winter 231/232 – Origen departs to Antioch and composes book 5 of *ComJn*.²⁶ Nautin's dating, which

²² Eusebius, *EH* 6.19.16 (Greek and trans. from Eusebius, *EH: Books 6-10*, ed. J. E. L. Oulton, Loeb Classical Library 265 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 62–3.).

²³ Pierre Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie et son œuvre*, Christianisme antique 1 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 366.

²⁴ Eusebius, *EH* 6.3.8.

²⁵ At least one factor in the deterioration of Origen's relationship with Demetrius was his ordination, not under the auspices of Demetrius, by the bishops of Caesarea and Jerusalem (see Eusebius, *EH* 6.8.4). In Nautin's dating schema, this event would give us an early time at which conflict between Origen and Demetrius was increasing. Even still, we cannot date Origen's ordination with any precision and are no closer to a date for the work before. In his relatively recent treatment of Origen, John Behr follows Nautin's dating. His work was produced well before Heine's reassessment, and Behr does not mention Preuschen's earlier suggestions. See John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea, The Formation of Christian Theology 1* (Crestwood, N.Y: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 167.

²⁶ Nautin, *Origène*, 371.

pushes *ComJn* to the very end of Origen's time in Alexandria, means that all of Origen's other Alexandrian works were composed earlier than *ComJn*.²⁷

The alternative understanding of Eusebius' statement is given by Heine and Preuschen. Because Heine sums up Preuschen's work so well, I treat Heine's argument as representative of this view.²⁸ Heine finds it quite unlikely that Eusebius' statement about warfare breaking out in the city would refer to the disagreement between Origen and Demetrius. If Eusebius were describing the disagreement between Origen and Demetrius, he would be suggesting that the whole city was embroiled in the controversy, which is highly unlikely.²⁹ Instead, Heine understands Eusebius' statement to be referring to

²⁷ Ibid., 366–7. Nautin's dating was a substantial revision of the paradigm that had prevailed before him. Indeed, he is well aware that his proposal is overturning the argument of Preuschen. He notes that (unnamed) scholars had taken Origen's reference to *ComJn* as the first fruits of his works since the return to Alexandria as meaning that this was the first of Origen's literary efforts.

²⁸ For Preuschen's argument, see Origen, *Origenes Werke: Der Johanneskommentar*, ed. Erwin Preuschen, vol. 4, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 10 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1903), lxxvi–lxxxi. Heine's views on the dating of books 1–2 of *ComJn* have shifted during his career. In his introduction to *ComJn* in 1989, Heine follows Nautin's proposal and dates the work as follows: "This would place the composition of the first four books in Alexandria in A.D. 230–231, and part, at least, of Book 5 in Antioch in A.D. 231–232" ("Introduction," in *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, Fathers of the Church 80 [Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1989], 4). Although he does not explicitly revise his dating of *ComJn*, Heine argues in 1993 that Origen was responding to monarchianism at the beginning of *ComJn*, a key point in his later reappraisal of the dating ("Stoic Logic as Handmaid to Exegesis and Theology in Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John," *Journal of Theological Studies* 44, no. 1 [1993]: 92–100). In his 1998 article, Heine suggests, "The first two books [of *ComJn*] were written soon after Origen returned from Rome, and are largely structured by the modalist question" ("The Christology of Callistus," 58). This statement appears to mark the point where Heine's views on the dating of the work definitively shifted to an early date, following Preuschen.

²⁹ Heine finds Nautin's suggestion implausible on linguistic grounds, among others. See Heine, *Origen*, 87 n. 20, where he writes, "There are two points in Eusebius' account which I think point to Caracalla's massacre. First is Eusebius' statement that this warfare broke out 'in the city' (*kata tēn polin*). This suggests something larger than a dispute between the bishop and a teacher. The other is the verb Eusebius chooses to designate Origen's departure—*hupexerchesthai*. The usual meaning of this word is a secret, unnoticed departure (see, for example, Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.16). I can see no reason for Origen's departure to have been secretive had he been leaving because of Demetrius' animosity towards him. But if it refers to his departure at the time when Caracalla's army was slaughtering the inhabitants of Alexandria randomly and at will, it would have had to be secretive."

Origen's stealthy departure from Alexandria to escape Caracalla's massacre in 215.³⁰

This understanding of Eusebius' statement makes his claim that warfare broke out in the city much more intelligible than a skirmish between a bishop and a theologian. The upshot of this dating is that the date of composition of the first books of *ComJn* is moved back to sometime around 217, soon after Caracalla had left the city and Origen had time to return.³¹ Heine notes the full import of this dating:

This way of reading the texts also makes the *Commentary on John* the first of Origen's Biblical commentaries. Origen would have been in his early thirties when he began work on the commentary. He begins his literary career by trying to sort out the thorny Christological issues centered largely on the Gospel of John which divided the late second-and early third-century church.³²

The two dating proposals that deal with the majority of the evidence at length, then, give us very different conclusions.³³ Nautin's scheme places *ComJn* after Origen's other Alexandrian works, while that of Preuschen and Heine puts the composition at the very beginning of Origen's literary endeavors. There are various other suggestions for the dating of *ComJn*, but Nautin and Heine/Preuschen contain the fullest discussions.³⁴ I find

³⁰ Heine, *Origen*, 87. On pp. 87-88, Heine gives a detailed explanation of Caracalla's massacre. Caracalla seems to have erected statues portraying himself as Alexander the Great, some of which might have been destroyed in a riot in Alexandria. Upon arrival, Caracalla was incensed at the destruction of the statues and began a massacre that lasted for some time.

³¹ Heine, *Origen*, 88.

³² *Ibid.*, 89.

³³ Neither of these dominant dating schemes, however, damages my thesis that Origen's distinction of the Father and Son was motivated by his contact with monarchianism. Even the late dating of *ComJn* 1-2 still places it in the middle of the monarchian controversy and puts it before Novatian's *De Trinitate*.

³⁴ In his 1994 article, John Anthony McGuckin dates the first books of *ComJn* to 230/231: "Structural Design and Apologetic Intent in Origen's Commentary on John," in *Origeniana Sexta* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1995), 444 n.9. Later, he changes his position and dates them to between 226 and 229: John Anthony McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, 1st ed., The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 29. Johannes Quasten dates books 1-4 to between 226 and 229: *Patrology* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1950), 2.49. Hans Georg Thümmel dates the work to the late 220s or by 230: Thümmel, ed., *Origenes' Johanneskommentar, Buch I-V*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 63 (Tübingen: Mohr

Heine and Preuschen's argument convincing, especially its treatment of the "warfare" Eusebius mentions.

The Alexandrian Milieu of the *Commentary on John*

While Origen's *De prin.* draws the attention of a number of scholars, we would do well to remember that his exposition of the Christian faith in this work was not typical of the mode in which he theologized. Indeed, Heine notes that apart from *De Prin.*, *Contra Celsum*, and a few other works, "Origen did his theology by writing commentaries on the canonical scriptures of the Church in the manner that his contemporaries who were Aristotelian or Platonic philosophers did their philosophy by writing commentaries on the works of earlier philosophers."³⁵ In Eusebius' list of the works Origen composed in Alexandria, the majority are biblical commentaries.³⁶

If the biblical commentary was Origen's preferred theological medium, he gave the Gospel of John pride of place among all the other scriptures. By doing so, he was conforming to the pattern that prevailed in Alexandria in the late second and early third centuries.³⁷ Eusebius attributes the following opinion to Origen's predecessor, Clement:

Siebeck, 2011), 4. Margurite Harl notes that Eusebius' statement is "trs vague" and asserts that books 1-2 of *ComJn* were written either contemporaneously with, or just before, *De Prin.*: Marguerite Harl, *Origne et la fonction rvlatrice du Verbe incarn*, Patristica Sorbonensia 2 (Paris: ditions du Seuil, 1958), 121.

³⁵ Heine, *Origen*, 83.

³⁶ Eusebius, *EH (EH)* 6.24.1-3 (LCL 265:71-3). Eusebius lists the following works: *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, *Commentary on Genesis*, *Commentary on Psalms 1-25*, *Commentary on Lamentations*, *De Principiis*, *On the Resurrection*, and *Stromateis*. Eusebius also indicates that Origen began work on the *Hexapla* while still in Alexandria: *EH* 6.16.

³⁷ The privileging of John's Gospel was by no means confined to Alexandria. See, for example, *Adversus Praxean* 21-5, which reads almost like a commentary on the Gospel of John.

“But that John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the Gospels, was urged on by his disciples, and, divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel.”³⁸ Origen himself states, “We might dare say, then, that the Gospels are the firstfruits of all the Scriptures, but that the firstfruits of the Gospels is that according to John, whose meaning no one may understand who has not leaned on Jesus’ breast nor received Mary from Jesus to be his mother also.”³⁹ Heine notes that Origen does not allegorize anything contained in the first five verses of John’s Gospel.⁴⁰ This restraint on Origen’s part is somewhat surprising, especially given his fondness for allegorizing. What leads him to restraint here? It is likely that he shared the opinion of Clement that John’s was a spiritual Gospel, that it soared above the rudimentary foundations laid by the synoptics. If John’s Gospel already led people to contemplate the spiritual—the very goal of allegory, there was no need to allegorize.⁴¹

Ambrose and the Anti-Valentinian Context

Origen produced the *ComJn* at the request of his patron Ambrose, whom he addresses at multiple points in the *Commentary*.⁴² Although Origen does not refer to Ambrose by name, he speaks of someone urging him to examine the Gospel of John.⁴³

³⁸ Eusebius, *EH* 6.14.7 (trans. LCL 265:49).

³⁹ Origen, *ComJn* 1.23 (trans. FC 80:38). See also *ComJn* 1.21.

⁴⁰ Heine, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴¹ Although not related, I suspect that something similar to this is happening in Basil’s refusal to allegorize in his *Hexaemeral Homilies*.

⁴² For references to Ambrose, see: Origen, *ComJn* 1.9, 2.1, 6.6, 13.1, 20.1, 28.6, 32.2.

⁴³ Origen, *ComJn* 1.21: “But I think that John’s Gospel, which you have enjoined us to examine to the best of our ability, is the firstfruits of the Gospels. It speaks of him whose descent is traced, and begins from him who is without a genealogy” (ἀπαρχὴν τῶν εὐαγγελίων εἶναι τὸ προστεταγμένον ἡμῖν ὑπὸ σοῦ

Eusebius tells us that Ambrose supplied Origen with multiple stenographers and copyists, a luxury he would not have enjoyed without his patron.⁴⁴ Eusebius also writes the following about Ambrose: “At this time also Ambrose, who held the views of the heresy of Valentinus, was refuted by the truth as presented by Origen, and, as if his mind were illuminated by light, gave his adhesion to the true doctrine as taught by the Church.”⁴⁵ Jerome, however, suggests that Ambrose was a follower of Marcion before being converted by Origen.⁴⁶ Heine argues that Eusebius was correct and that, as an Alexandrian, it is more likely that Ambrose would have been a follower of Valentinus than of Marcion.⁴⁷

Sinec Ambrose had only recently converted from Valentinianism, it is no surprise that he commissioned Origen to write a commentary on the Gospel of John.⁴⁸ It is likely that in addition to supplying Origen with stenographers and copyists, Ambrose provided Origen with a copy of Heracleon’s Valentinian commentary on the Gospel of John.⁴⁹ The

κατὰ δύναμιν ἐρευνῆσαι, τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην, τὸν γενεαλογούμενον εἰπὸν καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀγενεαλογήτου ἀρχόμενον). Translation from FC 80:121; Greek from SC 120:68.

⁴⁴ Eusebius, *EH* 6.23.1-2 (LCL 265:69). See also Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 61.3.

⁴⁵ Eusebius, *EH* 6.18.1 (trans. LCL 265:55).

⁴⁶ Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 56.1. “ambrosius, primum marcionites, dein ab origene correctus, ecclesiae diaconus et confessionis dominicae gloria insignis fuit.” Latin from Jerome and Gennadius, *Hieronymus: liber De viris inlustribus; Gennadius: liber De viris inlustribus.*, ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 14 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1896), 34. Jerome repeats this claim that Ambrose was a follower of Marcion in *De viris illustribus* 61.3.

⁴⁷ Heine, “Introduction,” 6 n. 22.

⁴⁸ Eusebius, *EH* 6.18.1 (LCL 265:55); Heine, *Origen*, 95.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 91. See also Heine’s discussion of Heracleon and the *Tripartite Tractate*: Heine, “Introduction,” 23–26.

Gospel of John was a favorite gospel of Valentinians.⁵⁰ Irenaeus' record of the teaching of Ptolemaeus the Valentinian focuses on the opening verses of John's Gospel.⁵¹ In Irenaeus' account, Ptolemaeus focused on many of the same Christological titles that Origen dwells on at length in the opening books of *ComJn*.⁵²

Although the refutation of Heracleon's Valentinian commentary on the Gospel of John is ostensibly the motivation for Origen's composition of *ComJn*, there are only two references to Heracleon's commentary in the first two books of *ComJn*. The first reference to Heracleon does not occur until about halfway through book two of *ComJn*.⁵³ Heine argues that despite the scant references to Heracleon in books 1-2 of *ComJn*, Origen is still addressing Valentinian views.⁵⁴ As Irenaeus' account of Ptolemaeus' teaching shows, the interpretation of ἀρχή was a critical part of the Valentinian

⁵⁰ Elaine H. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 17 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), 16–7. T. E. Pollard suggests that one reason there is little explicit quotation of the Gospel by proto-orthodox Christians before the end of the second century is that the Gospel was used heavily by Gnostics. See his *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, Society for New Testament Studies; Monograph Series 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 24–5.

⁵¹ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.8.5. I use the term “Valentinian” here, as elsewhere, fully aware that it is perhaps an oversimplification. To be sure, the fragments we have that are thought to accurately reflect the thought of Valentinus himself lack many of the features of later “Valentinians.” Thus, we ought not assume that all who are called “Valentinians” are representative of the thought of Valentinus. See Heine, *Origen*, 53–4. See also the thorough treatment of Valentinianism and all of the attendant complexities in Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the Valentinians*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 60 (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

⁵² Among those Irenaeus discusses in *Adversus haereses* 1.8.5 are the following: beginning, life, logos, truth, God.

⁵³ Origen, *ComJn* 2.100-4. Here Origen is refuting Heracleon's interpretation of John 1:3: “All things were made through him.” Shortly afterward, Origen refutes Heracleon's interpretation of John 1:4: “What was made in him was life.” For an examination of all of Heracleon's fragments in *ComJn*, see Heracleon, *The Fragments of Heracleon: Newly Edited from the Mss. with an Introduction and Notes*, ed. Alan England Brooke, 1st Gorgias Press ed, Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, 1, no. 4 (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2004). Note, however, that Brooke's numbering of the text does not match that of Blanc and Thümmel, since his text was produced well before the newer critical editions.

⁵⁴ Heine, *Origen*, 92.

understanding of the Ogdoad.⁵⁵ Origen's fixation on determining the proper meaning of ἀρχή in book one of *ComJn* is most likely intended to guard against Valentinian interpretations.⁵⁶ However, Origen's discussions of ἀρχή also have utility for anti-monarchian polemic.

Monarchianism and Book 1 of the *Commentary on John*

At multiple points in *ComJn*, Origen bemoans the fact that many people have unduly fixated on the title *Logos* for Christ. He wishes that they would consider it as one title among many. He states,

But let us consider more carefully what the Word is which is in the beginning. I frequently marvel when I consider the things said about the Christ by some who wish to believe in him. Why in the world, when countless names are applied to the Savior, do they pass by most of them in silence? Even if they should perhaps remember them, they do not interpret them in their proper sense, but say that these name him figuratively. On the other hand, they stop in the case of the title "Word" alone, as if they say that the Christ of God is "Word" alone; and they do not investigate, consistent with the rest of the names, the meaning of what is indicated by the term "Word."⁵⁷

After surveying the many titles ascribed to Christ, he further specifies what troubles him about his opponents' fixation on the title *Logos*:

⁵⁵ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.8.5. So also Heine, *Origen*, 94–5.

⁵⁶ For a good example, see *ComJn* 1.111–8, where Origen's discussion is concentrated on terms important for Valentinian pleromatology: *arche*, *logos*, *sophia*, and *demiourgos*. While the Valentinians took all of these terms to represent different Aeons, Origen collapses all of them together and unifies them in the Son. This move is almost assuredly motivated by his opposition to the Valentinian exegesis of the prologue to the Gospel of John.

⁵⁷ Origen, *ComJn* 1.125 (trans. FC 80:59–60): "Ἰδωμεν δ' ἐπιμελέστερον τίς ὁ ἐν αὐτῇ λόγος. Θαυμάζειν μοι πολλάκις ἐπέρχεται σκοποῦντι τὰ ὑπὸ τινων πιστεύειν εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν βουλομένων λεγόμενα περὶ αὐτοῦ, τί δήποτε δυσεξαριθμήτων ὀνομάτων τασσομένων ἐπὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τὰ μὲν πλεῖστα παρασιωπῶσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἴ ποτε μνήμη αὐτῶν γένοιτο, μεταλαμβάνουσιν οὐ κυρίως ἀλλὰ τροπικῶς τὰῦτα αὐτὸν ὀνομάζεσθαι, ἐπὶ δὲ μόνης τῆς λόγος προσηγορίας ἰστάμενοι οἰονεὶ «λόγον» μόνον φασὶν εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐχὶ ἀκολούθως τοῖς λοιποῖς τῶν ὀνομαζομένων ἐρευνῶσι τοῦ σημαينوμένου τὴν δύναμιν ἐκ τῆς «λόγος» φωνῆς. Greek from SC 120:124.

It is worthwhile to consider those who disregard so many names and treat this one as special. And again they look for an explanation in the case of the other names, if someone brings them to their attention, but in the case of this one they believe they have a clear answer to what the Son of God is, when he is named Word. This is especially obvious since they continually use this verse, ‘My heart uttered a good word,’ (Ps. 44:2 LXX) as though they think the Son of God is an expression of the Father occurring in syllables. And in accordance with this view, if we inquire of them carefully, they do not give him ὑπόστασιν, neither do they make clear his οὐσίαν. I do not yet mean that it is this or that, but in what manner he has οὐσίαν. For it is impossible for anyone to understand a proclaimed word to be a son. Let them declare to us that God the Word is such a word, having life in himself, and either is not separated from the Father and, in accordance with this position, does not subsist (μὴ ὑφ’εστάναι) nor is he a son, or is both separated and invested with *ousia*.⁵⁸

Scholars have suggested multiple possibilities for Origen’s opponents in this passage.

Often drawing on a passage from Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 2.28.5, some have argued that Origen is addressing Valentinian positions here.⁵⁹ Others have suggested that Origen

⁵⁸ Origen, *ComJn* 1.151-2 (trans. FC 80:64-5 with modifications). Καὶ ἔστιν ἄξιον ἐπιστῆσαι τοῖς τὰ τοσαῦτα τῶν ὀνομαζομένων παραπεμπομένοις καὶ τούτῳ ὡς ἐξαιρέτῳ χρωμένοις καὶ πάλιν ἐπ’ ἐκείνοις μὲν διήγησιν ζητοῦσιν, εἰ τις αὐτοῖς προσάγοι αὐτά, ἐπὶ δὲ τούτῳ ὡς σαφὲς προσιεμένοις τὸ τί ποτὲ ἔστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὀνομαζόμενος, καὶ μάλιστα ἐπεὶ συνεχῶς χρῶνται τῷ· «Ἐξηρεύζατο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν», οἰόμενοι προφορὰν πατρικὴν οἶονεῖ ἐν συλλαβαῖς κειμένην εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ὑπόστασιν αὐτῷ, εἰ ἀκριβῶς αὐτῶν πυνθανοίμεθα, οὐ διδῶσιν οὐδὲ οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ σαφηνίζουσιν, οὐδέπω φαμὲν τοιάνδε ἢ τοιάνδε, ἀλλ’ ὅπως ποτὲ οὐσίαν. (152.) Λόγον γὰρ ἀπαγγελλόμενον υἱὸν εἶναι νοῆσαι καὶ τῷ τυχόντι ἔστιν ἀμήχανον. Καὶ λόγον τοιοῦτον καθ’ αὐτὸν ζῶντα καὶ ἦτοι οὐ κεχωρισμένον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο τῷ μὴ ὑφ’εστάναι οὐδὲ υἱὸν τυγχάνοντα ἢ καὶ κεχωρισμένον καὶ οὐσιωμένον ἀπαγγελλέτωσαν ἡμῖν θεὸν λόγον. Greek from SC 120:134-6.

⁵⁹ See Ilaria Ramelli, “Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis,” *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 3 (2012): 313–4; Christoph Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 62–3; Cécile Blanc in Origen, *Commentaire sur Saint Jean*, 1 (livres I - V):136. Blanc suggests that Irenaeus’ report in *Adversus haereses* 2.28.5 elucidates Origen’s passage. Irenaeus writes, “But ye pretend to set forth His generation from the Father, and ye transfer the production of the word of men which takes place by means of a tongue to the Word of God, and thus are righteously exposed by your own selves as knowing neither things human nor divine” (Vos autem generationem eius ex patre divinantes et verbi hominum per linguam factam prolationem transferentes in verbum Dei, iuste detegimini a vobis ipsis quod neque humana neque divina noveritis). Trans. ANF 1.400-1; Latin from Irenaeus, *Contre les hérésies: Livre II*, ed. Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 294 (Paris: Cerf, 1982), 282. Ronald Heine has recently supported this view and shown how Ptolemaeus appears to have focused on the term *logos*, according to Irenaeus’ report in *Adversus haereses* 1.8.5. He argues that this focus would make sense of Origen’s comments in *ComJn* 1.125. See Heine, *Origen*, 94–6. Elsewhere, however, Heine notes that the interpretation of Psalm 44:2 was a point of disagreement between the “Logos theologians” and the “modalists.” See Heine, “The Christology of Callistus,” 64.

is addressing a monarchian reading of Psalm 44:2 (LXX).⁶⁰ Ronald Heine writes, “The difference between the Logos theologians and the modalists lay in the definition of the Logos as either substantial or insubstantial, and this difference was debated exegetically, as both Tertullian and Origen show, in relation to Ps. 44:2.”⁶¹ The latter group of scholars often notes that Origen appears to be addressing both the position of the monarchians and the teaching of someone like Tertullian.⁶² Part of the difficulty of determining the identity of Origen’s opponents in this passage is that Origen’s interpretation takes place within a crowded polemical landscape. We know that the monarchians relied heavily on passages from the Gospel of John, especially John 10:30 and 14:8-10.⁶³ At the beginning of the *Dialogue with Heraclides*, Heraclides quotes John 1:1-3 as a statement of his belief, thus demonstrating that the Johannine prologue could also be a focal point for someone who

⁶⁰ Antonio Orbe, in agreement with Eugenio Corsini, shows the parallels between Origen’s opponents and monarchian exegesis before suggesting that Origen also “has his sights set on a domestic exegesis, like that of Tertullian.” See Orbe, “Orígenes y los Monarquianos,” 54–6; Origen, *Commento al Vangelo di Giovanni*, ed. and trans. Eugenio Corsini, *Classici della filosofia* 3 (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1968), 160–1, n. 45. Thümmel notes the similarity to monarchianism: *Origenes’ Johanneskommentar, Buch I-V*, 221–2. In his earlier article, Heine, following Orbe, argues that Origen appears to be addressing the positions of both the monarchians and someone like Tertullian in this passage (“The Christology of Callistus,” 65–6). Perhaps the various solutions are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, Tertullian’s attribution of a similar interpretation of Ps. 44:2 to the monarchians in *Adversus Praxeum* is the closest parallel to Origen’s passage that we have. Therefore, it is probable that Origen was addressing the monarchians in this passage. On the other hand, the resonances with the passages from *Adversus haereses* describing Valentinianism are evocative and should not be dismissed.

⁶¹ Heine, “The Christology of Callistus,” 64.

⁶² The part of the “domestic exegesis” of someone like Tertullian that Origen would find troublesome is that it can be considered a two-stage Logos theology. For example, Tertullian speaks of the “perfect nativity of the Word” (*nativitas perfecta sermonis dum ex Deo procedit*) occurring when God says “*Fiat lux*” in Gen. 1:3. See, *Adversus Praxeum* 7.1 (*Tertulliani Opera: Pars II*, ed. A Kroymann and Ernest Evans, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 2 [Turnholt: Brepols, 1954], 1165). Tertullian’s exegesis would be problematic for Origen because he wants to stress that the Son has always been alongside the Father. See *De prin.* 1.2.2; *ComJn* 10.246. Behr draws attention to Origen’s insistence that the Son has always been with the Father: (*The Way to Nicaea*, 185, 193).

