

The Pattern of the Father: Divine Fatherhood in Gregory of Nazianzus¹

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INTRODUCTION

One of the more evocative elements of Gregory of Nazianzus’s (hereafter, Nazianzen) teaching on the Trinity is that of a “superabundant” one which moves to two and stops at three (*Ors.* 23.8; 29.2). If we associate the “one” with the Father, we see a dynamism which moves out from his person resulting in the eternal generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit. This “dynamic movement” not only moves out from the Father but also returns to him in a convergence within the divine life (*Ors.* 29.2; 20.7; 42.15).

This is the “pattern of the Father” because, according to Nazianzen, the “beginning” and “end” of this pattern is the person of the Father. This pattern is not without antecedents, both philosophical (perhaps Plotinus) and theological (Origen). While these will be briefly explored, the thrust of this article will be concerned with arguing for what we learn of divine

Fatherhood within Nazianzen's theology by taking note of a pattern that begins with priority in the divine life yet is unmistakably mirrored within Nazianzen's thought in the economy of God's actions and human involvement in *θεωρία*. We will see that an account of the monarchy of the Father within the dynamic movements of the Trinity is crucial for understanding Nazianzen's articulation of the unity and diversity of the Godhead. Out to these considerations we will be able to conclude with some thoughts on whether Nazianzen's articulation of the Father entails an understanding of a hierarchy of authority among the Trinitarian relations.

THE PATTERN OBSERVED

Before referring to its manifestations elsewhere, we begin with an extended section from *Or.* 23 that allows us to gain our bearings in observing this dynamic quality of movement that is essential to understanding the Father and the Trinity in Nazianzen:

I ... by positing a source of divinity (*θεότητος ἀρχὴν*) that is independent of time, inseparable, and infinite, honor both the source as well as what issues from the source (*τὴν τε ἀρχὴν τιμῶ καὶ τὰ ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπίσης*): the source because of the nature of the things of which it is the source; the issue, because of their own nature as well as of the nature of the source from which they are derived, because they are disparate neither in time, nor in nature, nor in holiness. They are one in their separation and separate in their conjunction (*ἐν ὄντα διηρημένως καὶ διαιρούμενα συνημμένως*), even if this is a paradoxical statement; revered no less for their mutual relationship than when they are thought of and taken individually; a perfect Trinity of three perfect entities; a monad taking its impetus from its superabundance, a dyad transcended (*Τριάδα τελείαν ἐκ τελείων τριῶν, μονάδος μὲν κινηθείσης διὰ τὸ πλούσιον, δυάδος δὲ ὑπερδαθείσης*) — that is, it goes beyond the form and matter of which bodies consist—, a triad defined by its perfection since it is the first to transcend the synthesis of duality in order that the Godhead might not be constricted or diffused without limit, for constriction is an absence of generosity; diffusion, an absence of order (*Τριάδος δὲ ὀρισθείσης διὰ τὸ τέλειον, πρώτη γὰρ ὑπερβαίνει δυάδος σύνθεσιν, ἵνα μήτε στενὴ μένη θεότης, μήτε εἰς ἄπειρον χέηται. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀφιλότιμον, τὸ δὲ ἄτακτον*). The one is thoroughly Judaic; the other, Greek and polytheistic.²

In his familiar mode of navigating between two erroneous alternatives, Nazianzen's description of source and issue bring together a central concern of his Trinitarian theology: the Triune God's unity and diversity. Each of the three are worthy of equal reverence: the Father because he is the source, and "what issues from the source" because they share the source's nature and holiness. Yet a consideration of both what they share and how they relate brings one to the "generosity" and "order" established by the Father. In seeking to avoid an absence of "generosity" in the Father, Nazianzen is distinguishing Trinitarian faith from what is traditionally "monotheistic." In seeking to uphold the ordered relations emerging from the Father, Nazianzen is protecting Trinitarian thought from diffusing into what is "polytheistic." Weaving these various elements together, Nazianzen uses the dynamic image of a "superabundant" monad that, because of its generous character, cannot but issue forth into a dyad. Yet, to settle there would be to suggest a constriction held in duality. Consequently, a triad speaks to a generous perfection that flows out of the "superabundant" one—that is, the Father—yet is, nonetheless, ordered within particular relations. With this image of a move from a monad to a dyad to a triad Nazianzen is addressing what he sees as the dynamic nature of the Trinity, containing within it a certain "divine movement" that is set in motion from the Father leading to the Son and Spirit. The dynamic movement that Nazianzen portrays within the Trinity necessarily entails a logical "starting point," and so causes the knower to "start" with the Father as it is his superabundance that prompts the dynamic movement. This "outward" manifestation of the abundance of the one, the Father, also dynamically returns.

The "return" of the movement converging on the "one" brings us to a famous passage from Nazianzen's "third theological oration" concerning the monarchy. We will evaluate the contested aspect of the divine monarchy in Nazianzen later in this article. For now, though, we simply observe in *Or.* 29.2 this notion of "return:"

Monarchy (μοναρχία) is what we hold in honor—but not a monarchy that is contained in a single person (μοναρχία δὲ, οὐχ ἦν ἐν περιγράφει πρόσωπον) (after all, it is possible for a self-discordant one to become a plurality) but one that is constituted by equality of nature, harmony of will, identity of action, and the convergence to the one of what comes from it (ἀλλ' ἦν φύσεως ὁμοτιμία