⁶³ See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 4.7, 7.1, and 7.4-5; Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeum* 20.1; Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.1, 28.1-5.

subscribed to monarchian views.⁶⁴ We also know that the Johannine prologue was a focal point of Valentinian theology.⁶⁵ Even more, the Gospel of John was important for theologians like Origen and Tertullian, who worked to refute both Valentinianism and monarchianism.⁶⁶ In short, the Gospel of John was central to the theology of many of the major Christians groups at the beginning of the third century.⁶⁷ In what follows, I focus on one side of the polemical context (anti-monarchian) of books 1-2 of Origen's *ComJn*, which focus on the opening verses of John's Gospel.⁶⁸

After the passage quoted above, Origen repeats that these opponents interpret the title *Logos* literally although they understand many of the other titles of Christ figuratively.⁶⁹ Later, after another lengthy excursus on the names of Christ, Origen again punctuates his discussion by countering the claims of his opponents, saying,

We have said all these things wishing to show the random and unexamined procedure followed by many interpreters. Although so many names are applied to Christ, they stop with the term 'Word' alone, and do not investigate why 'the Son of God' has been recorded to be the Word, God, who was in the beginning with the Father, through whom all things came into being.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides* 1.

⁶⁵ As demonstrated, for example, in Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.8.5.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeum* 20-5. In these chapters, Tertullian relies heavily on the Gospel of John to articulate his position against that of the Praxeans.

⁶⁷ T. E. Pollard writes, "I believe that it was St John's Gospel, with its Logos-concept in the Prologue and its emphasis on the Father-Son relationship, that raised in a most acute way the problems which led the church to formulate her doctrines of the trinity and of the person of Christ" (*Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, xi).

⁶⁸ I leave aside the discussion of Origen's anti-Valentinian motive here in order to keep this chapter focused and concise.

⁶⁹ Origen, *ComJn* 1.154.

⁷⁰ Origen, *ComJn* 1.266 (trans. FC 80:88): Ταῦτα δὲ ἡμῖν πάντα εἴρηται τὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἀποκληρωτικὸν καὶ ἀβασάνιστον ἐλέγξει βουλομένοις, ὅτι τοσούτων ὀνομάτων εἰς αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένων ἴστανται ἐπὶ μόνῃς τῆς «λόγος» ὀνομασίας, οὐκ ἐξετάζοντες, τί δὴποτε λόγος εἶναι θεὸς ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, ἀναγράφεται «<ὁ> υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ». Greek from SC 120:194.

Again, the problem is that is opponents privilege the title *Logos* and do not consider the reason the Son is called *Logos*.

At the end of book one of *ComJn*, Origen returns to interpretation of Ps. 44:2 and says that his opponents cite it frequently as if they understood it.⁷¹ Origen does not give us more detail about his opponents' interpretation of this verse, only complaining that they interpret literally the word mentioned in it as an expression occurring in syllables.⁷² Tertullian, however, discusses Ps. 44:2 at multiple points in *Adversus Praxean*. He himself uses this verse to describe the generation of the Son and summarizes his opponents' position: "For what, you will say, is a word except voice and oral sound and (as the grammarians' tradition has it) smitten air intelligible in the hearing, for the rest an empty something, void and incorporeal?"⁷³ Later, when Tertullian takes up this psalm again, he clarifies the monarchian position:

Just as I allege as spoken by God, *My heart hath disgorged a good Word*, against this do you object that God somewhere said, *My heart hath disgorged myself as a good word*, so that he himself may be both he who disgorged and what he disgorged, himself both he who brought forth and he who was brought forth, if he himself is Word and God.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Origen, *ComJn* 1.280.

⁷² Again, see *ComJn* 1.151 for those who interpret *Logos* as an "expression of God occurring in syllables" (trans. FC 80:64).

⁷³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 7.6 (trans. Evans, 137-8): *Quid est enim, dices, sermo, nisi uox et sonus oris et, sicut grammatici tradunt, aer offensus intellegibilis auditu, ceterum uacuum nescio quid et inane et incorporeale?* Latin from CCSL 2:1166.

⁷⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.2 (trans. Evans, 143): *Sicut ego profero dictum a Deo: Eructauit cor meum sermonem optimum, haec tu contra opponas alicubi dixisse Deum: 'Eructauit me cor meum sermonem optimum', ut ipse sit qui et eructauit et quod eructauit et ipse qui protulerit et qui prolatus sit si ipse est et sermo et deus.* Latin from CCSL 2:1170-1.

Heine ably treats these passages in his article on Callistus' Christology, detailing the philosophical underpinnings of monarchian teaching on the *Logos* as it relates to Psalm 44:2:⁷⁵

If we view the statement in Ps. 44:2 from a Stoic standpoint, then the exegetical argument of the modalists becomes clear. The Stoics distinguished between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (reason) and λόγος προφορικός (speech). Ps. 44:2 is clearly about the latter.... Consequently when the term *Logos* was used of Christ in the sense of λόγος προφορικός it could only refer to a spoken word (φωνή, *vox* or *sonus oris*) from a Stoic standpoint. And this is precisely what Tertullian and Origen accuse the modalists of saying in their exegesis of Ps. 44:2.⁷⁶

It is most likely to this interpretation of Psalm 44:2 that Origen is referring when he speaks of those who think the Son is an expression of the Father occurring in syllables.

Heine notes that the Stoic understanding of *Logos* used by the monarchians was unpalatable to Origen, Tertullian, and the author of the *Refutatio* because it treated *Logos* as a category of speech, not a category of ontology.⁷⁷ Tertullian complains that his opponents' understanding of the word makes it "void and incorporeal" (*inane et incorporale*) and counters that what proceeds from substance must have substance.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Heine also notes that the foregrounding of the *Logos* concept in Callistus' theology is probably the work of the author of the *Refutatio*. Heine argues that spirit was probably a more important concept for Callistus' theology. See "The Christology of Callistus," 64.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 66. Note, however, that Mark J. Edwards does not think this distinction was as much of a Stoic commonplace as some posit: "Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the *Logos*," *Vigiliae Christianae* 54, no. 2 (2000): 161–2.

⁷⁷ Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 66.

⁷⁸ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 7.6. Note also that Tertullian's materialist understanding of God as spirit is probably influencing his critique here. See René Braun, *Deus christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, 2nd ed., Collection des Études augustiniennes 70 (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1977), 149.

Origen's characterization of his opponents' error fits well with Tertullian's testimony. Recall that in the passage I quoted above, Origen wrote that his opponents interpreted Psalm 44:2

as though they think the Son of God is an expression of the Father occurring in syllables. And in accordance with this view, if we inquire of them carefully, they do not give him ὑπόστασιν, neither do they make clear his οὐσίαν. I do not yet mean that it is this or that, but in what manner he has οὐσίαν. For it is impossible for anyone to understand a proclaimed word to be a son. Let them declare to us that God the Word is such a word, having life in himself, and either is not separated from the Father and, in accordance with this position, does not subsist (μὴ ὑφεστάναι) nor is he a son, or is both separated and invested with *ousia*.⁷⁹

Origen criticizes his opponents for denying *ousia* to the *prophora*, which is here the *Logos*.⁸⁰ This criticism is very similar to Tertullian's complaint that his opponents understand the Word as something "void and incorporeal."⁸¹ The Stoicized *Logos* theology of their opponents allowed them to interpret the *Logos* as something without a distinct existence or substance.

This background for the interpretation of Psalm 44:2 elucidates why Origen and Tertullian are concerned with it. When substance is denied to the *Logos*, it is much easier to claim that the *Logos* is not distinct from the Father. An indistinct *Logos* easily allows for the assertion that the Father and the Son are "one and the same."⁸² This fact is

⁷⁹ Origen, *ComJn* 1.151-2 (trans. FC 80:64-5 with modifications). οἰόμενοι προφορὰν πατρικὴν οἰοῦναι ἐν συλλαβαῖς κειμένην εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ὑπόστασιν αὐτῷ, εἰ ἀκριβῶς αὐτῶν πυνθανοίμεθα, οὐ διδόασιν οὐδὲ οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ σαφηνίζουσιν, οὐδέπω φαμέν τοιάνδε ἢ τοιάνδε, ἀλλ' ὅπως ποτὲ οὐσίαν. (152.) Λόγον γὰρ ἀπαγγελλόμενον υἱὸν εἶναι νοῆσαι καὶ τῷ τυχόντι ἐστὶν ἀμήχανον. Καὶ λόγον τοιοῦτον καθ' αὐτὸν ζῶντα καὶ ἥτοι οὐ κεχωρισμένον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο τῷ μὴ ὑφεστάναι οὐδὲ υἱὸν τυγχάνοντα ἢ καὶ κεχωρισμένον καὶ οὐσιωμένον ἀπαγγελλέτωσαν ἡμῖν θεὸν λόγον. Greek from SC 120:134-6.

⁸⁰ As I note later, Origen appears to be guarding against just the sort of tendency in his discussion of wisdom in *De principiis* 1.2.2.

⁸¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 7.6

⁸² For the monarchian contention that the Father and Son are one and the same, see especially *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.10.11-12; Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3: *maxime haec quae se existimat*

especially clear when Tertullian taunts his opponents to change the wording of the Psalm so that they have a passage that supports their position: “My heart hath disgorged *myself* as a good word.”⁸³ Tertullian’s opponents do not allow for any distinction between the one speaking and the thing being spoken; they are one and the same. Origen appears to be addressing a similar problem when he writes, “Let them declare to us that God the Word is such a word, having life in himself, and either is not separated from the Father and, in accordance with this position, does not subsist (μὴ ὑφεστάναι) nor is he a son, or is both separated and invested with *ousia*.”⁸⁴ For Origen, if the *Logos* is not separated (οὐ κεχωρισμένον) or distinct from the Father, he does not subsist (μὴ ὑφεστάναι) and, therefore, cannot be a son. Conversely, if the *Logos* is separate from the Father, he has *ousia* (οὐσιωμένον).⁸⁵ The problem is that in the monarchian exegesis, the προφοράν is merely syllables and is denied ὑπόστασιν or οὐσίαν; the Son does not have distinct existence alongside the Father.

meram veritatem possidere dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat (CCSL 2:1161).

⁸³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.2 (italics mine). Note the subtle shift between the Latin text of the Psalm, *Eructavit cor meum sermonem optimum* and the modified version Tertullian puts on the lips of his opponents, *Eructavit me cor meum sermonem optimum*. (Latin from CCSL 2:1171).

⁸⁴ Origen, *ComJn* 1.152 (trans. FC 80:64-5 with modifications): Καὶ λόγον τοιοῦτον καθ’ αὐτὸν ζῶντα καὶ ἦτοι οὐ κεχωρισμένον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο τῷ μὴ ὑφεστάναι οὐδὲ υἱὸν τυγχάνοντα ἢ καὶ κεχωρισμένον καὶ οὐσιωμένον ἀπαγγελλέτωσαν ἡμῖν θεὸν λόγον. Greek from SC 120:136-8.

⁸⁵ Origen gives us a rough summary of his opponents’ interpretation of Psalm 44:2, but he does not elaborate on their teaching. From *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*, however, we know that the monarchians denied that there was any distinction between the Father and the Son. Consider the saying Hippolytus attributes to the Noetians: “You see, brethren, how rash and reckless a doctrine they introduced in saying quite shamelessly, ‘The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son; he himself was born, he himself suffered, he himself raised himself up!’” See *Contra Noetum* 3.2 (trans. Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, ed. Robert Butterworth, Heythrop Monographs 2 (London: Heythrop College [University of London], 1977), 48.).

Origen returns to this Psalm repeatedly in the first book of his commentary on the Gospel of John because it was an integral piece of the monarchian contention that the Word was, in fact, not an existent distinct from the Father. Furthermore, one of the reasons Origen downplays the significance of Word as a title for Christ in book one of *ComJn* is this prominent exegetical trend of his monarchian opponents.⁸⁶ Thus, Origen spends so much time discussing every title of Christ but *Logos* in his commentary on the opening verse of John's gospel, which is the *locus classicus* for *Logos* Christology. As is clear elsewhere, Origen was certainly not averse to developing a *Logos* Christology, but he deemphasized it in this instance to counter the monarchian usage of the term. Origen, of course, does not completely pass up this opportunity to speak about the Word. In book two of *ComJn*, he argues that all rational creatures are rational insofar as they participate in the *Logos*. See especially the section on participation starting in 2.16. He is not willing to relinquish such an important Christological title to his opponents, but he can develop an alternative to combat what he views as their mistaken interpretation of *Logos*.

⁸⁶ As I noted above in my summary of scholarship, the Valentinian usage of *Logos* surely contributed to Origen's de-emphasis of it as well. A few scholars have noticed the importance of Wisdom as a Christological title in Origen, but they do not consider the function of Wisdom as a response to monarchianism. See A. H. B. Logan, "Origen and Alexandrian Wisdom Christology," in *Origeniana Tertia: The Third International Colloquium for Origen Studies, University of Manchester, September 7th-11th, 1981*, ed. Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985), 123-29; W. Ullmann, "Die Sophia-Lehre des Origenes im 1 Buch seines Johanneskommentars," *Studia Patristica* 16.2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985), 271-78; Miyako Demura, "Origen on Sophia in Contra Celsum: The Double Understandings of the Wisdom of Solomon 7:27," in *Origeniana Quinta: Papers of the 5th International Origen Congress, Boston College, 14-18 August 1989* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 174-78; Michel Fédou, *La sagesse et le monde: Essai sur la christologie d'Origène*, Collection "Jésus et Jésus-Christ" 64 (Paris: Desclée, 1995). Behr writes that in books 1-2 of *ComJn*, Origen pays the most attention "to the designation of Jesus as the 'Word,' for, as mentioned earlier, Origen is particularly concerned about those who refrain from investigating 'the meaning of what is indicated by the term 'Word,'" so that they do not have to affirm the independent subsistence of the Son (*ComJn*. 1.125, 151)." See Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, 182. As I argue in what follows, despite the few passages where Origen complains of his opponents' misinterpretation of the title *Logos*, he downplays it in favor of the title *Sophia*.

Where we would expect to find lengthy meditations on Christ as *Logos*, we see Origen suggest that Wisdom is perhaps the most proper name for the Son. When Origen does discuss the Son as *Logos* in book one of *ComJn*, he locates *Logos* in Wisdom. He states, “And if we should carefully consider all the concepts applied to him, he is the beginning only insofar as he is wisdom. He is not even the beginning insofar as he is the Word, since ‘the Word’ was ‘in the beginning,’ so that someone might say boldly that wisdom is older than all the concepts in the names of the firstborn of creation.”⁸⁷

Origen’s de-emphasis of *Logos* is not confined to *ComJn*. In his discussion of Christ in *De Prin.* 1.2, Origen begins with a discussion of the names of applied to Christ. Instead of *Logos*, Origen focuses on Christ as Wisdom.⁸⁸ He then quickly adds, “Let no one think, however, that when we give him the name ‘wisdom of God’ we mean anything without substance (*aliquid insubstantivum*).”⁸⁹ It appears that Origen made this comment to guard against the same problem he saw in the monarchian exegesis of Psalm 44:2 that he addressed in *ComJn*, namely, that they denied the Son substantiality and distinction from the Father. Origen discusses Christ as *Logos* in *De Prin.* only after he has considered him as Wisdom. Although Origen locates *Logos* within Wisdom in book 1 of

⁸⁷ Origen, *ComJn* 1.118 (trans. FC 80:58): Καὶ ἐὰν ἐπιμελῶς ἐξετάζωμεν αὐτοῦ πάσας τὰς ἐπινοίας, μόνον κατὰ τὸ εἶναι σοφία ἀρχὴ ἐστίν, οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸ εἶναι λόγος ἀρχὴ τυχάνων, εἶγε «ὁ λόγος ἐν ἀρχῇ» ἢ ὥς εἰπεῖν ἂν τινα τεθαρρηκότως <ὥς> πρεσβύτερον πάντων τῶν ἐπινοουμένων ταῖς ὀνομασίαις τοῦ πρωτοτόκου πάσης κτίσεώς ἐστίν ἡ σοφία. Greek from SC 120:120. In the sections preceding this one, Origen discusses the role of Wisdom in creation. He also discusses the relationship between *Logos* and Wisdom, although his discussion is not terribly clear.

⁸⁸ Origen, *De Prin.* 1.2.

⁸⁹ Origen, *De Prin.* 1.2.2 (trans. Butterworth, 15 with modifications): “Nemo tamen putet aliquid nos insubstantivum dicere, cum eum dei sapientiam nominamus.” Latin from Origen, *Traité des principes*, ed. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, vol. 1, Sources chrétiennes 252 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 112. Butterworth translates *aliquid insubstantivum* as “anything without hypostatic existence.” This translation, however, could be over-determined because we are not sure that *hypostasis* was in the original Greek.

ComJn, he viewed both Wisdom and *Logos* as proper titles for the Son, titles that would have been appropriate even if humans had not fallen.⁹⁰

In both *ComJn* and *De Prin.*, Origen interprets ἀρχή in John 1:1 as a reference to the ἀρχή in Proverbs 8:22ff, where Wisdom is said to have been with God before creation. By means of Pr. 8:22, which itself echoes the opening words of Genesis in the LXX, Origen explicitly links Wisdom with demiurgic functions, even claiming that Wisdom contains within herself all of the forms of what would be created.⁹¹ In *De Prin.*, he asks if any pious person could consider the Father to have ever existed without Wisdom by his side.⁹² Later in book one of *ComJn*, Origen stresses that the Wisdom of God “is above all creation” (τὴν ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν κτίσιν σοφίαν τοῦ θεοῦ).⁹³ Thus, not only has Origen argued that Wisdom is not something insubstantial, he has also argued that Wisdom has been alongside of, and distinct from, the Father from the beginning, that the Father has never been without Wisdom.⁹⁴

At the beginning of book two, Origen addresses views that are surely monarchian. He writes,

⁹⁰ Origen, *ComJn* 1.124. Origen’s point here is that, in the absence of the fall, Christ would not have needed to be “physician” or “shepherd.” In the absence of the fall, however, Christ would have still been Wisdom and Word.

⁹¹ Origen, *ComJn* 1.111ff; *De Prin.* 1.2.3.

⁹² Origen, *De Prin.* 1.2.2.

⁹³ Origen, *ComJn* 1.244-6 (Greek from SC 120:180).

⁹⁴ Note that Tertullian does something very similar to this in his reading of Proverbs 8:22 in *Adversus Praxean* 6. There, he speaks of Wisdom being “established as a second person (*secundam personam*).” For both Tertullian and Origen, the description of Wisdom as being with God in creation provides ample grounds to assert that there was another (person, being, thing?) with God at creation. As I noted above, however, Origen probably disagreed with the fact that Tertullian thought that the Word only achieved a perfect nativity when God spoke the first words in creation. The way Origen speaks of Wisdom as alongside the Father *prior* to creation serves as a good refutation of Tertullian’s position that the Word only achieved perfect nativity when God spoke in creation.

Many people who wish to be pious are troubled because they are afraid that they may proclaim two Gods (δύο ἀναγορεύσαι θεοὺς) and, for this reason, they fall into false and impious beliefs. They either deny that the individual nature (ιδιότητα) of the Son is other than that of the Father by confessing him to be God whom they refer to as ‘Son’ in name at least, or they deny the divinity of the Son and make his individual nature (ιδιότητα) and essence as an individual (τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν) to be different from the Father.⁹⁵

In this passage, he uses two terms, ιδιότης and περιγραφή, to describe the individuality of the Son.⁹⁶ Without overtly directing it at monarchians, Origen had earlier used περιγραφή to speak about the individuality of the Son.⁹⁷ He begins, “In addition, to signify that the Word has his own individuality, that is to say, lives according to himself....”⁹⁸ He goes on and writes about the “*Logos*... having ὑπόστασιν ‘in the beginning,’ in Wisdom.”⁹⁹ Even when Origen is focusing on the title *Logos*, he employs Wisdom as the basis for articulating the distinct ὑπόστασις or ἰδίαν περιγραφὴν of the Son.

I have argued that Origen’s turn to Wisdom Christology as a means of establishing the individual identity of the Son was due to his rejection of monarchianism in Rome. The monarchians identified the Father and the Son, and their Stoicized

⁹⁵ Origen, *ComJn* 2.16 (trans. FC 80:98): Καὶ τὸ πολλοὺς φιλοθέους εἶναι εὐχομένους ταρασσόν, εὐλαβουμένους δύο ἀναγορεύσαι θεοὺς καὶ παρὰ τοῦτο περὶ πίπτοντας ψευδέσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι δόγμασιν, ἧτοι ἀρνούμενους ιδιότητα υἱοῦ ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμολογοῦντας θεὸν εἶναι τὸν μέχρι ὀνόματος παρ’ αὐτοῖς «υἱὸν» προσαγορευόμενον, ἢ ἀρνούμενους τὴν θεότητα τοῦ υἱοῦ τιθέντας δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ιδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν τυγχάνουσιν ἑτέραν τοῦ πατρὸς. Greek from SC 120:220-2. I examine this passage at length in the next chapter.

⁹⁶ For a good discussion of the use of περιγραφή by Origen and others, see Matthew R. Crawford, “The Triumph of Pro-Nicene Theology over Anti-Monarchian Exegesis: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Heraclea on John 14:10-11,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21, no. 4 (2013): 549–55. Note also my discussion of this term in the section on Clement of Alexandria in chapter one. Clement also used περιγραφή to speak of the distinction of the *Logos* from the Father.

⁹⁷ Origen, *ComJn* 1.291-2.

⁹⁸ Origen, *ComJn* 1.291 (trans. FC 80:94): Καὶ ἔτι εἰς τὸ παραδέξασθαι τὸν λόγον ἰδίαν περιγραφὴν ἔχοντα, οἷον τυγχάνοντα ζῆν καθ’ ἑαυτόν. Greek from SC 120:206.

⁹⁹ Origen, *ComJn* 1.292: λόγος... ἐν ἀρχῇ, τῇ σοφίᾳ, τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχων. Greek from SC 120:206.

understanding of the *Logos* helped support this identification.¹⁰⁰ Their understanding of the *Logos* as a *prophora* from the Father allowed them to deny that the *Logos* had any individual existence of his own. He was merely struck air or sound. This understanding of *Logos* meant that the monarchians did not have to consider the *Logos* as *another* existing alongside the Father.

Accordingly, Origen de-emphasized *Logos* Christology and developed Wisdom Christology in counterpoint to his monarchian opponents. The turn to Wisdom Christology shaped his Christology in two important ways. First, Origen de-emphasized *Logos* as the pre-eminent title of Christ in response to the controversy that the monarchian interpretation of the term had caused. Second, he emphasized Wisdom in his understanding of the Son to counteract the monarchian position: he argued that the Son, as Wisdom, had an individual existence distinct from the Father from the beginning.¹⁰¹ He then described the *Logos* as in the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ), which he identifies with Wisdom, thus communicating to the *Logos* the distinct individual existence he had ascribed to Wisdom. His use of Wisdom Christology was also able to counteract what he most likely viewed as a problem in non-Stoicized *Logos* theologies of someone like Tertullian. Tertullian argued that the *Logos* received “perfect nativity” when God spoke the first words in creation, but for Origen, such an understanding of the *Logos* coming to fully or perfectly exist at a point in time was problematic. He used the concept of Wisdom to argue that the Son preceded creation and indeed was always alongside the

¹⁰⁰ Again, see specifically *ComJn* 151-2 for Origen’s discussion of the reading of Psalm 44:2 that denies *ousia* to the *Logos*.

¹⁰¹ As I have noted above, Origen uses a number of different terms to establish this distinct individual existence: ὑπόστασις, οὐσία, περιγραφή, and ιδιότης, to name a few.

Father.¹⁰² In this way, his Wisdom Christology accomplished something that a de-Stoicized *Logos* theology might not have been able to.

¹⁰² See especially, *De prin.* 1.2.2. See also passages like *ComIn* 10.246, where Origen argues that for a father to be father, he must always have a son. As John Behr astutely notes, Origen was on the early end of those who held that the relationship between the Father and Son is constitutive of the core of their being, and therefore, must always have existed. See Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, 185.

CHAPTER FIVE: ORIGEN THE SUBORDINATIONIST; SUBORDINATION AS A MEANS OF DISTINGUISHING THE FATHER AND SON

Introduction: Anti-Monarchian Subordination in the Early Third Century

Throughout this dissertation I have surveyed various ways of speaking about the relationship between the Father and Son. In the first chapter, I introduced a heuristic to evaluate the ways authors spoke about the distinction between the Father and Son, ranging from “soft” distinction to “hard” distinction. On one end of the spectrum were those authors who distinguished the Father and Son mainly through the consistent use of names and titles.¹ Others were more attentive to distinguishing the Father and Son but left the precise manners of their unity and distinction ambiguous. For example, Clement of Alexandria spoke of the Son as distinct from the Father by means of περιγραφή; and Athenagoras spoke of distinction within the Godhead by means of τάξις.² On the far end of the spectrum was Justin, who argued that the Father and Son were distinct because they were ἕτερος ἐν ἀριθμῷ.³ Even more dramatic is the θεὸς ἕτερος that Justin claims to find in the Old Testament.⁴

¹ Many of the so-called apostolic Fathers fall into this category. See my discussion of “soft distinction” in the first chapter. For example, Clement of Rome consistently uses the title δεσπότης to refer to the Father and the title κύριος to refer to the Son.

² For Clement’s use of περιγραφή, see especially my discussion of *Exc.* 19 in chapter one. For Athenagoras’ use of τάξις language, see *Legatio* 10.5, where he writes, “τὴν ἐν τῇ τάξει διαίρεσιν.”

³ For one of the places Justin makes this claim, see *Dialogue with Trypho* 128.4.

⁴ See *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.11.

At the beginning of the third century, the monarchians claimed that the Father and Son were “one and the same.”⁵ With this claim, they denied that there was any distinction between the Father and Son. For the anti-monarchian writers who opposed them, finding proper means to distinguish the Father and Son was of paramount importance. Like earlier authors, they used the language of alterity and claimed that the Son was “other” (*alius* or ἕτερος) than the Father.⁶ Following the tradition of authors who antedated the monarchian controversy, like Athenagoras, they also spoke of distinction by using the language of order or τάξις.⁷ They used various other terms such as περιγραφή, ιδιότης, ὑπόστασις, οὐσία, and ὑποκείμενον to describe how the Father and Son had existences differentiated from each other. At the beginning of the third century, however, these terms did not yet have fixed, univocal meanings. The anti-monarchian writers used these terms and others to argue for the distinction of the Father and the Son; but they had to offer further explanation to clarify how they were using them.

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the intentional subordination of the Son was a common strategy that anti-monarchian writers used to distinguish the Father and Son during the first half of the third century. By situating their terms for distinction within a subordinationist framework, they were able to clarify how the Father and Son were not “one and the same.” The term subordination is often used by scholars with the negative

⁵ See Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3 and *Refutatio* 9.10.11-2 for prime examples of this claim. Tertullian writes: *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat*. The *Refutatio* records the following language: οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν.

⁶ For examples, see Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.4; Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 11.1, among others.

⁷ See especially Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3-4, where Tertullian uses *gradus* in a manner similar to Athenagoras’ use of τάξις.

evaluative judgment that whatever is deemed subordinationist was a failure to live up to the standards of Nicaea.⁸ I reject this usage as anachronistic when discussing third-century texts and authors and argue, to the contrary, that the subordinationist schemata employed by the authors considered in this chapter were intentionally used to distinguish the Father and Son.⁹ Although subordinationism comes to be viewed as heretical in the post-Nicene period, it was an accepted anti-monarchian strategy among some prominent early third-century authors.

By treating subordination in the context of anti-monarchian polemics, I hope to avoid anachronistic evaluative judgments. Thus, I examine three instances of anti-monarchian subordination in the early third century. First, I examine subordinationist passages from Tertullian and Novatian, whose works were separated by roughly thirty years.¹⁰ Next, I evaluate a key passage from the beginning of book 2 of Origen's *Commentary on John*, which was composed in the years between *Adversus Praxeian* and *De Trinitate*. In order to justify my focus on this passage, I preface it with an appraisal of

⁸ Simonetti notes that scholars often view the subordinationism of a pre-Nicene theologian as something of an embarrassment. He then notes that it is only an embarrassment if we expect the pre-Nicene theologians to have espoused post-Nicene orthodoxy *avant la lettre*. Manlio Simonetti, "Note sulla teologia trinitaria di Origene," *Vetera Christianorum* 8 (1971): 274. It is precisely this sort of embarrassment that drives Christoph Bruns' preoccupation with determining whether Origen's subordinationism was ontological, in his *Trinität und Kosmos: zur Gotteslehre des Origenes*, Adamantiana 3 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2013).

⁹ Geoffrey D. Dunn rightly notes the importance of reading texts within their contemporary contexts, although he has not completely escaped the post-Nicene freight attached to pronouncements of subordinationism. He writes, "The need to read Novatian free from later developments in trinitarian theology is important and for this reason Novatian's work deserves a re-reading. A good historical theologian seeks not to evaluate early theological writings from a later perspective or to use them to prove points in other debates, but to understand them as products of their own environment and to understand them within that environment" ("The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's *De Trinitate*," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 78, no. 4 (2002): 389–90).

¹⁰ For the dating of these texts, see my discussions in the earlier chapters.

the value of Rufinus' translations of Origen's work.¹¹ Finally, I conclude that subordinationist renderings of the Son's relationship to the Father were a key feature in anti-monarchian polemics and that Origen's subordinationist scheme in *ComJn* 2.13-32 is best understood within this context.¹²

Tertullian

Scholars have puzzled over what to make of Tertullian's Trinitarian theology in *Adversus Praxean*. On the one hand, he responds to the monarchian accusations that he separates the Father from the Son by arguing that the Father, Son, and Spirit all share one substance.¹³ On the other hand, some passages in the work strike scholars as undeniably "subordinationist." Eric Osborn has captured the scholarly ambivalence toward Tertullian's Trinitarian theology well: "Criticism of Tertullian's doctrine of the trinity has measured him against later formulations and either applauded or bewailed his achievement. To many he seems to have anticipated Nicaea and later developments, to others he has succumbed to extreme subordinationism."¹⁴ Raniero Cantalamessa judges

¹¹ Specifically, I discuss why I have chosen to privilege *ComJn* over *De Principiis*, which appears to provide a more compact and orderly account of Origen's Trinitarian theology.

¹² Adolf von Harnack rightly observes, "While Adoptianism apparently played a very small part in the development of the Logos Christology in the church, the Christological theses of Tertullian and the rest were completely dependent on the opposition to the Modalists. This reveals itself especially in the strict subordination of the Son to the Father. It was only by such a subordination that it was possible to repel the charge, made by opponents, of teaching that there were two Gods" (*History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 [Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907], 70).

¹³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3-4.

¹⁴ Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 133. He then qualifies this scenario on the same page, "A first reading of *Against Praxeas* suggests that Tertullian has not avoided a division of the divine substance, and more exact scrutiny indicates that he may not have given the son and the spirit a totality of divine substance."

certain aspects of Tertullian's theology to be subordinationist, writing, "The Christ of Tertullian is God in the same way as the Father, but not to the same extent."¹⁵ Similarly, Adhémar d'Alès concludes that in Tertullian's theology, "The divinity of the Father is communicated by degrees to the Son and the Holy Spirit, without detriment to the monarchy."¹⁶ His final judgement is that "the subordinationist flavor of some of the passages is undeniable."¹⁷

In Tertullian's Trinitarian vocabulary in *Adversus Praxean*, there are some words that he consistently uses to denote unity and some that he uses consistently to denote distinction. The following passage, where Tertullian focuses on monarchianism among other heresies, gives a clear example of these terms:

and in particular this one [Monarchianism] which supposes itself to possess truth unadulterated while it thinks it impossible to believe in one God unless it says that both Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one and the same: as though the one <God> were not all <these things> in this way also that they are all of the one, namely by unity of substance, while none the less is guarded the mystery of that economy which disposes the unity into trinity, setting forth Father and Son and Spirit as three, three however not in quality but in sequence, not in substance but in aspect, not in power but in <its> manifestation, yet of one substance and one quality and one power, seeing it is one God from whom those sequences and aspects and manifestations are reckoned out in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. How they admit of plurality without division the discussion will show as it proceeds.¹⁸

¹⁵ Raniero Cantalamessa, *La cristologia di Tertulliano*, Paradosis 18 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Edizioni universitarie Friburgo, 1962), 27: *Il Cristo di Tertulliano è Dio allo stesso modo del Padre, ma non nella stessa misura.*

¹⁶ Adhémar d'Alès, *La théologie de Tertullien*, Bibliothèque de théologie historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1905), 73.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁸ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3-4 (trans. Evans, 132; Latin CCSL 2.2, 1161). *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum Deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat. Quasi non sic quoque unus sit omnia dum ex uno omnia per substantiae scilicet unitatem et nihilominus custodiatur oikonomiae sacramentum, quae unitatem in trinitatem disponit, tres dirigens Patrem et Filium et Spiritum, tres autem non statu sed gradu, nec substantia sed forma, nec potestate sed specie, unius autem substantiae et unius status et unius potestatis quia unus Deus ex quo et gradus isti et formae et species in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti deputantur. <Qui> quomodo numerum sine diuisione patiuntur, procedentes tractatus demonstrabunt.*

In this passage, Tertullian uses *substantia*, *status*, and *postestas* to indicate of what there is one among Father, Son, and Spirit.¹⁹ He distinguishes these latter three by using the terms *gradus*, *forma*, and *species*.²⁰ Of note here is *gradus*, which implies a gradation of the three Trinitarian persons.²¹ In his discussion of *gradus* in Tertullian, Rankin writes, “Here we have the suggestion of a hierarchy in the Godhead, which Tertullian is prepared to accept with the attendant risk of suggesting a notion of subordinationism, for he will do everything he possible [*sic*] can to avoid the greater dangers of modalism.”²²

Elsewhere, Tertullian speaks of an order within the Godhead without the use of *gradus*:

how should God be thought, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit occupying second and third place, while they are to such a degree conjoint of the Father's substance,

¹⁹ Moingt highlights that Tertullian uses *substantia* as a unifying term in *Adversus Praxean*, but he cautions against reading too much into Tertullian's usage. He suggests that in *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian means something like generic unity when he speaks of unity of substance, not something like numerical unity of substance. He further notes that we should not expect Tertullian to have anticipated the philosophical difficulty introduced by Arius. See Joseph Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, vol. 2, *Théologie* 69 (Paris: Aubier, 1966), 395.

²⁰ *Species* is not as important for my argument as *gradus*, but note Moingt's lengthy discussion of Tertullian's use of the *species*: *ibid.*, 2:433–47.

²¹ For a detailed discussion of *substantia*, *status*, and *gradus* in Tertullian, see René Braun, *Deus Christianorum: recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, 2nd ed., Collection des études augustinienes 70 (Paris: Études augustinienes, 1977), 176–207. Note also Moingt's detailed discussion of *gradus*: Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 2:447–78. Moingt notes that from the perspective of God's interaction with the world, Tertullian's use of *gradus* can seem to imply that the Son is posterior and inferior to the Father. Moingt, however, wants to avoid these conclusions (463). These very notions that Moingt finds uncomfortable, however, are precisely the ones that help Tertullian distinguish the Father and Son.

²² David Rankin, “Tertullian's Vocabulary of the Divine ‘Individuals’ in *Adversus Praxean*,” *Sacris Erudiri* 40 (2001): 20. Later, Rankin writes, “In employing *gradus* to distinguish the Persons Tertullian comes perilously close—indeed some might suggest that he cannot avoid it—to a form of subordinationism. Yet, used in conjunction with terms such as *conserti* and *connexus*, and understood against the backdrop of the *oikonomia*, Tertullian is prepared to take this risk in order to expose and oppose the greater danger of Praxeas' modalism” (45). Rankin's analysis here exemplifies the typical scholarly attitude toward pre-Nicene subordinationism. For Rankin, subordinationism is something to be avoided almost at all costs; it is perilous and risky. Tertullian, however, does not appear to share this modern aversion to subordinationist understandings of the Son's relationship to the Father. Even as he describes it as perilous, Rankin can recognize that it was commonplace in pre-Nicene theology: “Subordination is, however, not an unusual feature of Tertullian's concept of the Trinity, as it was not for anyone prior to Nicaea” (43). Rankin overstates his case, for the monarchians had no *other* to subordinate to the Father.

to experience a division and a dispersion such as he does not experience in the plurality of those angels, alien as they are from the Father's substance?²³

This sentence again highlights how Tertullian can at the same time claim unity of substance for the Trinitarian persons and distinction by order or place, a distinction that neither divides nor disperses them. The assignment of second or third place to the Son and Spirit does not necessarily imply subordination, but other instances where Tertullian uses a *taxis* to distinguish the Trinitarian persons lead to the conclusion that the Son and Spirit are somehow less than the Father. Just before the quotation above, Tertullian describes the Son's place in the monarchy by invoking the language of participation. He writes of the Monarchy, "it is not *ipso facto* divided, does not cease to be a monarchy, if the son also is assumed as partner [*particeps*] in it, but it continues to belong in first instance to him by whom it is passed on to the son: and so long as it is his, that continues to be a monarchy which is jointly held by two who are so closely united."²⁴

Tertullian's understanding of the unity of God and monarchy is further elucidated by his description of what would destroy monarchy:

Overthrow of monarchy you should understand as <taking place> when there is superimposed another kingship of its own character and its own quality, and consequently hostile, when another god is introduced to oppose the Creator, as with Marcion, or many gods according to people like Valentinus and Prodicus:

²³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.5 (trans. Evans, 133; Latin CCSL 2.2, 1162): *Quale est ut Deus diuisionem et dispersionem pati uideatur in Filio et in Spiritu sancto, secundum et tertium sortitis locum, tam consortibus substantiae Patris quas non patitur in tot angelorum numero et quidem tam <alienorum> a substantia Patris?*

²⁴ *Adversus Praxean* 3.3 (trans. Evans, 133): *si vero et filius fuerit ei cuius monarchia sit, non statim dividi eam et monarchiam esse desinere si particeps eius adsumatur et filius, sed proinde illius esse principaliter a quo communicatur in filium, et dum illius est proinde monarchiam esse quae a duobus tam unitis continetur.* Joseph Moingt argues that Tertullian's use of a schema of participation does not imply subordination, that the divine power is not degraded. See Joseph Moingt, "Le problème du Dieu unique chez Tertullien," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 44, no. 4 (1970): 355–356. See also idem, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 2:395. As I argue in the following discussion of Origen's use of participation, however, the subordinationist implications of the framework of participation are difficult to escape.

then is it for the overthrow of the monarchy when it is for the destruction of the creator.²⁵

This passage demonstrates how Tertullian understands the economy to work. There is but one monarch who administers the economy through those who share in his rule.²⁶ A monarchy can, by definition, only have one monarch; and the Marcionite dualism destroys this arrangement. In the systems of both Marcion and Valentinus, other deities are often opposed to the rule of the supreme deity. Tertullian's monarchical economy has the Father at the top with the Son and Spirit in the second and third places, respectively. Both the Son and the Spirit work in accord with the will of the Father, thus working from within the monarchy instead of opposing it.

Tertullian next argues for the distinction of the Father and the Son in a discussion of the visibility of the Son.²⁷ He writes,

It will follow that we must understand the Father as invisible because of the fulness of his majesty, but must acknowledge the Son as visible because of the enumeration of his derivation, just as we may not look upon the sun in respect of the total of its substance which is in the sky, though we can with our eyes bear its beam because of the moderation of the assignment which from thence reaches out to the earth.²⁸

²⁵ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.6 (trans. Evans, 133; Latin CCSL 2.2, 1162): *Euersio enim monarchiae illa est tibi intellegenda cum alia dominatio suae condicionis et proprii status ac per hoc aemula superducitur, cum alius deus infertur aduersus creatorem cum Marcione, cum plures, secundum Valentinus et Prodicos: tunc in monarchiae euersionem cum in creatoris destructionem.*

²⁶ Note again, that in *Adversus Praxean* 3.3, quoted on the previous page, Tertullian describes the Son's place in the monarchy by using the language of participation.

²⁷ Recall from the earlier chapters on monarchianism that the question of God's visibility was one of the chief areas of disagreement between the monarchians and their opponents. The monarchians argued that the same God was both visible and invisible, while their opponents consistently argued that the Father was invisible and the Son was visible.

²⁸ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.3 (trans. Evans, 149; Latin CCSL 2.2, 1176): *consequens erit ut inuisibilem patrem intellegamus pro plenitudine maiestatis, visibilem vero filium agnoscamus pro modulo deriuationis, sicut nec solem nobis contemplari licet, quantum ad ipsam substantiae summam quae est in caelis, radium autem eius toleramus oculis pro temperatura portionis quae in terram inde porrigitur.*

Here, Tertullian claims that the Son is visible because his majesty is derivative. The Father possesses properly the fullness of majesty, while the Son has majesty in virtue of the *modulus* of its derivation from the Father.²⁹ The fact that the Son derivately has what is properly the Father's allows for Tertullian to distinguish between them. The degree to which each possesses majesty determines whether that person is visible. Tertullian here uses the sun/ray image that is important elsewhere in *Adversus Praxean* for maintaining both the unity and distinction of Father and Son.³⁰ The key point for Tertullian is that the Father possesses something (in this case, majesty) in its fullness, and the Son only possesses it in part. Were the Son the same as the Father, he too would have the fullness of majesty.

In *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian's insistence that the Son is not the same as the Father because the Son is less than the Father is most clearly stated in chapter nine, where he combats the monarchian identification of the Father and Son:

Remember at every point that I have professed this rule, by which I testify that Father and Son and Spirit are unseparated from one another, and in that case you will recognise what I say and in what sense I say it. For look now, I say that the Father is one, and the Son another, and the Spirit another (every unlearned or self-willed person takes this statement in bad part, as though it proclaimed diversity and because of diversity threatened a separation of Father and Son and Spirit: but I am bound to make it, so long as they maintain that Father and Son and Spirit are identical, favouring the monarchy at the expense of the economy), not however that the Son is other than the Father by diversity, but by distribution, not by division but by distinction, because the Father is not identical with the Son, they even being by measure one and another. For the Father is the whole substance, while the Son is an outflow and portion of the whole, as he himself professes,

²⁹ Evan's translation here is idiosyncratic, and he blunts the force of what Tertullian says. "Enumeration" is not a standard definition for *modulus*, which normally means something like a "measure" or "small measure." Tertullian is intentionally contrasting *modulus* with *plenitudo*. The Father's majesty cannot be measured; and thus, he is invisible. Because of the derivation of the Son's majesty and subsequent lack of plenitude, the Son is visible.

³⁰ For his other uses of the sun/ray image in this work, see *Adversus Praxean* 8.5-7, 13.10, 18.4, 22.6, 27.1.

Because my Father is greater than I: and by him, it is sung in the psalm, he has also been made less, a little on this side of the angels. So also the Father is other than the Son as being greater than the Son, as he who begets is other than he who is begotten, as he who sends is other than he who is sent, as he who makes is other than he through whom a thing is made. It suits my case also that when our Lord used this word regarding the person of the Paraclete, he signified not division but ordinance: for he says, I will pray the Father and he will send you another advocate, the Spirit of truth. Thus <he calls> the Paraclete other than himself, as we say the Son is other than the Father, so as to display the third sequence in the Paraclete as we the second in the Son, and so to preserve the economy. Is not the very fact that they are spoken of as Father and Son <a statement that they are> one thing beside another? Surely all facts will correspond with their designations, and diversity of designation can by no means be confused, since neither can < the diversity> of the things of which they are the designations. "Is" is "is", and "not" is "not": for what is more than this is on the side of evil.³¹

This passage encapsulates many of the key features of Tertullian's polemic against the monarchians. His first task is to reiterate that he does not teach that the Father, Son, and Spirit are separated, divided, or diverse, lest he be accused of the error of the Valentinians.³² Such clarification, however, does not cause him to abandon the language of alterity to describe the Father, Son, and Spirit: *Ecce enim dico alium esse Patrem et*

³¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.1-4 (trans. Evans, 140-1 with my modifications; Latin, CCSL 2.2, 1168-9): *Hanc me regulam professum qua inseparatos ab alterutro patrem et filium et spiritum testor, tene ubique et ita quid quomodo dicatur agnosces. Ecce enim dico alium esse Patrem et alium Filium et alium Spiritum – male accepit idiotae quisque aut perversus hoc dictum, quasi diuersitatem sonet et ex diuersitate separationem protendat Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Necessitate autem hoc dico cum eundem Patrem et Filium et Spiritum contendunt, aduersus oikonomiam monarchiae adulantes – non tamen diuersitate alium Filium a Patre sed distributione, nec diuisione alium sed distinctione, quia non sit idem Pater et Filius, uel modulo alias ab alio. Pater enim tota substantia est, Filius uero, deriuatio totius et portio sicut ipse profitetur: Quia Pater maior me est. A quo et minoratus canitur in psalmo: Modico quid citra angelos. Sic et Pater alias a Filio, dum Filio maior, dum alias qui generat, alius qui generatur, dum alius qui mittit, alius qui mittitur, dum alius qui facit, alius per quem fit. Bene quod et Dominus usus hoc uerbo in persona Paracleti non diuisionem significauit sed dispositionem: Rogabo enim, inquit, Patrem et alium advocatum mittet uobis, Spiritum ueritatis. Sic alium a se Paracletum, quomodo et nos a Patre alium Filium, ut tertium gradum ostenderet in Paracleto, sicut nos secundum in Filio, propter oikonomiae observationem. Ipsum, quod Pater et Filius dicuntur, nonne aliud ab alio est? Utique enim omnia quod uocantur, hoc erunt, et quod erunt, hoc uocabuntur, et permiscere se diuersitas uocabulorum non potest omnino, quia nec rerum quarum erunt uocabula. Est, est, non, non; nam quod amplius est, hoc a malo est.*

³² This dual polemical context of monarchianism and Valentinianism suggests that monarchianism was at least in part a reaction against Gnosticism. Tertullian is likely guarding against these Gnostic views because the monarchians accused him of teaching the separation of the Father and the Son in the manner of some Gnostics. Note also Moingt's discussion of how Valentinian theology might have shaped Tertullian's use of *substantia* (*Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 2:394).

*alium Filium et alium Spiritum....*³³ This language, of course, harkens back to that used by Justin in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Such assertions of the alterity of Father, Son, and Spirit would have undoubtedly been repugnant to the monarchians; it might have been this sort of language that provoked the monarchians in the first place. Tertullian is well aware of the harsh ring of the language of alterity, and he quickly moves to rule out certain ways of interpreting his use of *alius*. The three divine persons are other *non tamen diuersitate alium Filium a Patre sed distributione, nec diuisione alium sed distinction....*³⁴

Thus far in the passage, Tertullian has tried to secure the distinction of the persons of the Trinity, but he has not yet used anything potentially subordinationist to accomplish this goal. His next bevy of reasons that the Father and Son are not one and the same, however, relies on his assumption that there is gradation within the Godhead. He writes, “For the Father is the whole substance, while the Son is an outflow and portion of the whole” (*Pater enim tota substantia est Filius uero, deriuatio totius et portio*).³⁵ Ernest Evans writes concerning this passage,

The unity depends on this, that the Father is the whole substance, *pater tota substantia est*, while the Son is *deriuatio totius et portio* (§9). It is tempting here, and in §26 (*portio totius quae cessura erat in filii nomen*) to claim that *portio* does not mean part but inheritance, and that *totius* is a descriptive, not a partitive, genitive; but it seems from Novatian...that in the third century *portio* was regularly used for *pars*, and in fact in the present passage Tertullian admits a

³³ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.1.

³⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.1.

³⁵ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.2. Kevin B. McCrudden notes that such notions of the Father containing the fullness of the divinity imply that the Logos is a lesser divinity than the Father. See his “Monarchy and Economy in Tertullian’s *Adversus Praxeam*,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55, no. 3 (2002): 327.

certain minoration of the Son (not only in the incarnation but) in his divine being.³⁶

Evans later tries to downplay the implications of this passage, arguing, “And it would appear likely that while the suggestion of minoration was forced upon him by controversy, the safeguarding of equality was a requirement of the received tradition.”³⁷ Andrew McGowan likewise notes that this passage is potentially subordinationist but then seeks to soften the severity of that judgment. He writes, “The ‘Father is the whole substance’ (*pater enim tota substantia est*, 9.2), which suggests a quite different understanding of God's fatherhood, and potentially a subordinationist one; but this is primarily a claim for unity of divine substance.”³⁸

Evans is concerned to protect Tertullian from what he views to be the damning charge of subordinationism, but his statement begs the question about whether or not the equality of the Father and Son was yet a part of the “received tradition.”³⁹ Tertullian here uses straightforwardly subordinationist language as an intentional means of

³⁶ Tertullian, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, ed. Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 44.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 247.

³⁸ Andrew Brian McGowan, “God in Early Latin Theology: Tertullian and the Trinity,” in *Andrew Brian McGowan, Brian Daley, and Timothy J. Gaden, eds., God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Memory of Lloyd G. Patterson, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 94* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 66. It is not clear that recourse to “unity of divine substance” successfully mitigates the charge of subordinationism. Substance and status unify the divine persons for Tertullian; but his point is that they can be possessed in differing, and, therefore, differentiating, degrees. It is not clear that emphasizing “unity of substance” is Tertullian's primary goal here. Indeed, he needs to emphasize both unity and distinction equally in order to achieve his double goal here.

³⁹ Furthermore, Evans does not define what he means by “received tradition.” Evans seems to assume that the equality of the Father and Son was generally accepted at the beginning of the third century and that it was Tertullian's duty to protect this tradition. As I hope to have demonstrated in the preceding reconstruction of the monarchian controversy, however, few theologians were yet concerned with the equality of the Father and Son at the beginning of the third century. More pressing for them was the question of whether the Father and Son were “one and the same.” Only after that question was answered would debates about their equality come into focus.

distinguishing the Father and the Son. He clearly argues, without blinking, that the Son cannot be the Father because the Father is greater than the Son. One cannot be greater than oneself.

Tertullian then bolsters his argument with the exegesis of John 14:28 and Psalm 8:5/Hebrews 2:7.⁴⁰ He quotes John 14:28 as scriptural warrant for his assertion that the Father is greater than the Son (*Sic et Pater alias a Filio, dum Filio maior*).⁴¹ Evans observes that Tertullian cites Psalm 8/Hebrews 2 elsewhere to refer to the incarnation. He then states, “The present passage therefore stands alone in regarding the minoration as the subordination of the Son to the Father within the Godhead.”⁴² *Adversus Praxean* 9.1-4 is a clear and focused example of Tertullian using subordinationist imagery and exegesis as a means of distinguishing the Father, Son, and Spirit. The intentional subordination of the Son to the Father was one of Tertullian’s anti-monarchian means of distinguishing the Father and Son.

Novatian

Questions about the nature of Novatian’s subordinationism have arrested the attention of scholars for some time. Daniel Lloyd has recently offered a valuable summary of scholarly positions regarding Novatian’s subordinationism, suggesting three

⁴⁰ Tertullian’s quotation of Psalm 8:5/Hebrews 2:7 presents a variant reading not attested in any of the main text-types of the *Vetus Latina*. See Hermann Josef Frede, ed., *Epistulae ad Thessalonicenses, Timotheum, Titum, Philemonem, Hebraeos*, *Vetus Latina* 25 (Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 1975), 1127–31.

⁴¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.2.

⁴² Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 248. Evans wants to protect Tertullian from his later critics, but his statement needs much more nuance. As I have argued above, there are numerous passages within *Adversus Praxean* that imply that the Son is somehow less than the Father.

main groupings of scholarship: 1) those who view Novatian's subordination of the Son as ontological; 2) those who view Novatian as teaching a subordination of rank or authority, but, nevertheless, holding that he taught that the Father and Son were equal in divinity; and 3) those who believe "that Novatian never resolves the theological tension between his suggestions of equality and inequality."⁴³ In the first group, d'Alès had no doubt that Novatian's subordinationism was ontological.⁴⁴ James Leonard Papandrea's work is the most prominent in the second group, although his attempts to rescue Novatian often feel strained.⁴⁵ DeSimone's scholarship represents those who felt that Novatian had significant unresolved theological tension.⁴⁶

Russel J. DeSimone writes that "[Novatian] strives to place in bold relief the posteriority of the Son, insofar as his origin is concerned, so that he can better defend the personal distinction of the Father and the Son. He has been charged with subordinationism. Novatian, however, did not make use of explicit formulas to formally defend subordinationism."⁴⁷ DeSimone argues that "Novatian, however, in his efforts to

⁴³ Daniel Lloyd, "Ontological Subordination in Novatian of Rome's Theology of the Son" (Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 2012), 9–13.

⁴⁴ See especially, his, *Novatien, étude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du IIIe siècle*, Études de théologie historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1924), 120–34.

⁴⁵ See his two major works: *The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome: A Study in Third-Century Orthodoxy* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2008); *Novatian of Rome and the Culmination of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 175 (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick, 2012).

⁴⁶ See his *The Treatise of Novatian, the Roman Presbyter on the Trinity. A Study of the Text and the Doctrine*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 4 (Roma: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1970); idem, "Introduction," in *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish Foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters*, The Fathers of the Church 67 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1974), 13–19; idem, "Again the Kenosis of Phil. 2,6-11," *Augustinianum* 32, no. 1 (1992): 91–104.

⁴⁷ DeSimone, "Introduction," 19. Earlier (p. 17), Simone had argued that Novatian's subordinationism is a product of his reliance on the theology of Tertullian. As the above discussion indicated, I think Tertullian's subordination pervades more of his thought than just his conception of the procession of the Word.

posit a real distinction in the Trinity against the Sabellians, ran ashore on the dangerous shoals of subordinationism (mitigated form).⁴⁸ DeSimone correctly perceives that Novatian's subordinationism was a response against his monarchian, or Sabellian, opponents.⁴⁹ He nevertheless exhibits the attitude, prevalent among modern scholars, that subordinationism was a danger that would have best been escaped by pre-Nicene theologians.⁵⁰ DeSimone ultimately judges Novatian's subordinationism to be the product of some sort of theological incompetence, although Lloyd has heavily critiqued him on this point.⁵¹

Geoffrey Dunn has more recently suggested that appraisals of Novatian's theology as ontological subordination perhaps expect too much from him. Referring to J. N. D. Kelly's classic, *Early Christian Doctrines*, Dunn writes,

Kelly argues that the only way Novatian maintained a belief in the oneness of God and a distinction of persons in the Trinity was through a subordination of Son to Father. As we have noted above, there is certainly a subordination of dignity or function between Son and Father, but one should be a little hesitant to conclude from this that Novatian envisaged a subordination of natures or being; he simply seemed to have avoided anything that esoteric.⁵²

⁴⁸ DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian*, 90–1.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey Dunn also notes that “Novatian was writing in reaction against those who over-emphasised the oneness of God.” See his “The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate,” 386. See also his specific mention of monarchianism at p. 390.

⁵⁰ Thus, he writes that Novatian “did not avoid the pitfall of subordinationism” (DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian*, 78). At p. 169, he uses similar language: “He has avoided the dreaded pit of ditheism only to fall headlong into that of subordinationism.”

⁵¹ Consider the following statement at *ibid.*, 181: “Hence, Novatian's deviations are due to doctrinal impotence rather than obstinate, heretical intent. Although it is evident from critical scrutiny that many of Novatian's statements are truly tainted with subordinationism, he did not make use of explicit formulas to formally defend subordinationism. Finally, we must bear in mind that the subordinationism of certain Ante-Nicene writers was simply an erroneous theory of private theologians and does not touch the faith of the Church.” Contra DeSimone, I argue that subordinationism was one of the most prominent means some early third-century theologians used to distinguish the Father from the Son against monarchianism.

⁵² “The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate,” 400. Dunn here has the following statement from Kelly in his sights: “Thus, for all his emphatic assertion of the Son's distinct subsistence as a Person, he succeeds in avoiding the ditheism he dreads only by strongly subordinating Him to the Father,

Such a judgment that Novatian avoided anything as “esoteric” as speaking about the subordination of being or nature betrays some assumptions about Novatian that Lloyd sought to correct. Dunn rightly notes that Novatian “was commenting on and explaining the rule of truth (*regula veritatis*) as preserved in the early Roman church’s baptismal symbol of faith.”⁵³ Dunn’s observation comes with the concomitant judgment that “it could well be a work designed more for catechetical instruction than for theological investigation.”⁵⁴ This judgment about *De Trinitate* implies that it is perhaps simplistic and unconcerned with esoteric things such as being or nature.⁵⁵ Lloyd, however, has argued precisely the opposite. He demonstrates that in this treatise, Novatian employs the technical language of Middle Platonism to buttress his theology.⁵⁶

I find Lloyd’s arguments about ontological subordination in *De Trinitate* compelling, but my primary interest in Novatian here is not whether his subordination of

or alternatively by making Him a passing moment in the divine life of the Father. His doctrine of the Holy Spirit is, for his date, rudimentary” (J. N. D Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th, rev. ed. [London: A & C Black, 1977], 126).

⁵³ Dunn, “The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian’s *De Trinitate*,” 390.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Note Lloyd’s similar reading of Dunn at Lloyd, “Ontological Subordination,” 14. Dunn’s implication that Novatian was philosophically unsophisticated is continued in his image of Novatian as unable to keep from running aground in his attempt to articulate his theology: “Sailing between the Scylla and Charybdis of Adoptionism and Modalism, Novatian could not avoid the perils of subordinationism, although they seem to be perils about which he was largely unaware and which would only be recognised in the following generations” (“The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian’s *De Trinitate*,” 409). Dunn’s statement here demonstrates the unnuanced way in which many scholars speak of subordinationism. On the one hand, Dunn refers to subordinationism as a peril. On the other hand, Dunn suggests that Novatian would not have been aware that it was perilous because it was only recognized as such by later generations. But subordinationism can only be viewed as perilous when it is viewed through the lens of later theological developments. For early third-century anti-monarchian authors, it was a tool to be employed intentionally to secure the distinction of Father and Son against the monarchians, as I hope to show in this chapter.

⁵⁶ See especially his first two chapters on Novatian’s conception of the Father in relation to contemporary philosophical theology: Lloyd, “Ontological Subordination,” 22–74.

the Son is ontological. My interest is in the purpose of Novatian's subordination of the Son. The following passages from *De Trinitate* that clearly depict subordination will aid in determining the function of Novatian's subordination. Commenting on John 16:14, Novatian writes,

If [the Paraclete] received from Christ the things which He will make known, then surely Christ is greater than the Paraclete, since the Paraclete would not receive from Christ unless He were less than Christ. Now, the fact that the Paraclete is less than Christ proves that Christ is also God, from whom he received what He makes known. This, then, is a great testimony to Christ's divinity, inasmuch as the Paraclete, having been found to be less than Christ, takes from Him what He gives to others. If Christ were only man, Christ would receive from the Paraclete what He should say; the Paraclete would not receive from Christ what he should make known.⁵⁷

The subordination of the Paraclete to Christ is the main focus of this passage, and Novatian highlights this subordination in order to reiterate the divinity of Christ. For Novatian, the subordination of the Paraclete to the Son is not an accident he could have avoided if he had been more careful or astute. It is a strategy he employs in order to make an intentional theological claim about the divinity of the Son. Novatian here is dealing with the views of psilanthropists, but the logic he employs to establish the Son's divinity recurs in his treatment of positions that are explicitly monarchian.

⁵⁷ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 16.3 (trans. FC 67:62; Latin CCSL 4:40): *Sed si a christo accepit quae nuntiet, maior ergo iam paracleto christus est, quoniam nec paracletus a christo acciperet, nisi minor christo esset. Minor autem christo paracletus christum etiam deum esse hoc ipso probat, a quo accepit quae nuntiat, ut testimonium christi diuinitatis grande sit, dum minor christo paracletus repertus ab illo sumit quae ceteris tradit. Quandoquidem si homo tantummodo christus, a paracleto christus acciperet quae diceret, non a christo paracletus acciperet quae nuntiaret.* Dunn notes regarding this passage, "Such an economic treatment of the Spirit still leaves Novatian open to charges of subordinationism, particularly in the light of his comment in chapter 16 about the relationship between Son and Spirit that: '*... maior ergo iam paracleto Christus est, quoniam nec paracletus a Christo acciperet, nisi minor Christo esset*'" ("The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's *De Trinitate*," 402–3).

In a passage commenting on Philippians 2:6-11, Novatian again demonstrates subordinationist tendencies.⁵⁸ He writes,

Therefore, though 'He was in the form of God, He did not think it robbery to be equal to God.' For though He was ever mindful that He was God of God the Father, He never compared or ranked Himself with God the Father, knowing that He is of His Father; and this very thing (that He is) He had, because the Father had given it to Him. Hence not only before He took upon Himself the flesh but even after He had taken a body, and again, after His Resurrection, He rendered and still renders perfect obedience to His Father in all things. Consequently, this proves that He never regarded His divinity as a means of unlawfully arrogating to Himself equality with God the Father.⁵⁹

Novatian first argues that Christ was God because he was *ex deo patre*. He then qualifies this statement by clarifying that the Son did not compare himself to the Father.

Novatian's reasoning for this point is illuminating. The Son does not compare himself to the Father because the Father has given to the Son what the Son has. Although Papandrea claims that Novatian's interpretation of this passage is "tantamount to asserting that [the

⁵⁸ Novatian's interpretation of Philippians 2:6-11 features prominently in DeSimone's work. Although DeSimone had earlier judged Novatian's interpretation of this passage to be subordinationist, he later changed his position in his 1992 article. For his earlier position, see *The Treatise of Novatian*, 108–13. In his later article, he writes, "Novatian's teaching, therefore, is not 'frankly heretical', as Prat thought, nor is it a question of a diminished, inferior god of the Neoplatonics, nor the heretical crass subordinationism of the Arians. It is the elaboration of Ante-Nicene Trinitarian language" ("Again the Kenosis of Phil. 2,6-11," 100). Note also Lloyd's discussion at "Ontological Subordination," 281–4. Papandrea claims that Phil. 2:6-11 is the "most important New Testament passage for Novatian..." He then claims that "*forma* can be synonymous with *substantia* for Novatian, so that to say that Christ was in *forma dei*, is tantamount to asserting that He is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father" (*The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome*, 268–9). To make such a judgment, Papandrea has to ignore a mass of contrary evidence.

⁵⁹ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 22.5-6 (trans. FC 67:82; Latin CCSL 4:55). *Hic ergo quamvis esset in forma dei, non est rapinam arbitratus aequalem se deo esse. Quamvis enim se ex deo patre deum esse meminisset, numquam se deo patri aut comparavit aut contulit, memor se esse ex suo patre et hoc ipsum, quod est, habere se, quia pater dedisset. Inde denique et ante carnis assumptionem, sed et post assumptionem corporis, post ipsam praeterea resurrectionem omnem patri in omnibus rebus oboedientiam praestitit pariter ac praestat. Ex quo probatur numquam arbitratum illum esse rapinam quandam diuinitatem, ut aequaret se patri deo.* DeSimone's earlier position views chapter 22 as one of the most egregious examples of Novatian's subordinationism: "The note of subordinationism in Novatian, however, is not found so much in his exegesis of the theophanies (chs. 17, 18, 19, 20)—where he follows the safe and sure tradition of previous Ante-Nicene writers—as in his unique and unprecedented exegesis of Philippians 2:6-11, contained in chapter 22 of his treatise. The distinctive mark of subordinationism is clearly and apodictically found there." See DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian*, 108.

Son] is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father,” a reading of this passage in light of Novatian’s earlier remarks about the Paraclete suggests a more nuanced assessment is needed.⁶⁰ Recall that Novatian had earlier argued that the Paraclete is inferior to the Son because it receives from the Son.⁶¹ Novatian’s reasoning in the earlier passage yields a clear conclusion when applied to his exegesis of Philippians 2:6-11. If reception of something makes the recipient inferior to the giver, the Son must be inferior to the Father because he receives from the Father. This line of thinking elucidates Novatian’s conclusion that “this proves that He never regarded His divinity as a means of unlawfully arrogating to Himself equality with God the Father.”⁶² Pace Papandrea, the Son can possess divinity from the Father without being equal to the Father in divinity.

In his interpretation of Philippians 2:6-11, Novatian stresses that the Son has always been obedient to the Father. This obedience to the Father is partially a result of the fact that the Son is inferior to the Father. A statement later in *De Trinitate* makes it clear that the Son’s obedience to the Father had polemical utility for Novatian. He argues, “What could make it more evident that He is not the Father but the Son than the fact that He is set before us as obedient to God the Father? If we were to believe otherwise—that he is the Father—then we would have to say that Christ is subject to another God the

⁶⁰ Again, see Papandrea, *The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome*, 269. The introduction of ὁμοούσιος brings with it the connotations of its legacy in the Nicene and post-Nicene debates, where it was used to emphasize the equality of the Father and Son. Whatever Novatian thinks about shared substance between the Father and Son, it is clear that he is stressing their inequality here.

⁶¹ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 16.3.

⁶² Novatian, *De Trinitate* 22.6 (trans. FC 67:82).

Father.”⁶³ Immediately preceding this sentence, Novatian focuses on the power that the Son has over all things. Recalling the subordinationist framework of reception discussed above, Novatian speaks of the Son’s power as delivered and granted to the Son by the Father.⁶⁴ The Son’s obedience to and reception of power from the Father shows that he is not himself the Father. Novatian expounds the Son’s obedience to the Father within his subordinationist framework of reception and deploys it to argue against the monarchian contention that the Father and the Son are the same, that the Father is the Son and the Son is the Father. Here, obedience and subordination secure the distinction between the Father and the Son.⁶⁵

Novatian continues to multiply reasons that the Son is inferior to the Father. He writes,

On the other hand, the Father also precedes Him; for as the Father, He must of necessity be prior, because He who knows no origin must of necessity precede Him who has an origin. At the same time the Son must be less than (*minor*) the Father, for he knows that He is in the Father, having an origin, since he is born.⁶⁶

Scholars have focused on this passage in their discussions of whether Novatian taught the eternal generation of the Son, but those questions are beyond the scope of my argument

⁶³ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.21 (trans. FC 67:92; Latin CCSL 4:63): *Quid enim tam evidens potest esse, hunc non patrem esse, sed filium, quam quod oboediens patri deo proponitur, ne si pater esse credatur, alteri iam deo patri christus subiectus esse dicatur?*

⁶⁴ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.20: “...potestatem, sed qua traditam, sed qua concessam, sed qua a Patre proprio sibi indultam.”

⁶⁵ Manlio Simonetti also observes that Novatian’s subordination of the Son serves to distinguish him from the Father (“Il problema dell’unità di Dio a Roma da Clemente a Dionigi,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 22, no. 3 [1986]: 462).

⁶⁶ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 31.3 (trans. FC 67:108; Latin CCSL 4:75): *quia et pater illum etiam praecedit, quod necesse est prior sit qua pater sit, quoniam antecedit necesse est eum qui habet originem ille qui originem nescit, simul ut hic minor sit, dum in illo esse se scit, habens originem quia nascitur.*

here.⁶⁷ What is important for my argument is that we have here another clear example of Novatian's contention that the Son is less than the Father. Note that in this passage, Novatian claims that the Son is inferior to the Father because he comes from the Father. This lines up with his argument about Phil. 2 in *De Trinitate* 22.5-6

Having surveyed some of the passages where Novatian implies or overtly claims that the Son is less than the Father, let us now consider the function of Novatian's subordinationism.⁶⁸ In chapter 27 of *De Trinitate*, Novatian engages with monarchian interpretations of John 10:30, first using a grammatical argument to refute their reading of the verse.⁶⁹ After this argument, Novatian cites John 10:36, where Jesus asks, "Do you say of Him whom the Father has made holy and sent into this world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"⁷⁰ Novatian comments:

Furthermore, He declares that He has been made holy by His Father. Since, then, He receives sanctification from the Father, He is less than the Father. Because He is less than the Father, He is consequently <not the Father>, but the Son. For if He had been the Father, He would have given, not received sanctification. By openly acknowledging that He receives sanctification from the Father, He proves, by the very fact that He receives sanctification from the Father, that He is less than the Father; consequently He has already demonstrated that He is the Son, not the Father.⁷¹

⁶⁷ See Lloyd's discussion of this passage and its interpretation at "Ontological Subordination," 262–70.

⁶⁸ Of particular note for establishing his subordinationism are *De Trinitate* 22.5-6, 26.20-21, and 30.3. The subordinationist import of these passages is especially clear when they are read through the lens of Novatian's comments about the Holy Spirit in *De Trinitate* 16.3.

⁶⁹ On this argument, see Mark DelCogliano, "The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 117–38.

⁷⁰ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.10 (trans. FC 67:94).

⁷¹ Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.12 (trans. FC 67:94; Latin CCSL 4:65): *Et sanctificatum se a suo Patre esse proponit. Dum ergo accipit sanctificationem a patre, minor patre est; minor autem patre consequenter <non pater> est, sed filius. Pater enim si fuisset, sanctificationem dedisset, non accepisset. Et nunc autem profitendo se accepisse sanctificationem a patre, hoc ipso quo patre se minorem accipiendo ab ipso sanctificationem probat, filium se esse, non patrem, monstravit.*

This passage demonstrates the polemical function of subordination within Novatian's thought. Note again that Novatian argues that the Son's reception (here, of sanctification) from the Father makes him less than the Father. The next step in his reading of the passage is crucial for my argument. Because the Son is less than the Father, he is not the Father but the Son. For Novatian, the subordination of the Son to the Father is neither an accidental by-product of an anti-psilanthropist proof of Christ's divinity nor the product of an inferior theological mind. It is purposefully deployed to refute the monarchian identification of the Father and Son.⁷² As for Tertullian, the subordination of the Son to the Father was a crucial piece in Novatian's anti-monarchian polemic.

Subordination and Distinction: Origen's Schema of Participation

In this final section, I analyze a core passage from the second book of Origen's *Commentary on John*. In this passage, Origen seeks to guard against monarchian theology by employing a framework of participation which, I argue, is subordinationist. I supplement my analysis with others passages from Origen's corpus, but I do not attempt to be exhaustive. I consider the passage from *ComJn* 2.13-32 to be one of the most important passages for determining Origen's views on the relationship between the

⁷² Commenting on *De Trinitate* 22.2-3, Dunn writes, "That there is the suggestion of subordinationism here is undeniable, but it was more by accident or oversight than by design. Establishing the divinity of Christ was Novatian's concern, and questions of the relationship between Father and Son beyond establishing that the Son was of God were more of a distraction" ("The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's *De Trinitate*," 398). Novatian's comments in *De Trinitate* 27.12 and elsewhere make problematic Dunn's claim that Novatian's subordinationism in his interpretation of Philippians 2:6-11 was an accident or the result of oversight. In the earlier passage, Novatian uses the same logic that he employs in 27.12. The Son, as receiver, is less than the Father, who gives to the Son.

Father and Son in his Alexandrian works.⁷³ Before examining this passage, however, I must make a few observations about Rufinus as a translator of Origen.

Two Origenes: Rufinus' Translation of *De principiis*

In my examination of Origen's articulation of the distinction between the Father and Son in his Alexandrian works, I use his statements in *De principiis* only with great caution. Such a methodological decision, however, is not followed in several recent reconstructions of Origen's Trinitarian theology. The recent works of Christopher Beeley and Ilaria Ramelli are good examples of this trend. Christopher Beeley's recent discussion of Origen's Christology notes the importance of Origen's *ComIn* for a reconstruction of his authentic thought, but Beeley relies heavily on statements from *De principiis* without serious discussion of the reliability of Rufinus' translation.⁷⁴

In her recent article alleging anti-subordinationism in Origen, Ilaria Ramelli notes that she offers a "painstaking analysis of [Origen's] works (always with attention to their reliability in relation to Greek original, translations, and fragments)."⁷⁵ After this statement of methodology, Ramelli starts her article with a series of quotations from Latin translations of Origen, notably *De principiis* and the *Commentary on Romans*.

⁷³ Henri Crouzel notes that this passage has caused a good bit of controversy, but then he tries to explain away its obvious implications. See his *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 181.

⁷⁴ See: Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 9–11, 21–7. The closest Beeley comes to engaging the question of the reliability of Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* is in n. 41 on pp. 319–20. Here, defending Rufinus' translation, he argues that Jerome's critique of Rufinus' translation "clearly reflects Jerome's own biases and tells us little about Origen's text." Beeley considers Rufinus' translations to represent accurately Origen's thought on Trinitarian matters.

⁷⁵ Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 1 (2011): 21.

Regarding *Comm. in Rom.* 7.12.146-147 (7.11.10 in SC 543), she notes that the text claims that “Christ has nothing and nobody over him, not even the Father.”⁷⁶ The translators of the *Sources chrétiennes* edition note the following about the passage Ramelli quoted: “On peut légitimement penser que cette dernière formule porte la marque de Rufin, soucieux de défendre l’orthodoxie d’Origène. Mais le développement qui précède n’en traduit pas moins la pensée de l’Alexandrin, et montre que celui-ci ne peut être accusé d’avoir ouvert la voie à l’arianisme.”⁷⁷ Ramelli has introduced the quotation from Rufinus’ translation as authoritatively representing Origen’s thought; but in her article, she does not interact with those scholars who suggest that it is clearly a Rufinian modification or interpolation.

Furthermore, Ramelli’s decision to label Origen an “anti-subordinationist” begs a fundamental question that she does not answer: Was anyone being accused of subordinationism in the early third century? As my argument should make clear, my answer is a resounding “no.” The subordination of the Son to the Father was a tool used intentionally by Tertullian, Novatian, and Origen against the monarchians. None of these authors was yet labeled a subordinationist because such theologies had not yet taken on the negative evaluative judgment they were later given in the post-Nicene era. This, of course, is not to say that the theologies of Tertullian, Novatian, and Origen were unopposed in the third century. As I make clear, the monarchians opposed their theology; but they opposed it because they thought it was tantamount ditheism, not because it subordinated the Father to the Son. In the third century, the subordination of the Father to

⁷⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁷⁷ Origen, *Commentaire sur l’Épître aux Romains*, ed. Caroline P. Hammond Bammel, trans. Luc Brésard and Michel Fédou, *Sources chrétiennes* 543 (Paris: Cerf, 2011), 369, n. 2.

the Son was a common anti-monarchian strategy that was rejected by the monarchians as entailing ditheism. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that Tertullian, Novatian, and Origen do not defend themselves against charges of subordinationism, only against charges of ditheism or polytheism.

My hesitance about the use of *De principiis* as a source for Origen's Trinitarian theology stems from my conviction that Rufinus' translations are fundamentally unreliable with regard to Origen's Trinitarian theology. Numerous other scholars have also noted this same unreliability.⁷⁸ The following survey of Rufinus' translation methodology demonstrates why his translations of Trinitarian material are of dubious value.⁷⁹ After this discussion of his methodology, I will offer a concrete example of how his methodological assumptions affect his translation practice.

⁷⁸ Paul Koetschau notes that "Rufinus has adapted Origen's doctrine of the Trinity to his orthodox commitments either by omission or emendation." See Koetschau, ed., *Origenes Werke: Fünfter Band; De Principiis (ΠΕΡΙ ΑΡΧΩΝ)*, GCS 22 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1913), cxxx. Basil Studer discusses Trinitarian issues in the translation of *De principiis* at length in his "Zur Frage der dogmatischen Terminologie in der lateinischen Uebersetzung von Origenes' De Principiis," in *Épektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 403-14. Regarding Rufinus' translations, Ronald E. Heine notes that "one may say that, on the whole, the substance can be regarded as representing Origen's thought. The major exception to this statement is theological statements regarding the Trinity and the resurrection of the body. Whenever statements on these subjects agree with the doctrines of the fourth-century Church they should be regarded with suspicion." See his "Introduction," in *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, ed. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 71 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 38. Catherine M. Chin specifically discusses Origen's subordinationism with regard to Rufinus' translation practices. See her "Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives: Translation as Origenism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18, no. 4 (2010): 628-34.

⁷⁹ Charles Kannengiesser warns that we must not spend so much time worrying about Rufinus' translations that we fail to grasp the thought of Origen himself in his "Écriture et théologie trinitaire d'Origène," in *Origeniana sexta: Origène et la Bible*, ed. Gilles Dorival and Alain Le Boulluec, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium* 118 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Peeters, 1995), 352: "Évitons que les arbres de Rufin traducteur ne nous cachent la forêt d'Origène auteur." Kannengiesser, of course, has a point; but so too do those who question the reliability of Rufinus' translations. Perhaps the best way to ensure that we do not lose sight of Origen's thought is to consider the texts that survive in Greek as foundational, and only after a thorough examination of those texts, move on to a consideration of Rufinus' translations.

Rufinus' working assumptions for translating Origen are first expressed in his translation of Pamphilus' *Apology for Origen* and his addendum of *On the Falsification of the Books of Origen* (henceforth *De adulteratione*). He explicitly discusses his methodological principles in *De adulteratione*, so it is the logical place to begin this discussion.⁸⁰ Rufinus begins by noting that there are in Origen's works things that do not agree with the rule of truth (*ueritatis regula*). There are also contradictions in Origen's writings, but Rufinus is confident that both sorts of problems cannot be the product of someone as wise and well-educated as Origen.⁸¹ Such contradictory and problematic statements are found in Origen's writings, argues Rufinus, because "heretics" modified them and inserted their own heretical opinions, as is their wont.⁸² Rufinus claims that such insertions were made in Origen's work, even in his own lifetime; and then Rufinus reproduces one of Origen's letters, wherein Origen himself complains of the falsification of his works.⁸³ Rufinus finally reaches the following conclusion:

If anything is found in his works that is not consonant with the Catholic faith, we suspect that it has been inserted by heretics, and regard it as alien both to his understanding and to our faith. Even if we are deceived about this, we incur, as I think, no danger from such an error. For we ourselves, through God's help,

⁸⁰ Rufinus' work on Pamphilus' *Apology*, *De adulteratione*, and *De Principiis* was completed from 397 to 398 at the request of a certain Macarius, whom Rufinus mentions in his preface to the translation of Pamphilus' *Apology*. For the dating of these works and the circumstances of their production, see Francis X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works*, Studies in Medieval History 6 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 82–110; C. P. Bammel, "Last Ten Years of Rufinus' Life and the Date of His Move South from Aquileia," *Journal of Theological Studies* 28, no. 2 (1977): 386.

⁸¹ Rufinus, *De adulteratione* 1.

⁸² Rufinus, *De adulteratione* 2. Rufinus cites a number of examples of such misfortunes happening to the works of other authors, including Clement of Rome, Dionysius of Alexandria, Cyprian, Hilary of Poitiers.

⁸³ Rufinus, *De adulteratione* 6-7.

continue unharmed by avoiding that which we regard as suspect and of which we disapprove.⁸⁴

Rufinus' conclusions about the presence of heretical interpolations in Origen's writings motivate his approach to translating those same texts.⁸⁵

Because Rufinus assumes that Origen's works contain interpolations, he does not hesitate to correct anything he deems to be contradictory or unorthodox. In the preface to his translation of *De Prin.*, he speaks of following the practices of a previous translator of Origen, presumably Jerome:⁸⁶

[I]n my translation I would follow as far as possible the rule observed by my predecessors and especially by the distinguished man whom I mentioned above. For he, when translating into Latin more than seventy treatises of Origen, called homilies, and also a number of his other Commentaries on St. Paul's epistles, both of which are known to contain in the original a good many statements likely to cause offence, so smoothed over and emended these in his translation, that a Latin reader would find in them nothing out of harmony with our faith. His example, therefore, I am following to the best of my ability; if not with an equal degree of eloquence, at least observing the same rules and taking care not to reproduce such passages from the books of Origen as are found to be inconsistent with and contrary to his true teaching.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Rufinus, *De adulteratione* 16 (trans. Thomas P. Scheck, *Apology for Origen*, The Fathers of the Church 120 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 136–7): *Si quid autem inuentum fuerit in his quod cum fide catholica non consonant, hoc et ab haereticis suspicatur insertum et tam ab illius sensu quam a nostra fide ducimus alienum. In quo etiam si fallimur, nihil, ut opinor, periculi huiuscemodi errore incurrimus. Nam et ipsi Deo iuuante permanemus inlaesi uitando ea quae suspecta habemus et improbamus.* Latin from Pamphilus, Eusebius, and Rufinus, *Pamphile et Eusèbe de Césarée Apologie pour Origène ; suivi de Rufin d'Aquilée Sur la falsification des livres d'Origène*, ed. René Amacker and Eric Junod, Sources chrétiennes 464 (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 320–2.

⁸⁵ Catherine Chin helpfully catalogues some of Rufinus' basic assumptions about the texts he is working with: "first, the instability of texts given the mechanics of late ancient book production; second, the presumption of authorial consistency, so that the same author cannot be both orthodox and heretical; and third, the more general notion that textual corruption necessarily occurs over time, and that it is the task of later readers to restore a text to its original condition" ("Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives," 636–7).

⁸⁶ Above, Rufinus speaks of this person translating some of Origen's Homilies on the Song of Songs, and the editors of the SC edition of *De prin.* identify this translator as Jerome. See Origen, *Traité des principes*, ed. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, vol. 1, Sources chrétiennes 252 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 69.

⁸⁷ Rufinus, *Preface to De principiis* 2 (trans. Origen, *On First Principles: Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis*, ed. Paul Koetschau, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), lxii–lxiii.). *ut quantam fieri potest in interpretando sequar regulam praecessorum et eius praecipue uiri,*

As Rufinus' discussion makes clear, Origen's "true teaching" will emerge as something that will be in accord with what Rufinus takes to be the correct faith of his Latin readers, especially regarding Trinitarian theology. He goes on to make a specific remark about his treatment of Trinitarian passages:

Wherever, therefore, I have found in his books anything contrary to the reverent statements made by him about the Trinity in other places, I have either omitted it as a corrupt and interpolated passage, or reproduced it in a form that agrees with the doctrine which I have often found him affirming elsewhere.... But I have said nothing of my own, simply giving back to him his own statements found in other places.⁸⁸

Rufinus himself admits that he is especially cognizant of problematic passages regarding Trinitarian theology in Origen's corpus.

Rufinus states that he will correct Origen's Trinitarian thought so that it is in accord with what Origen says elsewhere. Although one might suspect that Rufinus is dissimulating when he claims only to be reproducing Origen's true thought, he is not

cuius superius fecimus mentionem. Qui cum ultra septuaginta libellos Origenis, quos homileticos appellavit, aliquantos etiam de tomis in apostolum scriptis transtulisset in latinum, in quibus cum aliquanta offendicula inueniantur in graeco, ita elimavit omnia interpretando atque purgavit, ut nihil illis quod a fide nostra discrepet latinus lector inueniat. Hunc ergo etiam nos, licet non eloquentiae uiribus, disciplinae tamen regulis in quantum possumus sequimur, obseruantes scilicet ne ea, quae in libris Origenis a se ipso discrepantia inueniuntur atque contraria, proferamus. Latin from SC 252:70.

⁸⁸ Rufinus, *Preface to De Principiis* 3 (trans. Butterworth, lxiii.). *Sicubi ergo nos in libris eius aliquid contra id inuenimus, quod ab ipso in ceteris locis pie de trinitate fuerat definitum, uelet adulteratum hoc et alienum aut praetermisimus aut secundum eam regulam protulimus, quam ab ipso frequenter inuenimus adfirmatam.... Nihil tamen nostrum diximus, sed licet in aliis locis dicta, sua tamen sibi reddidimus.* Latin from SC 252:72. At the end of this passage, Rufinus wishes to diminish his role as a translator. He claims that he is not saying anything of his own; he is merely reproducing an undefiled Origen for his Latin readers. Note that shortly before this passage, Rufinus offers a thinly veiled critique of Pope Damasus' translation of Origen for introducing too much of his own voice: "I can see, however, that he derives most pleasure from the works of his own pen. He pursues a task that promises greater fame, that of being a 'father of the word' and not a mere translator" (*Sed ille, ut uideo, in stilo proprio placens rem maioris gloriae sequitur, ut pater uerbi sit potius quam interpres*). Rufinus, *Preface to De Principiis*, 1 (trans. Butterworth, lxii; Latin from SC 252:68). Catherine Chin notes that Rufinus privileged the role of translator more than that of author in his attempt to produce a Latin Christian library ("Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives").

necessarily being disingenuous. Shortly after his translation of the *Apology* and *De principiis*, Rufinus translated the *Dialogue of Adamantius on the Orthodox Faith*.⁸⁹ Although Buchheit claimed that Rufinus was aware that the work was not actually by Origen, Bammel argues that such a cynical interpretation is not necessary.⁹⁰ Whether or not Rufinus was aware that it was not an authentic work of Origen, Murphy suggests that “Rufinus, on discovering the complete orthodoxy of the contents, naturally seized upon it as a justification of his contention that the errors found in the other works of Origen were interpolations.”⁹¹ Rufinus’ belief that the *Dialogue* was genuinely a work of Origen allowed him to justify using it as the touchstone for his correction of the alleged interpolations in Origen’s works; it gave him a more fully orthodox version of Origen from which to work.⁹²

Test Case: *De principiis* 1.2.13

In order to make more concrete observations about Rufinus’ translations, I now examine his translation of *De principiis* 1.2.13, a passage for which we have both

⁸⁹ The critical edition of this text can be found in Adamantius, *Der Dialog des Adamantius: ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΝ ΟΡΘΗΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ*, ed. Willem Hendrik van de Sande Bakhuyzen, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 4 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901). For an English translation, see Robert A. Prettly, ed. and trans., *Adamantius: Dialogue on the True Faith in God*, Gnostica 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997). Bammel places Rufinus’ translation of this work ca. 398-399 (“Last Ten Years,” 428). If Bammel’s chronology is correct, it is unclear whether Rufinus had already had contact with the *Dialogue* when he was translating *De principiis*. Rufinus translated the *Dialogue with Adamantius* from Greek sources at the request of a certain “Paul”, and Murphy suggests that Rufinus chose this work because he was already familiar with it (*Rufinus of Aquileia*, 123–125).

⁹⁰ Bammel, “Last Ten Years,” 390–391; V. Buchheit, “Rufinus von Aquileja als Fälscher des Adamantiosdialogs,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 51, no. 2 (1958): 314–28.

⁹¹ Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 125.

⁹² See Thomas P. Scheck’s brief discussion of the Trinitarian orthodoxy of the *Dialogue*, in his Thomas P. Scheck, “Introduction,” in *Apology for Origen*, The Fathers of the Church 120 (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 16–7.

external attestation and internal parallels within Origen's other works. The choice of this passage is particularly apropos because of the ways it elucidates *ComIn* 2.13-32, which I will discuss after the present section. Rufinus' Latin translation reads as follows:

There remains the inquiry, what is the 'image of his goodness'? Here, I think, we do well to adopt the same line of reasoning which we used above in regard to the image formed in a mirror. The original goodness is undoubtedly the Father; and from this is born the Son, who is in every respect an image of the Father, and who may also without any doubt be properly called an 'image of his goodness'. For there is no other second goodness existing in the Son, besides that which is in the Father. So the Saviour himself rightly says in the Gospel that 'none is good save one, God the Father', the purpose of this statement being to make it understood that the Son is not of some other 'goodness', but of that alone which is in the Father; whose image he is rightly called, because he neither springs from any other source than from original goodness itself,—for if that were so, there would seem to be a different goodness in the Son from that which is in the Father—nor has the goodness that is in him any dissimilarity or divergence from that of the Father. Accordingly we ought not to imagine that there is some kind of blasphemy, as it were, in saying that 'none is good save one, God the Father', as if these words were to be taken as a denial that either Christ or the Holy Spirit is good; but, as we said before, the original goodness must be believed to reside in God the Father, and from him both the Son and the Holy Spirit undoubtedly draw into themselves the nature of that goodness existing in the fount from which the one is born and the other proceeds. If then there are any other things called good in the scriptures, such as an angel, or a man, or a slave, or a treasure, or a good heart or a good tree, all these are so called by an inexact use of the word, since the goodness contained in them is accidental and not essential.⁹³

⁹³ Origen, *De principiis* 1.2.13 (trans. Butterworth, 27-8). *Superest quid sit imago bonitatis eius inquirere, in quo eadem, ut opinor, intellegi conuenit, quae supererius de imagine ea, quae per speculum deformatur, expressimus. Principalis namque bonitas sine dubio pater est; ex qua filius natus, qui per omnia imago est patris, procul dubio etiam bonitatis eius conuenienter imago dicitur. Non enim alia aliqua secunda bonitas existit in filio praeter eam, quae est in patre. Vnde et recte ipse saluator in euangelio dicit quoniam nemo bonus nisi unus deus pater, quo scilicet per hoc intellegatur filius non esse alterius bonitatis, sed illius solius, quae in patre est; cuius recte imago appellatur quia neque aliunde est nisi ex ipsa principali bonitate, ne altera bonitas quam ea quae in patre est uideatur in filio, neque aliqua dissimilitudo aut distantia bonitatis in filio est. Propter quod non debet uelut blasphemiae aliquod genus putari in eo quod dictum est quia nemo bonus nisi unus deus pater, ut propterea putetur uel Christus uel spiritus sanctus negari quod bonus sit; sed, ut superius diximus, principalis bonitas in deo patre sentienda est, ex quo uel filius natus uel spiritus sanctus procedens sine dubio bonitatis eius naturam in se refert, quae est in eo fonte, de quo uel natus est filius uel procedit spiritus sanctus. Iam uero si qua alia bona in scripturis dicuntur, uel angelus uel homo uel seruus uel thesaurus uel cor bonum uel arbor bona, haec omnia abusiue dicuntur, accidentem, non substantialem in se continentia bonitatem.* Latin from SC 252:140-2.

Compare the above passage from Rufinus' Latin to the following Greek fragment from Justinian.⁹⁴

In the same way, therefore, I consider that in the case of the Saviour it would be right to say that he is an image of God's goodness, but not goodness itself. And perhaps also the Son while being good, is yet not good purely and simply. And just as he is the image of the invisible God, and in virtue of this is himself God, and yet is not he of whom Christ himself says 'that they may know thee, the only true God'; so he is the image of the goodness, and yet not, as the Father is, good in a precisely similar way.⁹⁵

Crouzel and Simonetti observe that the fragment from Justinian appears to be authentic, and the contents are not scandalous when viewed within the wider sweep of Origen's thought.⁹⁶ We also possess a comment from Jerome that appears to be discussing the same passage in *De principiis*. Jerome writes, "God the Father almighty he [Origen] calls good, and of perfect goodness. The Son is not good, but is a kind of breath and image of

⁹⁴ As a general rule, Justinian's fragments should be viewed with suspicion because of his overt bias against Origen. In this case, as I discuss below, there are other texts from Origen's corpus that corroborate what Justinian records in the fragment.

⁹⁵ Justinian, *Epistula ad Mennam* (trans. Butterworth, 27 with my modifications). Οὕτω τοίνυν ἡγοῦμαι καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος καλῶς ἂν λεχθῆσθαι ὅτι εἰκὼν ἀγαθότητος θεοῦ ἐστίν, ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτοαγαθόν. καὶ τάχα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἀγαθός, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἀπλῶς ἀγαθός, καὶ ὥσπερ εἰκὼν ἐστὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο θεός, ἀλλ' οὐ περὶ οὗ λέγει αὐτὸς ὁ Χριστὸς ἵνα γινώσκωσί σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν, οὕτως εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ἀπαραλλάκτως ἀγαθός. Greek from Justinian, *Scritti teologici ed ecclesiastici di Giustiniano*, ed. Mario Amelotti and Livia Migliardi Zingale, *Legum Iustiniani imperatoris vocabularium* 3 (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1977), 110. This text, with a few insignificant exceptions is the same as that printed by Koetschau in his edition of *De principiis*. See his *Origenes Werke: Fünfter Band; De Principiis (ΠΕΡΙ ΑΡΧΩΝ)*, 47. Note also *ComJn*, 6.295 (trans. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 80 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 248.FC 80:248). "... for the Father is good, and the savior is an image of his goodness" (ὁ μὲν γὰρ πατὴρ ἀγαθός, ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ). Greek from Origen, *Commentaire sur saint Jean*, ed. Cécile Blanc, vol. 2: *Livres VI et X*, Sources chrétiennes 157 (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 352.

⁹⁶ Origen, *Traité des principes*, ed. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 253 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 54. "Le passage de Justinian peut être authentique et raccourci par Rufin pour être compris de ses lecteurs latins. Il n'est guère scandaleux si on le replace dans la conception d'Origène, car il traduit uniquement un subordinationisme d'origine." Later they note that Justinian and Jerome warped Origen's thought by downplaying the unity of goodness between Father and Son (55). Görgemanns and Karpp also note that Rufinus seems to have suppressed some of the elements in Origen's thought, which they think are present in the Justinian fragment. See Origen, *Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, ed. Herwig Görgemanns and Heinrich Karpp, 2nd ed., Texte zur Forschung 24 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), 155, n. 43.

goodness, so that he is not called good absolutely, but with an addition, such as the good shepherd, etc.”⁹⁷

In addition to these exterior witnesses from Justinian and Jerome, we possess other passages from Origen where he speaks about the goodness of the Son in relation to the Father. In *ComJn* 13, Origen brings up the issue of the goodness of the Son, this time placing it in a fuller discussion of the relationship between the Father and Son:

But we are obedient to the Savior who says, 'The Father who sent me is greater than I,' and who for this reason, did not permit himself to accept the title 'good' when it was offered to him, although it was perfectly legitimate and true. Instead, he graciously offered it up to the Father, and rebuked the one who wished to praise the Son excessively. This is why we say the Savior and the Holy Spirit transcend all created beings, not by comparison, but by their exceeding preeminence. The Father exceeds the Savior as much (or even more) as the Savior himself and the Holy Spirit exceed the rest. And by 'the rest' I do not mean ordinary beings, for how great is the praise ascribed to him who transcends thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come? And in addition to these [what must we] say also of holy angels, spirits, and just souls? (152) But although the Savior transcends in his essence, rank, power, divinity (for the Word is living), and wisdom, beings that are so great and of such antiquity, nevertheless, he is not comparable with the Father in any way. (153) For he is an image of the goodness and brightness, not of God, but of God's glory and of his eternal light; and he is a vapor, not of the Father, but of his power; and he is a pure emanation of God's almighty glory, and an unspotted mirror of his activity.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Jerome, *Epistula ad Avitum* 2 (trans. Butterworth, 27, n. 3). *deum patrem omnipotentem appellat bonum et perfectae bonitatis, filium non esse bonum sed auram quondam et imaginem bonitatis, ut non dicatur absolute bonus, sed cum additamento 'pastor bonus' et cetera*. Latin from Jerome, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, ed. Isidorus Hilberg, vol. 3 (epistulae CXXI - CLIV), *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* 56 (Vindobonae; Lipsiae: Tempusky; Freytag, 1918), 97.

⁹⁸ Origen, *ComJn* 13.151-3 (trans. FC 89:100). Ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς πειθόμενοι τῷ σωτῆρι λέγοντι· «Ὁ πατὴρ ὁ πέμψας με μείζων μου ἐστίν» καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μὴ ἐνεγκόντι μηδὲ τὴν «ἀγαθὸς» προσηγορίαν τὴν κυρίαν καὶ ἀληθῆ καὶ τελείαν παραδέξασθαι αὐτῷ προσφερομένην, ἀλλὰ ἀναφέροντι <αὐ>τὴν εὐχαρίστως τῷ πατρὶ μετ' ἐπιτιμήσεως πρὸς τὸν βουλούμενον ὑπερδοξάζειν τὸν υἱόν, πάντων μὲν τῶν γεννητῶν ὑπερέχειν οὐ συγκρίσει ἀλλ' ὑπερβαλλούσῃ ὑπεροχῇ φαμέν τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὑπερεχόμενον τοσοῦτον ἢ καὶ πλέον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς, ὅσῳ ὑπερέχει αὐτὸς καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα τῶν λοιπῶν, οὐ τῶν τυχόντων ὄντων. Ὅση γὰρ δοξολογία τοῦ ὑπερέχοντος θρόνων, κυριοτήτων, ἀρχῶν, ἐξουσιῶν, καὶ παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι, πρὸς τοῦτοις καὶ ἁγίων ἀγγέλων καὶ πνευμάτων καὶ ψυχῶν δικαίων, <τί δεῖ> καὶ λέγειν; (152.) Ἀλλ' ὅμως τῶν τοσοῦτων καὶ τηλικούτων ὑπερέχων οὐσίᾳ καὶ πρεσβείᾳ καὶ δυνάμει καὶ θειότητι—ἔμψυχος γάρ ἐστι λόγος—καὶ σοφία, οὐ συγκρίνεται κατ' οὐδὲν τῷ πατρί. (153.) Εἰκὼν γάρ ἐστι τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπαύγασμα οὐ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου φωτὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀτμὶς οὐ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀπόρροια εἰλικρινῆς τῆς παντοκρατορικῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς

Compare this passage to a similar discussion in *ComMatt*, where Origen writes,

The Saviour is the image of the invisible God, and in the same way, he is the image of God's goodness. Whenever the word 'good' is applied to a lesser being, it has another meaning. Considered in relation to the Father, the Son is the image of the Father's goodness; considered in relation to other beings, he is to them what the Father's goodness is to him. And it can even be said that the analogy between God's goodness and the goodness of the Saviour, who is the image of God's goodness, is closer than the analogy between the Saviour and a good man, and good deed or a good tree. The fact that he is the image of God's goodness sets the Saviour higher above the lesser beings than the fact of being good sets God above the Saviour.⁹⁹

Hermann Josef Vogt discusses both *ComJn* 13.151-3 and *ComMatt* 15.10 and concludes that these passages are not fundamentally at odds with later post-Nicene theology. He acknowledges that the passage from *ComJn* appears to be written in opposition to a Gnostic conception of *homoousios*, although he does not expand on this suggestion. He concludes that the passage in *ComJn* is not at odds with Nicaea because it is addressing the incarnate Son, not the pre-existent *Logos*. This, conclusion, however, is not clearly faithful to the text. Origen's hierarchical schema in which the Son is an intermediary

ἐνεργείας αὐτοῦ. Greek from Origen, *Commentaire sur saint Jean*, ed. Cécile Blanc, vol. 3 (livres XIII), Sources chrétiennes 222 (Paris: Cerf, 1975), 112-4.

⁹⁹ Origen, *ComMatt* 15.10 (trans. Jean Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 255): Καὶ ὁ σωτὴρ δὲ ὡς ἔστιν «εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου», οὕτως καὶ «τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ εἰκὼν»· καὶ <ἐπὶ> παντὸς δὲ τοῦ ὑποδεεστέρου, ᾧ ἐφαρμόζεται ἡ «ἀγαθὸς» φωνή, ἄλλο σημαινόμενον ἔχει τὸ ἐφ' αὐτοῦ λεγόμενον, εἴπερ ὡς μὲν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα «εἰκὼν» ἔστιν «ἀγαθότητος», ὡς δὲ πρὸς τὰ λοιπὰ ὅπερ ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀγαθότης πρὸς αὐτόν. ἢ καὶ μᾶλλον ἔστι τινὰ ἀναλογίαν προσεχῆ ἰδεῖν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγαθότητος τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸν σωτῆρα ὄντα εἰκόνα «τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ», ἢ περ ἐπὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος πρὸς ἀγαθὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἔργον καὶ ἀγαθὸν δένδρον. πλείων γὰρ ἡ ὑπεροχὴ πρὸς τὰ ὑποδεέστερα ἀγαθὰ ἐν τῷ σωτήρι, καθό ἔστιν «εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος» αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἢ περ ἡ ὑπεροχὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ὄντος ἀγαθοῦ πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα σωτῆρα. Greek from Origen, *Origenes Werke: Origenes Matthäuserklärung*, ed. Erich Klostermann, vol. 10, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 40 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1935), 375-6. See also Crouzel's brief discussion of these two passages: Henri Crouzel, *Origène et Plotin: Comparaisons doctrinales*, Collection "Croire et savoir" 17 (Paris: Téqui, 1992), 130-1.

seems to be fundamentally at odds with later Nicene doctrine.¹⁰⁰ Regarding the passage from *ComJn* 13, Jean Daniélou writes,

Origen's position can be gathered from this without a shadow of a doubt. If the Son and the Spirit transcend all λογικοί, they are themselves transcended to a still greater extent by the Father. They thus form an intermediate category, which though much nearer to the Father than to the rest of creation, is still separate from him because their essence, power and other attributes are different from his.¹⁰¹

Daniélou emphasizes one of the most prominent characteristics of Origen's theology: that of some sort of hierarchy of beings. This hierarchy is evident in the passages on goodness from *ComJn* and *ComMatt*. In each, the Son is placed lower in the hierarchy than the Father, from whom he receives goodness.

A comparison of Rufinus' translation with these external attestations of his source and parallels within Origen's works makes Rufinus' editorial hand evident in his version of *De principiis* 1.2.13. Notably absent from Rufinus' translation of Origen's discussion of the goodness of Father and Son is any notion of the sort of hierarchy that is present in Origen's comments on goodness in *ComJn* 13 and *ComMatt* 15. The absence of this hierarchy, I argue, is the product of the sort of concern Rufinus expressed in his preface to the translation. Although the degree of the Father's superiority to the Son seems to have been variable in Origen's articulation of this hierarchy, the superiority itself is a stable element, often expressed with the verb ὑπερέχω and its variants. In Origen's depictions of this hierarchy, the verb ὑπερέχω suggests that something on a higher level

¹⁰⁰ See Hermann Josef Vogt, *Origenes als Exeget*, ed. Wilhelm Geerlings (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1999), 196–7.

¹⁰¹ Daniélou, *Origen*, 254–255. Daniélou's statement here seems to contradict itself and the text he is commenting on, but he is anticipating a tension in Origen's thought that he is about to introduce. Just following this quotation, he quotes *ComMatt* 15.10, where Origen states that the Son is closer to the Father in the hierarchy of beings than to other creatures. His comment conflates the two passages. Nevertheless, the common theme between the texts is that the Son is below the Father in the hierarchy of beings.

“rises above” those on a lower level; and this would seem to imply that there is some sort of distance that separates them. Thus, when Rufinus denies that there is any *distantia* between the goodness of the Father and the Son, it is probable that he is denying the implications of the hierarchical framework in which Origen elsewhere discusses goodness.

At the end of the passage in Rufinus’ translation, Origen appears to make a hard divide between the Father, Son, Spirit, and created beings. He writes, “If then there are any other things called good in the scriptures, such as an angel, or a man, or a slave, or a treasure, or a good heart or a good tree, all these are so called by an inexact use of the word, since the goodness contained in them is accidental and not essential.”¹⁰² Goodness in created beings is accidental, writes Rufinus’ Origen. The implication of this statement is that the goodness in the Son and Spirit is essential, even though it is drawn from the Father as source. This section in Rufinus’ translation again seems to expunge the hierarchical structure of Origen’s thought in which Son and Spirit functioned as intermediaries. Rufinus positions Son and Spirit firmly alongside the Father, while the passages from *ComJn* and *ComMatt* place them in positions in the middle, sometimes closer to the Father, sometimes closer to creatures.

The fragments of Justinian and Jerome both suggest that there was a dissimilarity, between the goodness in the Father and the Son. In Justinian’s fragment, the Son εἰκὼν ἀγαθότητος θεοῦ ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ οὐκ αὐτοαγαθόν.¹⁰³ The Son may still be good, but he is not

¹⁰² Origen, *De principiis* 1.2.13 (trans. Butterworth, 28). *Iam uero si qua alia bona in scripturis dicuntur, uel angelus uel homo uel seruus uel thesaurus uel cor bonum uel arbor bona, haec omnia abusiue dicuntur, accidentem, non substantialem in se continentia bonitatem.* Latin from SC 252:142.

¹⁰³ Justinian, *Epistula ad Mennam*.

goodness itself. The presence of αὐτοαγαθόν in Justinian's fragment is especially noteworthy because a similar term, αὐτόθεος, appears in *ComIn* 2.17. There, Origen uses αὐτόθεος to refer to the Father and then states that all other things that are said to be θεός (among which Origen includes the Son) are made θεός by participation in divinity of αὐτόθεος. Divinity properly belongs to the Father, and other things are divine only insofar as they participate in the divinity of the Father. If we were to use the terms of Rufinus at the end of *De principiis* 1.2.13 to describe the theology of *ComIn* 2.17, we would say that the Father has divinity essentially and all else (including the Son) has it accidentally. This, however, does not align with what Rufinus' translation says with regard to goodness. In his translation, goodness appears to be contained in Father, Son, and Spirit essentially. Compare Justinian's use to that of Numenius:

For if the Second (Divinity) is good, not from itself but from the First, how then would it be possible that he (the First) is not good, if the latter derives his goodness from participation with the (other, the First), especially as the Second participates in him (the First) specially because he is Good? So Plato taught the sharply observant (auditor) by his statement, 'That the Good is One.' That this is so, Plato has expressed in different ways; for in the *Timaeus* (10) he used the popular manner of expression, and said that he was 'good;' but in his *Republic* (vii.14), he speaks of the 'Idea of the Good.' Thus the Good would also be the Idea of the Creator, because he appears to us good through participation in the First and Only. Just as one says, that men are formed according to the idea of Man, and cattle after the Idea of Cattle, and the horses, after the Idea of a Horse, so it is also probably with the Creator; for if the latter is good only because of his participation in the goodness of the First Good, then would the First Mind, as the Good-in-itself, be its Idea (or model).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Numenius, *Fragments* 19-20 (trans. Numenius, *The Neoplatonic Writings of Numenius*, trans. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, Great Works of Philosophy Series, vol. 4 (Lawrence, Kans.: Selene Books, 1987), 34-6; Greek from Numenius, *Fragments*, ed. Édouard des Places, Collection des universités de France (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1973), 59-60): Εἰ γὰρ ἀγαθὸς ἐστὶν ὁ δεῦτερος οὐ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ πρώτου, πῶς οἷόν τε ὑφ' οὗ μετουσίας ἐστὶν οὗτος ἀγαθός, μὴ ἀγαθὸν <εἶναι>, ἄλλως τε κἂν τύχη αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀγαθοῦ μεταλαχὼν ὁ δεῦτερος; οὕτω τοι ὁ Πλάτων ἐκ συλλογισμοῦ τῷ ὅζῳ βλέποντι ἀπέδωκε τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὅτι ἐστὶν ἓν. Ταῦτα δ' οὕτως ἔχοντα ἔθηκεν ὁ Πλάτων ἄλλη καὶ ἄλλη χωρίσας· ἰδίᾳ μὲν γὰρ τὸν κυκλικὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ ἐγράψατο ἐν Τιμαίῳ εἰπὼν· 'Ἀγαθὸς ἦν'· ἐν δὲ τῇ Πολιτείᾳ τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἶπεν 'ἀγαθοῦ ιδέαν', ὡς δὴ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ ιδέαν οὖσαν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὅστις πέφανται ἡμῖν ἀγαθὸς μετουσίᾳ τοῦ πρώτου τε καὶ μόνου. Ὡσπερ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι μὲν λέγονται τυπωθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἀνθρώπου ιδέας, βόες δ' ὑπὸ

That Numenius uses αὐτοαγαθός to distinguish between the First and Second is particularly elucidating. It gives us a probable context within which to interpret Origen's use of αὐτο-X language.¹⁰⁵ For Numenius, the Second does not possess goodness on its own but rather through participation (μετουσία). He supplements this notion by using μεταλαγχάνω, which means something like possessing something because a share of it has been allotted by another. In the fragments where Numenius uses αὐτοαγαθός, two things are clear: (1) there is a hierarchy with the principal possessor (the First) of an attribute (αὐτο-X) at the top; and (2) that the Second possesses the attribute through reception of a share of what the principal possessor has. Although the Second is good, he does not possess goodness properly speaking, which is the sole prerogative of the First, ὁ αὐτοαγαθός.

The fact that Origen elsewhere uses αὐτο-X language to distinguish Father and Son (*ComJn* 2.17), coupled with the fact that we see a similar usage of it in Numenius, suggests that its appearance in Justinian's fragment is authentic. Furthermore, Justinian's fragment interprets the fact that the Son is not αὐτοαγαθός as suggesting that there is some sort of dissimilarity between the goodness of the Son and the goodness of the Father. The son is an image of the goodness of the Father, "but not as the Father, good in

τῆς βοός, ἵπποι δ' ὑπὸ τῆς ἵππου ιδέας, οὕτως καὶ εἰκότως ὁ δημιουργὸς εἶπερ ἐστὶ μετουσία τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ ἀγαθός, <ἀγαθοῦ> ιδέα ἂν εἴη ὁ πρώτος νοῦς, ὃν αὐτοάγαθον.

¹⁰⁵ Note here that both Origen and his predecessor and teacher Clement were familiar with the work of Numenius and occasionally cited it favorably. See Clement *Strom.* 1.22.150; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.51. Both Clement and Origen mention Numenius shortly after discussing Aristobulus. For a thorough discussion of this fragment of Numenius and Origen's thought, see Gerhard Gruber, *ZQH: Wesen, Stufen und Mitteilung des wahren Lebens bei Origenes*, Münchener theologische Studien, 2, Systematische Abteilung 23 (München: Max Hueber, 1962), 112–6.

a precisely similar way” (ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὡς ὁ πατήρ ἀπαραλλάκτως ἀγαθός).¹⁰⁶ If we combine Justinian’s fragment, interpreted through the lens of Numenius, with Origen’s other discussions of goodness, we are left with a stable schema. Origen consistently spoke about the goodness of the Father and Son by using some form of hierarchy. The Father, the proper possessor of goodness (ὁ αὐτοαγαθός), sat atop this hierarchy. The Son possessed the same goodness as the Father, but through reception and therefore to a diminished degree.¹⁰⁷ Thus, as in the passages from *ComJn* 13 and *ComMatt* 15, the Son was located somewhere in the hierarchy below the Father but above creatures.

Rufinus’ translation of *De prin.* 1.2.13, which discusses the issue of the goodness of the Father and Son, contains vestiges of Origen’s hierarchical teaching, which implied that there is some sort of dissimilarity or space between the Father and Son. The Son has goodness, but not in the same way as the Father. Rufinus’ Origen denies that there is any *dissimilitudo* or *distantia* between the goodness of the Father and Son. In *ComJn* 13.151-153, preserved in Greek, Origen argues that the Son “is not comparable to the Father in any way” (οὐ συγκρίνεται κατ’ οὐδὲν τῷ πατρί). Immediately after this statement, Origen writes that the Son is an image of God’s goodness. When Rufinus’ translation of *De principiis* 1.2.13 is put alongside this passage from *ComJn* 13 and Justinian’s fragment, one is left with the distinct impression that the denial of *dissimilitudo* or *distantia* is Rufinus’ attempt to correct the distance or dissimilarity within Origen’s hierarchical

¹⁰⁶ Justinian, *Epistula ad Mennam*.

¹⁰⁷ Thus, Rufinus has not completely distorted Origen’s thought. In all extant attestation, the Father is the source of goodness. Rufinus preserves this feature of Origen’s thought. Furthermore, Rufinus also attests to the fact that Origen thought that the Father and Son had the same goodness. This, too, seems to be authentically Origenian, although he would want to stress that they had it in a dissimilar manner; and this is something that Rufinus explicitly sought to deny.

theology. Origen's assertion that the Father transcends the Son and that the Son is the image of God's goodness, but not the goodness itself, would surely have been considered unorthodox by Rufinus as he was translating *De principiis* at the close of the fourth century. All of the external evidence suggests that Rufinus was aware of the occurrence of passages he considered unorthodox in the text of Origen he had before him. As Görgemanns and Karpp note, he seems to have suppressed the problematic elements of Origen's thought in this passage.¹⁰⁸

This examination of Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* 1.2.13 has demonstrated the ways in which Rufinus' editorial principles led him to modify Origen's texts. The fragment of Justinian and similar passages elsewhere in Origen's corpus suggest that Origen would have emphasized the transcendence of the Father over the Son in *De principiis* 1.2.13. Rufinus, in accordance with his assumptions about interpolations in *De adulteratione* and stated procedure in the *Preface*, has likely removed those characteristically Origenian elements that would have troubled his readers at the dawn of the fifth century. He has stripped Origen's theology of all but vestiges its characteristic hierarchical structure.

Commentary on John 2.13-32

Because of Rufinus' tendencies with regard Origen's Trinitarian theology, I do not mine passages from *De principiis* in this final vignette on Origen's articulation of the distinction between the Father and Son. Instead, I focus on *ComJn* 2.13-32, a passage that

¹⁰⁸ Origen, *Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, 155, n. 43.

survives in a Greek untouched by the editorial hand of Rufinus. This passage is one of the most important texts for understanding Origen's distinction of the Father and Son in his early works,¹⁰⁹ and it is all the more valuable because we can be fairly certain that Origen's opponents here are monarchians.¹¹⁰ My goal in this final vignette is not to offer a complete reconstruction of Origen's early Trinitarian thought but to demonstrate that Origen, like Tertullian and Novatian, used a schema of subordination to safeguard the distinction of the Father and Son against his monarchian opponents. Because the passage I am considering is so long, I break it up into smaller sections and discuss them in succession.

At the beginning of this section, Origen examines the use of the definite article in the opening verse of the Gospel of John. His deliberation on this topic forms the foundation for his subsequent discussion:

(13) John has used the articles in one place and omitted them in another very precisely, and not as though he did not understand the precision of the Greek language. In the case of the Word, he adds the article 'the,' but in the case of the noun 'God,' he inserts it in one place and omits it in another. (14) For he adds the article when the noun 'God' stands for the uncreated cause of the universe, but he omits it when the Word is referred to as 'God.' And as '*the* God' and 'God' differ in these places, so, perhaps, '*the* Word' and 'Word' differ. (15) For as the God who is over all is '*the* God' and not simply 'God,' so the source of reason in each rational

¹⁰⁹ Jean Danielou notes that "this passage expresses the very heart of Origen's vision of the Godhead." See his *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, trans. John Austin Baker, History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea 2 (London: Longman & Todd, 1973), 382.

¹¹⁰ For the identification of Origen's opponents here as monarchians or modalists, see Daniélou, *Origen*, 253; Cécile Blanc, "Avant-Propos," in *Commentaire sur saint Jean*, Sources chrétiennes 120 (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 14; Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 375–6; Jean-Noël Aletti, "D'une écriture à l'autre: Analyse structurale d'un passage d'Origène--Commentaire sur Jean, livre 2:13-21," *Recherches de science religieuse* 61, no. 1 (1973): 27; Antonio Orbe, "Orígenes y los Monarquianos," *Gregorianum* 72, no. 1 (1991): 42; Norbert Brox, "«Gott»: Mit und ohne Artikel: Origenes über Joh 1, 1," *Biblische Notizen*, no. 66 (1993): 32; Kannengiesser, "Écriture et théologie trinitaire d'Origène," 359–61; Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*, Christian Theology in Context (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 97–99; Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 50–2. Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao notes the dual polemical context of monarchianism and adoptionism. See his *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la controversia "monarquiana"*, Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie I: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996), 319–20.

being is '*the* Word.' That reason which is in each rational being would not properly have the same designation as the first reason, and said to be '*the* Word.'¹¹¹

Origen's comments on the use of the definite article here have a notable parallel in Philo, whose thoughts help to reveal the full import of Origen's passage. Philo comments on Genesis 31:13,

"I am the God who appeared to thee in the place of God" (Gen. xxxi. 13). Surely it is a good cause for boasting for a soul, that God deigns to show Himself to and converse with it. And do not fail to mark the language used, but carefully inquire whether there are two Gods; for we read "I am the God that appeared to thee," not "in my place" but "in the place of God," as though it were another's. What, then, are we to say? He that is truly God is One, but those that are improperly so called are more than one. Accordingly the holy word in the present instance has indicated Him Who is truly God by means of the articles saying "I am the God," while it omits the article when mentioning him who is improperly so called, saying "Who appeared to thee in the place" not "of the God," but simply "of God."¹¹²

¹¹¹ Origen, *ComIn* 2.13-5 (trans. FC 80:98). Πάνυ δὲ παρατηρημένως καὶ οὐχ ὡς ἑλληνικὴν ἀκριβολογίαν οὐκ ἐπιστάμενος ὁ Ἰωάννης ὅπου μὲν τοῖς ἄρθροις ἐχρήσατο ὅπου δὲ ταῦτα ἀπεσιώπησεν, ἐπὶ μὲν τοῦ λόγου προστιθεὶς τὸ «ὁ», ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς θεὸς προσηγορίας ὅπου μὲν τιθεὶς ὅπου δὲ αἴρων. (14.) Τίθησιν μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἄρθρον, ὅτε ἡ «θεὸς» ὀνομασία ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀγενήτου τάσσεται τῶν ὅλων αἰτίου, σιωπᾷ δὲ αὐτό, ὅτε ὁ λόγος «θεὸς» ὀνομάζεται. Ὡς δὲ διαφέρει κατὰ τούτους τοὺς τόπους «ὁ θεὸς» καὶ «θεός», οὕτως μήποτε διαφέρει «ὁ λόγος» καὶ «λόγος». (15.) Ὅν τρόπον γὰρ ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸς «ὁ θεὸς» καὶ οὐχ ἀπλῶς «θεός», οὕτως ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν λογικῶν λόγου «ὁ λόγος», τοῦ ἐν ἐκάστῳ λόγου οὐκ ἂν κυρίως ὁμοίως τῷ πρώτῳ ὀνομασθέντος καὶ λεχθέντος «ὁ λόγος». Greek from SC 120:214-6. Aletti, "D'une écriture à l'autre," offers a very close reading of the grammar of this passage, noting subtle shifts in Origen's schema throughout the passage.

¹¹² Philo, *De somniis* 2.228-9 (Greek and trans. with my modifications from Philo, *Philo: On Flight and Finding; On the Change of Names; On Dreams*, trans. F. H. Colson and Whitaker, vol. 5, Loeb Classical Library 275 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 416-9): 'ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθεὶς σοι ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ.' πάγκαλόν γε αὐχμημα ψυχῇ, τὸ ἀξιοῦν θεὸν ἐπιφαίνεσθαι καὶ ἐνομιλεῖν αὐτῇ. μὴ παρέλθῃς δὲ τὸ εἰρημένον, ἀλλὰ ἀκριβῶς ἐξετάσον, εἰ τῷ ὄντι δύο εἰσὶ θεοί· λέγεται γὰρ ὅτι 'ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθεὶς σοι,' οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ ἐμῷ, ἀλλ' ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ, ὡς ἂν ἐτέρου. τί οὖν χρὴ λέγειν; ὁ μὲν ἀληθεία θεὸς εἰς ἐστίν, οἱ δ' ἐν καταχρήσει λεγόμενοι πλείους. διὸ καὶ ὁ ἱερὸς λόγος ἐν τῷ παρόντι τὸν μὲν ἀληθεία διὰ τοῦ ἄρθρου μεμῆνυκεν εἰπὼν· 'ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεός,' τὸν δ' ἐν καταχρήσει χωρὶς ἄρθρου φάσκων· 'ὁ ὀφθεὶς σοι ἐν τόπῳ,' οὐ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ μόνον 'θεοῦ.'

Both Philo and Origen argue that the article before the noun θεός distinguishes between the God and other gods.¹¹³ For Origen, ὁ θεός refers to the “uncreated cause of the universe” (τοῦ ἀγενήτου τάσσεται τῶν ὅλων αἰτίου).¹¹⁴ For Philo, the use of the article designates the one who is truly God (ἀληθεία θεός). For both, the article represents the uniqueness of the one to whom it is applied.¹¹⁵ Thus far, Origen has set up a means for distinguishing God and Word, but he has not traced its full implications.

In the next section, however, the reason for his attention to the articles as a means of distinction becomes clear. He continues,

(16) Many people who wish to be pious are troubled because they are afraid that they may proclaim two Gods and, for this reason, they fall into false and impious beliefs. They either deny that the individual nature of the Son is other than that of the Father (ιδιότητα υἱοῦ ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς) by confessing him to be God whom they refer to as 'Son' in name at least, or they deny the divinity (θεότητα) of the Son and make his individual nature and essence as an individual (ιδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν) to be different from the Father.¹¹⁶

Origen has here described the key features of the monarchian controversy.¹¹⁷ The first thing to notice is that those whom Origen is addressing are concerned to keep from

¹¹³ Alan F. Segal's discusses this passage from Philo, although he does not remark on any possible connections with Origen: *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 260–6.

¹¹⁴ Aletti suggests that in the series of expressions in 2.13–5, the phrases that have the article are perhaps commenting on πηγὴ in 2.15. The articular nouns in the passage represent the source for any others that possess the quality (“D’une écriture à l’autre,” 29–30).

¹¹⁵ See also Hans Georg Thümmel's brief discussion of this matter, in which he notes the common aim of Origen and Philo to protect the claim that there is only one God: Thümmel, ed., *Origenes' Johanneskommentar, Buch I–V*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 63 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 243.

¹¹⁶ Origen, *ComIn* 2.16 (trans. FC 80:98): Καὶ τὸ πολλοὺς φιλοθέους εἶναι εὐχομένους ταρασσόν, εὐλαβουμένους δύο ἀναγορεύσαι θεοὺς καὶ παρὰ τοῦτο περιπίπτοντας ψευδέσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι δόγμασιν, ἤτοι ἀρνούμενους ιδιότητα υἱοῦ ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμολογοῦντας θεὸν εἶναι τὸν μέχρι ὀνόματος παρ' αὐτοῖς «υἱὸν» προσαγορευόμενον, ἢ ἀρνούμενους τὴν θεότητα τοῦ υἱοῦ τιθέντας δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ιδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν τυγχάνουσιν ἑτέραν τοῦ πατρὸς. Greek from SC 120:220–2.

¹¹⁷ Brox draws attention to the monarchian context of this passage and highlights that Origen's opponents here seemed concerned to protect monotheism (“«Gott»,” 32). Bruns states, “The fact Origen

becoming ditheists, from “proclaiming two gods.” The monarchians were especially troubled by anything they perceived to be ditheism, and ditheism was the damning label they attached to the theology of their opponents.¹¹⁸

In their quest to avoid ditheism, Origen argues that his opponents often fall into two main errors: 1) “they deny that the individual nature of the Son is other than that of the Father” (ιδιότητα υιοῦ ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς); 2) “they deny the divinity (θεότητα) of the Son and make his individual nature and essence as an individual (ιδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν) to be different from the Father.”¹¹⁹ Although Origen does not reproduce the exact terminology, this first “false and impious dogma” aligns well with the main contention of the monarchians—that the Father and Son are “one and the same.”¹²⁰ The second “false and impious dogma” also appears to be a paraphrase, but it aligns well with psilanthropism.¹²¹ In this error, Origen’s opponents

calls the Father alone ‘true God’ shows that he wants to account for biblical monotheism” (*Trinität und Kosmos*, 51).

¹¹⁸ The charge of ditheism is made explicitly by Callistus, when he says, “οἱ θεοὶ ἔστε.” See *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.12.16. For the critical edition, see Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, Patristische Texte und Studien 25 (New York; Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1986). See also Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.1. Although we do not see the accusation of ditheism itself in *Contra Noetum*, Hippolytus and the “elders” he mentions seem to be reacting to the charge of ditheism in multiple places. See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.7, 11.1, 14.2-3.

¹¹⁹ Thümmel uses Harnack’s terminology and notes that the two errors are modalistic and dynamistic [monarchianism]. See Thümmel, *Origenes’ Johannekommentar, Buch I-V*, 243. Orbe notes that both errors stem from “the same fundamental premise: the absolute oneness of God (substantial and personal)” (“Orígenes y los Monarquianos,” 42).

¹²⁰ It appears as though Origen has paraphrased their positions and used one of his own key terms, ιδιότητα. However, his claim that they denied that the Son is “other” (ἑτέραν) than the Father accords well with the extant testimony to monarchianism. As I suggested in the earlier chapters, early statements (like those in Justin’s *Dialogue*) that the Son was “other” than the Father were a probable motivation for the monarchian positions.

¹²¹ Many scholars use “adoptionism” to refer to the position Origen describes here, but I think “psilanthropism” is a more apposite term. Origen says nothing here of the adoption of the Son or his indwelling by the Holy Spirit; he merely states that some deny his divinity.

argue for the alterity of the Son; but they do so only because they have already denied his divinity. In their view, if they had admitted that the Son was divine, also admitting that the Son was other than the Father would have been tantamount to dividing the Godhead, to professing ditheism.

Origen's choice of vocabulary in *ComJn* 2.16 is noteworthy. He uses both *ιδιότητα* and *περιγραφὴν* to refer to the individuality of the Son, as distinguished from the Father. The term *ιδιότης* does not appear in discussion of the Godhead in *Contra Noetum* or the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, the two earliest attestations to monarchianism extant in Greek.¹²² Likewise, neither of those works contains a use of *περιγράφω* that approximates that of Origen's use of *περιγραφὴς* here or in *ComJn* 1.291-2.¹²³ He does not use *ὑπόστασις* at all in 2.13-20, where he is so concerned to articulate the distinction between the Father and Son.¹²⁴

Perhaps even more interesting is the manner in which Origen uses the term *οὐσία* in *ComJn* 2.16. Recall that the first error of Origen's opponents was that they denied that the *ιδιότης* of the Son was other than that of the Father, that they collapsed any distinction between the unique individualities of Father and the Son. The second error

¹²² As I argue here, Origen's *ComJn* also attests to monarchianism; but *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio* focus on this doctrine much more than does Origen. The term *ιδιότης* does appear once in *Refutatio* 7.20.4, but this is in the context of a discussion of the theology of Basilides. According to this passage, Basilides appears to use the term to talk about the particular characteristics of things designated by names; but he is not discussing the Godhead.

¹²³ The term is used once in the *Refutatio*, but it is used to describe the process of writing the tenth book. Again, see Matthew R. Crawford's discussion of *περιγραφὴ* in his "The Triumph of Pro-Nicene Theology over Anti-Monarchian Exegesis: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Heraclea on John 14:10-11," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21, no. 4 (2013): 549–55.

¹²⁴ With this observation, I do not mean to suggest that *ὑπόστασις* was not an important term for Origen's formulation of the distinction between the Father and Son. I call attention to its absence here only to suggest that it was only one of a cluster of terms Origen used to describe the individuality or distinction of the Son and Father.

was that the Son's *ιδιότης* and *οὐσία κατὰ περιγραφὴν* were preserved only because the divinity of the Son was rejected. Origen's problem with the latter error appears to have been the denial of divinity to the Son. He is unconcerned with the fact that his opponents held that the *οὐσία* of the Son according to *περιγραφὴν* was said to be *ἐτέρα τοῦ πατρός*. Origen seems comfortable with *οὐσία* being used to distinguish the Father and Son.¹²⁵ He does not even flinch at the suggestion that the *οὐσία* of the Son is *ἐτέρα τοῦ πατρός*.

His lack of concern with the way *οὐσία* is used here is reflected in the fact that the term does not appear anymore in this section. That Origen has no problem with *οὐσία* being used as part of an expression of the Father-Son distinction here is further confirmed by a passage later in book 2 of *ComJn*. Origen writes,

Now since the Savior here is 'light' in general, and in the catholic epistle of the same John, God is said to be light, one thinks it is confirmed from that source too that the Father is not distinct from the Son in essence. But another who has observed more accurately and speaks more soundly will say that the light which shines in the darkness and is not overcome by it, and the light in which there is no darkness at all are not the same.¹²⁶

Origen's problem with the position in this passage is that it claims that the Father is not separate or distinct from the Son in *οὐσία*. It is clear that Origen would readily approve the opposite, namely, that the Father and Son are distinct in *οὐσία*, as acceptable doctrine. Origen, in fact, makes exactly this move in *De oratione*: "For if, as is demonstrated by other arguments, the Son is a being and subject distinct from the Father, it follows that

¹²⁵ Compare Origen's usage here with that of Clement of Alexandria in *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 19, which I discuss in chapter 1. There, Clement uses *περιγραφὴν* to talk about the distinction of the Son (or *Logos*), but he maintains that the Father and Son are not distinguished by *οὐσία* as Origen appears to allow here.

¹²⁶ Origen, *ComJn* 2.149 (trans. FC 80:134; Greek SC 120:304-6): Ἐπεὶ δὲ «φῶς» ἀπαξᾶπλῶς ἐνταῦθα μὲν ὁ σωτήρ, ἐν δὲ τῇ καθολικῇ τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννου ἐπιστολῇ λέγεται ὁ θεὸς εἶναι φῶς, ὁ μὲν τις οἶεται καὶ ἐντεῦθεν κατασκευάζεσθαι τῇ οὐσίᾳ μὴ διεστηκέναι τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸν πατέρα· ὁ δὲ τις ἀκριβέστερον τηρήσας, ὁ καὶ ὑγιέστερον λέγων, φήσκει οὐ ταῦτόν εἶναι τὸ φαῖνον ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φῶς καὶ μὴ καταλαμβάνομενον ὑπ' αὐτῆς, καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν ᾧ οὐδαμῶς ἐστὶ σκοτία.

prayer should be addressed to the Son and not to the Father, or to both, or to the Father alone.”¹²⁷

Simonetti supports this conclusion and observes that in addition to *ὑπόστασις* and *ὑποκείμενον*, Origen also uses *οὐσία* to distinguish the Father and Son.¹²⁸ Ilaria Ramelli claims that *ComJn* 2.149 supports her contention that Origen taught that the Father and Son “are the same in their essence or *οὐσία*....”¹²⁹ Ramelli, however, has misread the passage. Origen puts the claim that the Father and Son (using light imagery) are not separated in *οὐσία* on the lips of those whom he is opposing. He clearly signifies this fact by introducing the statement with “someone thinks” (*ὁ μὲν τις οἶεται*). Origen explicitly states that he prefers the opposite stance, that the Father and the Son are not the same. Ramelli goes on to assert that Origen here teaches that the Father and Son “are two different individuals, having different individual substances or *ὑποστάσεις*.”¹³⁰ Apart from the fact that this assertion is built on a faulty premise concerning Origen’s use of *οὐσία* in the passage, Ramelli’s argument cannot stand. Ramelli wants to introduce a fine distinction between *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις* in this passage, but the term *ὑπόστασις* does not occur here or in the immediately surrounding context (it occurs again in 2.156, but not in

¹²⁷ Origen, *De oratione* 15.1: “εἰ γὰρ ἕτερος, ὥς ἐν ἄλλοις δείκνυται, κατ’ οὐσίαν καὶ ὑποκείμενον ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς, ἥτοι προσευκτέον τῷ υἱῷ καὶ οὐ τῷ πατρὶ ἢ ἀμφοτέροις ἢ τῷ πατρὶ μόνῳ.” Greek from Origen, *Origenes Werke: Buch V-VIII Gegen Celsus; Die Schrift vom Gebet*, ed. Paul Koetschau, vol. 2, *Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* 3 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899), 334.

¹²⁸ See Simonetti, “Note sulla teologia trinitaria di Origene,” 273–4.

¹²⁹ See her “Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis,” *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 03 (2012): 304.

¹³⁰ Ibid. Ramelli displays the same sort of tendency in her treatment of the *Dialogue with Heraclides*. She notes that the term *ὑπόστασις* is not present but then argues that the meaning is clear: “Although the key term *ὑπόστασις* does not pop up here – probably for the sake of simplicity and the lack of a philosophical context – Origen’s conception of the two distinct hypostases in one and the same divine nature is clear and extensively illustrated” (306).

connection with the relationship between the Father and Son). Origen might have catalyzed the development of these two key terms, but they had certainly not achieved any sort of stability when he was composing the first books of *ComJn*.

Origen's choice of vocabulary in this one small section which is extant in Greek is in particular contrast with Ramelli's thesis that Origen had a stable, advanced, and technical usage of οὐσία and ὑπόστασις that laid the foundation for the Nicene formulation. See, for example, her typical statement: "Origen himself had already maintained both things: that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit have the same οὐσία but are three different ὑποστάσεις.... As I set out to argue, Origen's thought represented a novel and fundamental theorization with respect to the communality of οὐσία and the individuality of ὑποστάσεις, conceived as individual substances, in the Trinity."¹³¹

After explaining the errors of those trying to avoid ditheism, Origen returns to his exegesis of John 1:1 in order to provide a solution to the problem the monarchians raised:

(17) Their problem can be resolved in this way. We must say to them that at one time God, with the article, is very God (αὐτόθεος), wherefore also the Savior says in his prayer to the Father, 'That they may know you the only true God.' On the other hand, everything besides the very God, which is made God by participation in his divinity (πᾶν δὲ τὸ παρὰ τὸ αὐτόθεος μετοχῇ τῆς ἐκείνου θεότητος θεοποιούμενον), would be more properly not said to be '*the* God,' but 'God.' To be sure, his 'firstborn of every creature,' inasmuch as he was the first to be with God and has drawn divinity into himself (ἅτε πρῶτος τῷ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εἶναι σπᾶσας τῆς θεότητος εἰς ἑαυτόν), is more honored than the other gods beside him (of whom God is God as it is said, 'The God of gods, the Lord has spoken, and he has called the earth'). It was by his ministry that they became gods, for he drew from God (ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρυσά<μενος>) that they might be deified, sharing ungrudgingly also with them according to his goodness. (18) *The* God, therefore, is the true God. The others are gods formed according to him as images of the prototype. But again, the archetypal image of the many images is *the* Word with *the* God, who was 'in the beginning.' By being 'with *the* God' he always continues to be 'God.' But he would not have this if he were not with God, and he

¹³¹ See Ramelli, "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis," 302–3.

would not remain God if he did not continue in unceasing contemplation of the depth of the Father (οὐκ ἂν δ' αὐτὸ ἐσχηκὼς εἰ μὴ πρὸς θεὸν ᾗν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν μείνας θεός, εἰ μὴ παρέμενε τῇ ἀδιαλείπτῳ θεᾷ τοῦ πατρικοῦ βᾶθους).¹³²

Origen begins by noting that God with the article, ὁ θεός, is “very God” (αὐτόθεος).¹³³

By quoting Jesus’ prayer from John 17:3, Origen clarifies that the Father is αὐτόθεος, or the only true God (ἀληθινὸν θεόν).¹³⁴ The designation of the Father as αὐτόθεος allows

Origen to distinguish the Father from all of the other *theoi*.¹³⁵

¹³² Origen, *ComJn* 2.17-8 (trans. FC 80:98-9): ἐντεῦθεν λύεσθαι δύναται. (17.) Λεκτέον γὰρ αὐτοῖς, ὅτι τότε μὲν αὐτόθεος ὁ θεός ἐστι, διόπερ καὶ ὁ σωτὴρ φησιν ἐν τῇ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εὐχῇ· «Ἵνα γινώσκωσι σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν». πᾶν δὲ τὸ παρὰ τὸ αὐτόθεος μετοχῇ τῆς ἐκείνου θεότητος θεοποιούμενον οὐχ «ὁ θεός» ἀλλὰ «θεός» κυριώτερον ἂν λέγοιτο, οὗ πάντως «ὁ πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως», ἅτε πρῶτος τῷ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εἶναι σπάσας τῆς θεότητος εἰς ἑαυτόν, ἐστὶ τιμιώτερος, τοῖς λοιποῖς παρ’ αὐτὸν θεοῖς—ὧν ὁ θεός θεός ἐστι κατὰ τὸ λεγόμενον· «Θεός θεῶν κύριος ἐλάλησε, καὶ ἐκάλεσε τὴν γῆν»—διακονήσας τὸ γενέσθαι θεοῖς, ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρυσά<μενος> εἰς τὸ θεοποιηθῆναι αὐτούς, ἀφθόνως καὶ ἐκείνοις κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ χρηστότητα μεταδιδούς. (18.) Ἀληθινὸς οὖν θεός ὁ θεός, οἱ δὲ κατ’ ἐκεῖνον μορφούμενοι θεοὶ ὡς εἰκόνες πρωτοτύπου· ἀλλὰ πάλιν τῶν πλειόνων εἰκόνων ἡ ἀρχέτυπος εἰκὼν ὁ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐστὶ λόγος, ὃς «ἐν ἀρχῇ» ᾗν, τῷ εἶναι «πρὸς τὸν θεόν» αἰ μένων «θεός», οὐκ ἂν δ’ αὐτὸ ἐσχηκὼς εἰ μὴ πρὸς θεὸν ᾗν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν μείνας θεός, εἰ μὴ παρέμενε τῇ ἀδιαλείπτῳ θεᾷ τοῦ πατρικοῦ βᾶθους. Greek from SC 120:216-8.

¹³³ Compare Origen’s usage of αὐτόθεος here to Tertullian’s usage of *ipsum deum*: “And so that they should not think they ought to stone him on the ground that he had wished himself to be taken for God himself, that is, the Father, because he had said, *I and the Father are one*, by way of showing that he is God, the Son of God, not by way of <showing> that he is God himself....” Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 22.12 (trans. Evans, 164; Latin CCSL 2.2:1191): *et ne putarent ideo se illum lapidare debere, quasi se Deum ipsum, id est Patrem, uoluisset intellegi quia dixerat: Ego et Pater unum sumus, qua Filium Dei Deum ostendens, non qua ipsum Deum....* Tertullian here argues that the Father is *ipsum Deum*, while the Son is only *Deum*. Tertullian’s usage here serves the same purpose as Origen’s distinction between αὐτόθεος and θεός. Note also the similarity in Origen’s usage here to that of Numenius in fragments 19-20 (des Places) discussed above. In both cases the αὐτο- prefix is used to distinguish the source from the recipient. Note also John Whittaker’s discussions of αὐτο- prefixes used in contexts of self-generation. See his “The Historical Background of Proclus’ Doctrine of the ΑΥΘΥΠΟΣΤΑΤΑ,” in *De Jamblique à Proclus: Neuf exposés suivis de discussions*, ed. Bent Dalsgaard Larsen, Entretiens sur l’Antiquité classique 21 (Vandœuvres-Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1975), 193–237; idem, “Self-Generating Principles in Second-Century Gnostic Systems,” in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: The School of Valentinus*, ed. Bentley Layton, vol. 1, Studies in the History of Religions: Supplements to Numen 41 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 176–93. Origen never uses the sort of self-generation language that Whittaker discusses, but his use of the αὐτο- prefixes is similar to that of Numenius.

¹³⁴ The ἀληθινὸν θεόν language from John 17:3 is similar to that used by Philo. Philo separated the highest God from the others by using “true God” language as well: ὁ μὲν ἀληθεὶς θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν (Philo, *De somniis*, 229). Note also Philo’s discussion of *the* God and God in the following sections. This passage in Philo provides a parallel to Origen’s usage.

¹³⁵ Recall my earlier discussion of the αὐτο-X language in Numenius and the fragment of Origen from Justin’s *Epistula ad Mennam*.

Unlike the psilanthropists, Origen was not willing to secure the distinction of the Father and Son by denying the divinity of the Son. In order to argue that the Son was divine while still distinct from the Father, Origen invoked the framework of participation.¹³⁶ Within this framework, all other divine beings (the *theoi*) are divine only insofar as they participate in the divinity of the αὐτόθεος.¹³⁷ Origen then makes explicit that this notion of deity by participation includes the “firstborn of every creature.” He has “drawn divinity into himself” (σπάσας τῆς θεότητος εἰς ἑαυτόν).¹³⁸ The implications of this statement are clear: divinity (θεότης) properly belongs to the Father, and a share of it comes to the Son from outside himself, that is, from the Father who is divinity itself. David Balás observes that “as in the Platonic tradition, in Origen's works, too, participation expresses the relationship of a lower degree within the hierarchy of beings to the higher.”¹³⁹ The Son is divine, but only because he participates in the divinity of the

¹³⁶ David L. Balás has argued convincingly that the concept of participation is fundamental for any analysis of Origen's thought. See his “The Idea of Participation in the Structure of Origen's Thought. Christian Transposition of a Theme of the Platonic Tradition,” in *Origeniana: Premier colloque international des études origéniennes, Montserrat, 18-21 Septembre 1973*, ed. Henri Crouzel, Gennaro Lomiento, and Josep Rius-Camps, Quaderni di “Vetera Christianorum” 12 (Bari: Istituto di letteratura cristiana antica, Università di Bari, 1975), 257. René Cadiou also highlights the foundational role of the concept of participation in Origen's thought. See his *Origen, His Life at Alexandria*, trans. John A. Southwell (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1944), 136. Note also the comment of Corsini, cited by Balás: “Il subordinazionismo, in particolare, sembra essere il frutto di quello che è, sostanzialmente, il nucleo metafisico fondamentale della speculazione origeniana: l'idea di partecipazione.” Origen, *Commento al Vangelo di Giovanni*, ed. and trans. Eugenio Corsini, Classici della filosofia 3 (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1968), 41.

¹³⁷ Both Philo and Origen note that only one is properly called God, although they do not use the same vocabulary to do this.

¹³⁸ He uses two verbs, σπάω and ἀρύω, to speak of the Son “drawing” divinity into himself.

¹³⁹ Balás, “The Idea of Participation,” 261. Balás' argument in this article is abbreviated because it is in a short conference paper. He offers a fuller discussion of the philosophical background of the idea of participation in the first chapter of his *Metousia Theou: Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Studia Anselmiana Philosophica Theologica 55 (Rome: I. B. C. Libreria Herder, 1966). There, he notes, “The idea of participation acquired true philosophical importance for the first time with Plato, who introduced the term μέθεξις primarily to express the relationship of the many individual and sensible instances to the one ‘idea’ or ‘form’” (2). At p. 4 of the same work, he also notes that in the transition from middle- to neo-Platonism occurring around the time of Origen, “the notion

Father or draws it into himself.¹⁴⁰ His participation in the divinity of the Father necessarily entails him receiving or drawing it from the Father into himself. Only one is αὐτόθεος, and it is not the Son. Origen's use of αὐτό- language to establish distinction between the Father and Son is even more intriguing when considered alongside monarchian theological expressions. Consider Origen's usage in response to the following passage from *Contra Noetum*: "You see, brethren, how rash and reckless a doctrine they introduced in saying quite shamelessly, 'The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son; he himself was born, he himself suffered, he himself raised himself up!'"¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, it is not inappropriate to call the Son θεός as long as he is distinguished from αὐτόθεος.

When *ComJn* 2.13-32 is viewed alongside other passages where Origen employs a hierarchical scheme (such as *ComJn* 13.151-3 and *ComMatt* 15.10 discussed above), it becomes clear that Origen has classed the Son below the Father in terms of divinity.¹⁴²

of participation naturally [came] to express not only the relationship between the intelligible and sensible worlds, but also more generally the relation of any lower to any higher degree of reality."

¹⁴⁰ Jules Lebreton argues that this passage is a good example of the sort of hierarchy with unequal degrees of divinity that he thinks is characteristic of Alexandrian theology. J. Lebreton, "Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'Église chrétienne du IIIe siècle (suite et fin)," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 20, no. 1 (1924): 15–6. He further notes that this sort of divine hierarchy shows "l'influence des spéculations philosophiques" (17). Lebreton locates the sources of this hierarchical tendency in what he considers to be an Alexandrian emphasis on the transcendence of God (16). Although I think Lebreton is correct in his assertion that (at least some) Alexandrian theologians had a hierarchical understanding of the Godhead, his assessment is part of a somewhat inexact characterization of different theologies. For example, Lebreton speaks of early theologians who only considered the persons of the Trinity "dans leurs relations avec le dogme du salut." That is, he wants to paint a picture of early theologians who were not influenced by philosophy.

¹⁴¹ Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, 3.2 (Greek and trans. Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, ed. Robert Butterworth, Heythrop Monographs 2 (London: Heythrop College [University of London], 1977), 48: ὁρᾶτε, ἀδελφοί, πῶς προαλὲς καὶ τολμηρὸν δόγμα παρεισήνεγκαν ἀναισχύντως λέγοντες, Αὐτός ἐστι Χριστός ὁ Πατήρ, αὐτός Υἱός, αὐτός ἐγεννήθη, αὐτός ἐπαθεν, αὐτός ἐαυτὸν ἤγειρεν! The Noetians used αὐτός frequently to identify the Father and the Son, but Origen's usage turns it to the opposite purpose.

¹⁴² It is difficult to find the proper word to describe Origen's view of the relationship between the Father and Son in *ComJn* 2.13-32. He does not express this relationship with a single word that can easily be translated, but alternative descriptors are inelegant. Since Origen refers to the Father as source (πηγή),

He places the Son among the other *theoi*, who also receive divinity through participation in the Father. Origen is aware that his classification of the Son with the other *theoi* might be troubling for some, and he quickly moves to reassert the preeminence of the Son. The Son, he writes, “is more honored than the other gods beside him” (ἐστὶ τιμιώτερος, τοῖς λοιποῖς παρ’ αὐτὸν θεοῖς). Although the other *theoi* receive divinity by participation like the Son, they only receive it through the mediation of the Son. “It was by his ministry that they became gods, for he drew from God (ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρυσά<μενος>) that they might be deified, sharing ungrudgingly also with them according to his goodness.”¹⁴³ In this schema, then, the Son participates directly in the divinity of the Father; and the other *theoi* participate indirectly through the Son. For this reason, the Son outranks them even though he, too, receives divinity. Origen further stresses the mediatorial function of the Son as he argues that the Son is the archetypal image upon whom the other images are based.

There are some interesting similarities here with the work of Novatian. Recall that Novatian had argued that the Spirit is inferior to the Son because the Spirit receives from the Son. He also applied the same logic to the Son’s relationship to the Father. Origen’s schema of participation implies the same sort of relationship between the source and receiver, although he never expresses it as bluntly as Novatian. I argue that he is less

we could say that the Son is “downstream” from the Father when it comes to divinity. Such a description, while somewhat awkward, has the virtue of emphasizing, as does Origen, that the Son receives divinity from a source. He is not himself the source of divinity.

¹⁴³ Note the striking structural similarity between Origen’s scheme here and that in *ComMatt* 15, where he writes, “Considered in relation to the Father, the Son is the image of the Father’s goodness; considered in relation to other beings, he is to them what the Father’s goodness is to him” (translation from Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Mitchell, 255). In each passage, the Father is the ultimate source (be it of divinity or goodness) and the Son serves as the intermediary through whom other beings receive a share of it.

blunt and explicit than Novatian here because other notions are doing the work of describing the relationship between the Father and Son. First, Origen uses his exegesis of the definite article in John 1:1 to establish that the Son receives divinity from the Father. Second, this exegesis occurs within a typically Origenian hierarchical structure that presupposes the inferiority of things that are “downstream” from the source. He did not need to explicitly say that the Son was inferior to the Father because the whole framework in which he was discussing the Son (or *Logos* here) presupposed it.

Origen ends this section in a manner that suggests how firmly he situates the Son within the participatory framework. He writes of the Son, “By being 'with *the* God' he always continues to be 'God.' But he would not have this if he were not with God, and he would not remain God if he did not continue in unceasing contemplation of the depth of the Father” (οὐκ ἂν δ’ αὐτὸ ἐσχηκὼς εἰ μὴ πρὸς θεὸν ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν μείνας θεός, εἰ μὴ παρέμενε τῇ ἀδιαλείπτῳ θεᾷ τοῦ πατρικοῦ βάθους). Here the logic of participation is made clear: one possesses that in which one participates only so long as one continues in participation. Because divinity is received by the Son from a source outside of himself, argues Origen, he would cease to be God if he stopped being with the only true God, who is the Father. The “being-with” of John 1:1 (πρὸς τὸν θεόν) Origen thus interprets within his framework of participation.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, divinity can be possessed in degrees

¹⁴⁴ In light of the participated nature of the Son’s divinity, I think Crouzel misses the mark when he writes: “Bien que le Fils et l’Esprit aient reçu tout ce qu’ils ont du Père, origine de la divinité et de l’univers, ils le possèdent comme leur bien propre et parfaitement, sans possibilité de croissance ou de diminution” (Although the Son and the Spirit have received all that they are from the Father, who is the origin of the deity and of the universe, they possess it as their own and perfectly, without the possibility of increase or decrease). See his, *Origène* (Paris; Namur: Lethielleux; Culture et vérité, 1985), 237 (trans. *Origen*, 181). Origen does seem to think that the Son will always remain God, but Crouzel does not specify what he means when he says “they possess it as their own and perfectly.” In the passage I am considering, Origen stresses the opposite: the Father is αὐτόθεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεός, not the Son. If Origen maintained, as Crouzel contends, that the Son and Spirit possessed as their own and perfectly what they received, we would expect him to say something like the Son is ἀληθινὸς θεός or even κυρίως θεός, but he does not.

depending on how perfectly one participates.¹⁴⁵ The Son is more honored than the other *theoi* because of the supremely exemplary nature of his participation.¹⁴⁶

Origen is aware that even though he has safeguarded the uniqueness of the Father by calling him αὐτόθεος, some will still suspect that he has failed to maintain the traditional monotheistic assertion that there is only one God. He continues,

(19) Some, however, have probably taken offense at what we said when we described the Father as the true God but, in addition to the true God (ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ), said many gods have come into existence by participation in *the* God (θεῶν πλείονων τῇ μετοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ γινομένων). These people might fear that the glory of the one who transcends all creation is put on a level with the others who happen to have the title 'god.' Because of this we must set for this explanation in addition to the difference which has already been explained in relation to which

There is a tension in Origen's thought that Crouzel side-steps too easily. On the one hand the Son always remains God (ἀεὶ μένων «θεός») because he is “πρὸς τὸν θεὸν” and has been since the beginning. On the other hand, everything except ὁ αὐτόθεος is made God (θεοποιούμενον) by participation through reception. The tension lies in the fact that Origen seems to be bending philosophy's schema so that he can account for the Christian faith. Normally, a trait that is possessed by participation can be lost; but Origen claims that this is not the case with regard to Jesus' possession of divinity by participation.

¹⁴⁵ Balás describes Origen's use of participation well: “Common to all applications seems to be that it expresses a relationship of a 'lower level' of being, which possesses a certain perfection in a derived, dependent manner to a 'higher level' of being, which possesses the same perfection fully, and is the source of it for others.” See Balás, “The Idea of Participation,” 270. Balás later suggests that within the Trinity, “though the aspects of receiving and of personal communion are fully present, the character of an accidental, losable, decreasing or growing possession is explicitly excluded by Origen, as is also the notion of a temporal beginning.” (271) Balás' argument here is unconvincing. He seems eager to avoid what he thinks are the negative side effects of participation within the Trinity. He produces as evidence for his claim *ComJn* 2.124, where Origen claims that rational beings do not possess blessedness as an inseparable attribute (ἀχώριστον συμβεβηκὸς τὴν μακαριότητα). This passage, however, is not directly addressing the members of the Trinity. Even more, a passage like *ComJn* 2.76 seems to problematize his claim. There, Origen writes, “The Holy Spirit seems to have need of the Son ministering to his hypostasis, not only for it to exist, but also for it to be wise, and rational, and just, and whatever other thing we ought to understand it to be by participation in the aspects of Christ which we mentioned previously” (trans. FC 80:114): “οὐ χρήζειν ἔοικε τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα διακονοῦντος αὐτοῦ τῇ ὑποστάσει, οὐ μόνον εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφὸν εἶναι καὶ λογικὸν καὶ δίκαιον καὶ πᾶν ὅτιποτοῦν χρὴ αὐτὸ νοεῖν τυγχάνειν κατὰ μετοχὴν τῶν προειρημένων ἡμῖν Χριστοῦ ἐπινοιῶν” (Greek from SC 120:256). If the Holy Spirit has to participate in the Son even to exist, it is difficult to see how Balás can support his claim that what is received in the Trinity is not accidental—at least in the case of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴⁶ Joseph Trigg expresses the full import of this passage well: “Origen, although he insisted on Christ's divinity and utter difference from all lesser beings, was unwilling to ascribe to the Son the same dignity he ascribed to the Father. The son as a mediating hypostasis is inferior to the Father and represents a lower stage in the cosmological scale. Only the Father, Origen said, is truly God; the Son is God only by participation in the Father. He found in the opening verse of the Gospel of John a grammatical construction that confirmed his evaluation of the Son's lesser divinity.” See Joseph Wilson Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 98–9.

we declared that God the Word is the minister of deity (θεότητος) to all the other Gods. (20) The reason which is in each rational being has the same position in relation to the Word which is in the beginning with God, which is God the Word, which God the Word has with God. For as the Father is very God and true God (ὡς γὰρ αὐτόθεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ) in relation to the image and images of the image (wherefore also men are said to be 'according to the image,' not 'images'), so is the very Word (ὁ αὐτόλογος) in relation to the reason in each one. For both hold the place of a source; the Father, that of divinity, the Son, that of reason (Ἀμφοτέρα γὰρ πηγῆς ἔχει χώραν, ὁ μὲν πατήρ θεότητος, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς λόγου).¹⁴⁷

The potential fear that Origen describes is precisely the sort of thing that would have troubled the monarchians. The application of the title “God” to more than one being opens one to the monarchian critique of ditheism or polytheism. Origen’s emphasis on the title “God” here signals that the application of this title was problematic for the monarchians unless the Son was identified with the Father. Origen reiterates that even though they are called *theoi*, they are not placed in the same position as the true God with regard to divinity, for the true God transcends all else.¹⁴⁸ The other *theoi* are downstream from the source (πηγή), as it were; and they are one step further removed from the source

¹⁴⁷ Origen, *ComIn* 2.19-20 (FC 80:99-100). (19.) Ἄλλ’ ἐπεὶ εἰκὸς προσκόμεναι τινὰς τοῖς εἰρημένοις, ἐνὸς μὲν ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀπαγγελλομένου παρὰ δὲ τὸν ἀληθινὸν θεὸν θεῶν πλείονων τῇ μετοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ γινομένων, εὐλαβουμένους τὴν τοῦ πᾶσαν κτίσιν ὑπερέχοντος δόξαν ἐξιῶσαι τοῖς λοιποῖς τῆς «θεός» προσηγορίας τυγχάνουσι, πρὸς τῇ ἀποδεδομένη διαφορᾷ, καθ’ ἣν ἐφάσκομεν πᾶσι τοῖς λοιποῖς θεοῖς διάκονον εἶναι τῆς θεότητος τὸν θεὸν λόγον, καὶ ταύτην παραστατέον. (20.) Ὁ γὰρ ἐν ἐκάστῳ λόγος τῶν λογικῶν τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἔχει πρὸς τὸν ἐν ἀρχῇ λόγον πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὄντα λόγον θεόν, ὃν ὁ θεὸς λόγος πρὸς τὸν θεόν· ὡς γὰρ αὐτόθεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ πρὸς εἰκόνα καὶ εἰκόνας τῆς εἰκόνας, —διὸ καὶ «κατ’ εἰκόνα» λέγονται εἶναι οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὐκ «εἰκόνες» —οὕτως ὁ αὐτόλογος πρὸς τὸν ἐν ἐκάστῳ λόγον. Ἀμφοτέρα γὰρ πηγῆς ἔχει χώραν, ὁ μὲν πατήρ θεότητος, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς λόγου. Greek from SC 120:218-20.

¹⁴⁸ Origen discusses differing degrees of participation in *De Prin.* 4.4.9. Creatures which participate in the same thing are said to share in the same nature as each other, even though they can possess the participated thing in different degrees. Origen writes, “Everyone who shares in anything is undoubtedly of one substance and one nature with him who shares in the same thing” (trans. Butterworth, 325-326; Latin from GCS 22:361): *Omnis, qui participat alicuius, cum eo, qui eiusdem rei particeps est, sine dubio unius substantiae est uniusque naturae*. Origen does not here spell out what this might mean for the Son’s participation in the Father’s divinity, perhaps because of Rufinian modifications; but Origen seems to have been able to speak about things being of the same nature while possessing something more or less fully. See also Crouzel’s discussion of this passage from *De Prin.*: Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l’image de Dieu chez Origène*, Théologie 34 (Paris: Aubier, 1956), 101–2.

because divinity is mediated to them by the Word, who is the minister of deity (διάκονον τῆς θεότητος).

After explaining the participatory schema with regard to divinity, Origen turns his attention to the way in which rational creatures participate in the *Logos*. In the same way that the Father is the source of divinity, so too the Word (ὁ λόγος, ὁ αὐτόλογος) is the source of reason in all rational creatures.¹⁴⁹ Origen goes on to speak of degrees of participation in the *Logos*, noting that there can be “words of the second or third rank next to the Word who is before all things.”¹⁵⁰ Just as there is a hierarchy of reason in those who participate in the *Logos*, so too there must be a hierarchy of those *theoi* who have divinity through participation in the Father. The graded nature of this participatory framework of *logos* is reflected in the graded nature of the participatory framework of divinity, since Origen himself says the two frameworks are similar.¹⁵¹ Origen places the

¹⁴⁹ Aletti draws attention to a subtle shift in Origen’s terminology here. On the one hand, those beings which participate in the divinity of the Father are called *theoi*. On the other hand, those beings which participate in the reason of the Word are called *logikoi*, not *logoi* (“D’une écriture à l’autre,” 32). Commenting on *ComJn* 2.20, Aletti notes that “Origen insists not on the subordination of the Word, but on the fact that he is, like the Father, source” (Origène insiste non sur la subordination du Verbe, mais sur le fait qu’il est comme le Père, *source*). See *ibid.*, 44. Aletti then concedes in a footnote that there is in this passage a “subordination quant à l’origine.” Even after this concession, however, Aletti argues that nothing indicates that this is a “subordination substantielle.” While Aletti’s observation that nothing in this section suggests substantial subordination is technically correct, his comment reveals the imposition of foreign concerns on this passage, namely, the heightened polemical importance of questions regarding divine substance in the Nicene and post-Nicene contexts. Substance is of little interest to Origen in this passage; his main concerns are with divinity, reason, and the sources of each. Aletti appears concerned to rescue Origen from the charge of teaching the substantial or ontological subordination of the Son. Even if he is successful in this task, though, Origen can still be said to be teaching a subordination of divinity in the Son. Surely this is just as problematic from a post-Nicene perspective as teaching that the Son is ontologically subordinate to the Father. Aletti’s tendency here is mirrored in the recent work of Bruns, which I discussed earlier. See especially *Trinität und Kosmos*, 22–3. It seems as though both Aletti and Bruns think that if they can prove that Origen did not teach the ontological subordination of the Son, they have proven that his theology is consonant with that of Nicaea. As this chapter has indicated, however, I find such approaches to be anachronistic.

¹⁵⁰ Origen, *ComJn* 2.23 (trans. FC 80:100): λόγων δευτέρων ἢ τρίτων παρὰ τὸν πρὸ πάντων. Greek from SC 120:222.

¹⁵¹ Harnack also notes that Origen’s notion of source implies a gradation within the Trinity: “But, as in Origen’s sense the union of these only exists because the Father alone is the ‘source of deity’ (πηγή

Son below the Father in the hierarchy of divine beings; yet he is still above all of the other *theoi*. The Son, being reason itself (ὁ αὐτόλογος), sits atop the hierarchy of the *logikoi*. Although the Son must receive divinity from another, he himself is the source of all reason.

After what he says might be seen as a digression, Origen sums up the force of his preceding argument:

There was “*the* God” and “God,” then “gods” in two senses. “God the Word” transcends the higher order of these gods, himself being transcended by “*the* God” of the universe. And again, there was “*the* Word,” and perhaps also “Word,” comparable to “*the* God” and “God,” and “the words” in two senses.¹⁵²

Origen’s discussion of the Father and Son here is similar to those passages discussed above where he speaks of the goodness of the Father and Son. In both *ComJn* 13 and *ComMatt* 15, Origen introduced a hierarchical framework wherein the Father transcended the Son and the Son transcended the rest of creatures. He does the same here, even using the same key term (ὑπερέχω) to describe this transcendence. Later, in a passage where he is considering the Son as “light,” Origen makes a similar argument in even stronger terms, writing, “Now to the extent that God, the Father of truth, is more than, and greater than, the truth and, being the Father of wisdom, is greater than and surpasses wisdom, to this extent he transcends being ‘true light.’”¹⁵³ Not only has Origen here used his

τῆς θεότητος) and principle of the other two hypostases, the Trinity is in truth no homogeneous one, but one which, in accordance with a ‘subtle emanation idea’, has degrees within it” (*History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 2 [Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907], 358).

¹⁵² Origen, *ComJn* 2.32 (trans. FC 80:102; Greek SC 120:230-232): Ἦν γὰρ «ὁ θεὸς» καὶ «θεός», εἴτα «θεοὶ» διχῶς, ὧν τοῦ κρείττονος τάγματος ὑπερέχει ὁ «θεὸς λόγος» ὑπερεχόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ τῶν ὅλων «θεοῦ». Καὶ πάλιν ἦν «ὁ λόγος», τάχα δὲ καὶ «λόγος», ὁμοίως τῷ «ὁ θεὸς» καὶ «θεός», καὶ «οἱ λόγοι» διχῶς.

¹⁵³ Origen, *ComJn* 2.151 (trans. FC 80:134; Greek SC 120:310): ὃ δὲ λόγος ὁ πατὴρ τῆς ἀληθείας θεὸς πλείων ἐστὶ καὶ μείζων ἢ ἀλήθεια καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὧν σοφίας κρείττων ἐστὶ καὶ διαφέρων ἢ σοφία, τοῦτο ὑπερέχει τοῦ εἶναι «φῶς ἀληθινόν».

characteristic term ὑπερέχω, he has also used the terms “more” (πλείων), “greater” (μείζων), and “better” (κρείττων) to describe the Father’s transcendence of the Son. This passage comes shortly after Origen brings up a problem:

Now since the Savior here [Jn 1:4] is “light” in general, and in the catholic epistle of the same John, God is said to be light [1 Jn 1:5], one thinks it is confirmed from that source too that the Father is not distinct from the Son in essence. But another who has observed more accurately and speaks more soundly will say that the light which shines in the darkness and is not overcome by it, and the light in which there is no darkness at all are not the same.¹⁵⁴

It is probable that the position Origen takes issue with in this passage is some form of monarchianism. If Origen is addressing monarchians here, he would seem to be opposing those who deny that the Father and Son are distinct in οὐσία. In the accounts of monarchianism I considered in part one, proponents of monarchianism do not often use technical language like οὐσία.¹⁵⁵ A bit later, Origen argues that because the Father is the Father of Wisdom, he is “greater than and surpasses wisdom.”¹⁵⁶ The verb Origen uses for “surpass” (διαφέρω) here carries the implication of differing from something else because it excels the other thing. If this is the sense Origen intends for the verb here, it clarifies his argument. Because the Father transcends and surpasses the Son, they cannot be the same. Origen’s hierarchical understanding of the universe, with its concomitant

¹⁵⁴ Origen, *ComJn* 2.149 (trans. FC 80:134; Greek SC 120:308-10): Ἐπεὶ δὲ «φῶς» ἀπαξ᾽ ἀπλῶς ἐνταῦθα μὲν ὁ σωτήρ, ἐν δὲ τῇ καθολικῇ τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννου ἐπιστολῇ λέγεται ὁ θεὸς εἶναι φῶς, ὁ μὲν τις οἶεται καὶ ἐντεῦθεν κατασκευάζεσθαι τῇ οὐσίᾳ μὴ διεστηκέναι τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸν πατέρα· ὁ δὲ τις ἀκριβέστερον τηρήσας, ὁ καὶ ὑγιέστερον λέγων, φήσκει οὐ ταῦτόν εἶναι τὸ φαῖνον ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φῶς καὶ μὴ καταλαμβάνομενον ὑπ’ αὐτῆς, καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν ᾧ οὐδαμῶς ἐστὶ σκοτία.

¹⁵⁵ They prefer to say things like the Father and Son are “one and the same” (ἐν καὶ ὁ αὐτός), but they do not specify one and the same “what.” If this usage of οὐσία is an insertion of Origen, it does not necessarily help us to understand the intricacies of the position he was opposing. As I noted above, his usage of οὐσία is not fixed and consistent.

¹⁵⁶ Origen, *ComJn* 2.151 (trans. FC 80:134; Greek SC 120:310): ὁ πατὴρ ὢν σοφίας κρείττων ἐστὶ καὶ διαφέρων ἢ σοφία.

subordinationism, pervades all of his thought; but he utilizes it in this anti-monarchian context to prove that the Father and Son are not the same.

As the preceding analysis has demonstrated, Origen expressed a subordination of the Son to the Father in *ComJn* 2.13-32. The question of whether this is an ontological subordination is a red herring. Origen focuses on divinity and reason in this passage, not on *ousia* and *hypostasis*. The subordination of the Son to the Father with regard to divinity is not an oversight or mistake, nor is it a corner into which Origen is backed or a shoal he fails to avoid despite his best efforts. Origen intentionally employs the framework of participation, with its concomitant subordinationism, in order to refute monarchian assertions that the Father and Son are one and the same. His distinction between ὁ θεός and θεός and ὁ αὐτόθεος and θεοί allows him to affirm that the Son is God (θεός, but not ὁ θεός) without the implication that he is the same as the Father. Origen, like Tertullian and Novatian, argued that the derivative or received nature of the Son's divinity distinguished him from the Father, who alone properly and fully possessed divinity. With regard to divinity, the Son was downstream from the Father, the source from whom he drew it into himself.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation rests on the methodological assumption that to understand Origen's Trinitarian theology properly, it is necessary to offer a detailed reading of that theology within its contemporary context in the early third century.¹ Any attempt to understand his theology requires a consciousness of the theological debates of Origen's time. Furthermore, the more detail we can provide about the theological positions Origen opposed or sought to correct, the better.²

Based on these methodological commitments, this dissertation has focused on a small part of the vast corpus of Origen's work: *ComJn* 1-2. In an evocative passage from these two books, *ComJn* 2.13-32, Origen gives an account of the relationships among the Father, Son, and the rest of creation that functions as a corrective to what he views as a pious but misguided theology: monarchianism. A methodologically sound reading of this passage requires as detailed an account of monarchianism as we can provide. Prior to my work in this dissertation, however, such a focused attempt to understand monarchian theology did not yet exist in English-language literature.³

The first part of this dissertation was an attempt to provide a thorough and fulsome account of monarchianism as a theological movement. There are no surviving works of monarchian theology from the early third century, so any reconstruction relies

¹ This dissertation is not, then, interested in the *Nachleben* of Origen's thought in the Nicene and post-Nicene debate, as important and interesting as it may be.

² Recall my note from the introduction that this dissertation is a long-form version of what Michel R. Barnes calls a "dense reading," a term I define there.

³ Furthermore, the examinations of monarchianism that did exist were not focused on reconstructing the broad contours of it as a theological movement.

on second-hand and often hostile witnesses to this understudied theological movement. Using the available sources, I offered an account of monarchianism that demonstrates that it had a stable core of theological commitments and development during the brief period of time I study. The monarchians shared with other streams of Christianity two non-negotiable theological commitments: (1) there is only one God; and (2) Jesus (or the Son) is God. The tension produced by these two commitments led the monarchians to what I consider their characteristic conclusion that the Father and Son are “one and the same.”⁴ With this assertion that the Father and the Son were the same, the monarchians opposed distinction between the Father and the Son, which they viewed as imperiling the uniqueness of God.

Monarchianism was popular at the beginning of the third century, probably because of its unabashed affirmation that Jesus was God and its staunch commitment to defending the uniqueness of God. Despite its popularity, monarchianism did not go unchallenged. Soon some notable theologians produced anti-monarchian treatises. Part two of this dissertation considered Origen alongside those other theologians who wrote against the monarchians. Origen likely wrote books one and two of *ComJn* at the height of the monarchian controversy, shortly after returning to Alexandria from Rome, the epicenter of the monarchian controversy.

My reexamination of *ComJn* 1-2 alongside other anti-monarchian writers and against the backdrop of monarchian theology brings into stark relief some of the key features of Origen’s Trinitarian theology. Both Origen and his contemporary anti-

⁴ In the surviving accounts that we have, the monarchians do not make this statement more precise. They are not reported as saying, “The Father and the Son are one and the same X.”

monarchian counterparts shared the two core theological commitments of the monarchians; they too wanted to affirm both that there is only one God and that Jesus is God. They could not, however, accept the conclusion that this meant that the Father and the Son were “one and the same.” Therefore, they had to articulate theologies in such a way that allowed them to affirm that Jesus is God, that there is only one God, and that the Father and Son are in some meaningful way distinct.⁵

This is precisely what Origen attempts to do in *ComJn* 1-2. In *ComJn* 1, he develops and emphasizes a Wisdom Christology so that he can argue that the Son, as Wisdom, was a distinct agent or actor alongside the Father “from the beginning.”⁶ Where one would expect him to devote all of his attention to the occurrence of *Logos* in John 1:1, we instead see him turn his focus to Wisdom as an important title for the Son. Furthermore, Origen’s emphasis on the Son as Wisdom allows him to use scriptural texts like Proverbs 8:22 to argue that the Son was alongside the Father prior to creation.⁷

In the passage I consider at the greatest length, *ComJn* 2.13-32, Origen’s response to the monarchian claims is even clearer, especially since he signals that he is responding to their theology in 2.16. In this passage, Origen argues that the Father is “the God” and

⁵ See my brief summary of the key terms and means they used to describe the distinction of the Father and Son at the beginning of chapter five. Another way to define “distinct” in the context of the anti-monarchian writers is “not one and the same.” Although these authors never use a phrase this unsubtle, this is what they need to prove. The anti-monarchian theologians must walk a tightrope and affirm that the Father and Son are one without allowing that they are “one and the same.” For this reason, they cast about for various ways to distinguish the Father and Son without completely separating them.

⁶ I say “agent or actor” here because I do not think that Origen’s vocabulary for speaking of different individuals had stabilized this early in his career.

⁷ As I argued in chapter four, the existence of the Son prior to creation is important for two reasons: (1) it places *another* alongside the Father prior to creation; (2) this *other* (the Son or *Logos* or Wisdom) has existence “from the beginning” or eternally. See, for example, *De prin.* 1.2.2 and *ComJn*, 2.9. The “two stage” *Logos* theologies would have been problematic for Origen because they denied the individual existence of the Son before creation, thus conceding something to the monarchians

that the Son is “God” by participation. He uses several devices to argue that the Father is truly God or “God himself.” This emphasis allows him to demonstrate that he, too, believes that there is only one God. By claiming that the Son is God by participation, Origen is also able to affirm that the Son is God without claiming that they constitute a coordinated pair of two Gods. The framework of participation that Origen employs to make this argument leads him to claim that the Father transcends the Son, that the Father is greater than the Son. In their anti-monarchian writings, Tertullian and Novatian made similar arguments. Both argued that although the Son was God, he was somehow less than the Father. This allows them to say that the Son is not “the same as the Father,” for something cannot be less than itself. Instead of emphasizing that the Son is less than the Father, Origen focuses on the transcendence of the Father over the Son. Origen’s argument varies slightly from that of Novatian and Tertullian, but the result is the same. What is greater than something else cannot be the same as that which it is greater than.

Because of their contention that the Son is less than the Father, the theologies of Tertullian, Origen, and Novatian have been labelled as “subordinationist” by scholars at different points.⁸ Scholars who label these theologies as “subordinationist” often imply or explicitly state that they are deficient. This negative evaluative judgment of early third-century “subordinationism” is based on an anachronistic imposition of post-Nicene definitions of Trinitarian orthodoxy onto these earlier authors. For Origen, as also for Tertullian and Novatian,⁹ a subordinationist understanding of the Father and Son enabled

⁸ Of course, the question of Origen’s subordinationism is hotly debated; and some scholars, such as Ramelli, would disagree with my assessment.

⁹ Regarding Novatian’s subordinationism, I agree with the broad conclusions of Daniel Lloyd’s dissertation on Novatian’s subordinationism. See his “Ontological Subordination in Novatian of Rome’s Theology of the Son” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Marquette University, 2012).

a cogent response to the appeal of monarchianism.¹⁰ Origen's subordinationism allowed him to argue that there is only one God, that the Son is God, and that the Son is not the same as the Father. This dissertation enables an appreciation of the theological force and function of Origen's subordinationism by demonstrating how he intentionally utilized it to combat monarchian teaching.

¹⁰ I am not the first to argue that pre-Nicene subordinationism was not aberrant. Wolfgang Marcus argued this position in his *Der Subordinatianismus als historiologisches Phänomen: Ein Beitrag zu unserer Kenntnis von der Entstehung der altchristlichen "Theologie" und Kultur unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Begriffe Oikonomia und Theologia* (München: M. Hueber, 1963). While Marcus seeks to normalize pre-Nicene subordinationism, his account is directed at determining whether this pre-Nicene subordinationism should be considered some sort of "proto-Arianism." His account is more historically sensitive than most, but it is still drawn into the orbit of Nicene and post-Nicene debates. Daniel Lloyd's recent dissertation also sought to rehabilitate pre-Nicene subordinationism as a measured theological strategy.

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