συνίστησι, καὶ γνώμης σύμπνοια, καὶ ταυτότης κινήσεως, καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῶν ἑξ αὐτοῦ σύννευσις) ..., so that while there is numerical distinction, there is no division in the substance (τῆ γε οὐσία μὴ τέμνεσθαι). For this reason, from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) a monad is moved to a dyad and stops at a triad. And this means for us the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The [Father] is begetter and producer (ὁ μὲν γεννήτωρ καὶ προβολεύς), to be certain without passion, and without reference to time, and not in a physical manner. But of the others, the [Son] is begotten, the [Spirit] is produced (τῶν δέ, τὸ μὲν γέννημα, τὸ δὲ πρόβλημα)—I do not know how to express this in any way that does not reference visible things.³

Intermingled with a mode of philosophical explanation, Nazianzen is here speaking to the dynamic movement in the Godhead we noted in *Or.* 23.8. This dynamic nature raises the question of upholding both a “starting point” of the Godhead and its unceasing movement, a potential tension we will return to later. For now, it is enough take note of this pattern within the divine life in order to set up a reference of its use within three realms, to which we now turn.

The first realm is creation. The notion of a dynamic outward movement within a Trinitarian frame is vaguely portrayed in his oration *On the Theophany* when in *Or.* 38.9 Nazianzen addresses the apparent “first” creation of the angels and other spiritual beings. God is a “superabundant” “Goodness” that is not “set in motion simply by contemplating itself, but the Good needed to be poured out, to undertake a journey (ἀλλ' ἔδει χεθῆναι τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ὁδεῦσαι), so that there might be more beings to receive its benefits—for this, after all, is the height of Goodness! (τῆς ἄκρας ἢν ἀγαθότητος)—it first thought of the angelic, heavenly powers; and that thought was an action, brought to fulfillment in the Word and made perfect in the Spirit (λόγω συμπληρούμενον καὶ Πνεύματι τελειούμενον).”⁴ He goes on to describe their existence as being “immovable (ἀκινήτους)” towards what is evil but moveable towards the good, “since they surround God and are the first glimmerings to shine forth from God (τὰ πρῶτα ἐκ Θεοῦ λαμπομένας); for beings in this world belong to a second phase of that shining”⁵ (This gesture toward light and its shining in conjunction with dynamic movement is also a theme to which we shall return.). After taking note of the lesson Satan provides for the stubborn possibility of movement toward evil in the immaterial order of creation, Nazianzen goes on in 38.10 to refer to the “second world (δεύτερον

... κόσμον)” God brought into being. He suggests a parallel structure to this “material and visible (ὕλικὸν καὶ ὁρώμενον)” creation, which, along with the immaterial creation, is “praiseworthy for the natural excellence of each of its parts, but still more praiseworthy for the proportion and harmony of all them to the whole, in order to bring a single, ordered universe to completion (εἰς ἑνὸς κόσμου συμπλήρωσιν).”⁶ We find hints here of the dynamic movement reflective of the divine life while also notions of unity and diversity held together. In this creation of both the immaterial and material worlds Nazianzen remarkably states, “[God reveals] his own nature to himself (δείξει ... οικείαν ἑαυτῷ φύσιν).”⁷

The second re-instantiation of Nazianzen’s dynamic pattern of divine life is the mirroring of creation in the redemptive mission of the incarnate Son found several chapters later in *Or.* 38.15. He sets up this section by meditating upon the creation of humanity in paradise and the subsequent introduction of sin into the world. God provided many remedies for sin but, in the end, Nazianzen reads the coming of the Word as the provision of a “stronger medicine (ισχυροτέρου ... φαρμάκου)”⁸ needed to root out finally the pernicious root of sin. It is in the sending of the “enfleshed Word” that we see again the dynamics of which we are taking note: “Think of the good pleasure of the Father as a mission (Τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀποστολήν), and that [the Son] refers all that is his back to him (ἐφ’ ὃν ἀναφέρει τὰ ἑαυτοῦ), both because he reveres him as his timeless source (ἀρχὴν τιμῶν ἄχρονον) and in order to not seem to be God’s competitor.”⁹ The Son is sent by the Father on a mission. While his title as Son is an expression of equal honor with the Father, his status as the “sent one” who “refers all that is his back to [the Father]” brings attention to the status of the Father as one who sends and receives back.

The third and final re-instantiation of the pattern is found in Nazianzen’s description of illumination. In the “fifth theological oration” we see him relate the progressive revelation of the Trinity throughout salvation history and the Spirit’s epistemic priority. In the Trinitarian *taxis*, the revelation of the Spirit stands in “third place,” as it were, as a result of the preparation for the coming of the Son and, then, the Spirit’s “gradual” revelation by the Son within the course of his earthly ministry culminating in his ascension. Within *Or.* 31.26-29 specifically, Nazianzen speaks of the gradual revelation of the Spirit, in accord with the disciples’ capability to receive him. It is a light that

shines “bit by bit” or “gradually” (κατὰ μέρος).¹⁰ Even though Nazianzen is primarily speaking here of a grand view of God’s revelation of himself in salvation history, he is secondarily suggesting and then outlining the Spirit’s unique work within the seeker—including “illumination (φωτιστικόν):”¹¹

The old covenant proclaimed the Father clearly (Ἐκήρυσσε φανερώς ἡ Παλαιὰ τὸν Πατέρα), the Son more obscurely. The new covenant manifested the Son and suggested the divinity of the Spirit. Now, the Spirit resides amongst us (Ἐμπολιτεύεται νῦν τὸ Πνεῦμα), giving to us a clearer demonstration of himself But by gradual additions, “ascents” (ἀναβάσεις) as David said (Psalm 84:7), and by progress and advances “from glory to glory” (2 Cor 3:18), that the light of the Trinity should shine with greater clarity (τὸ τῆς Τριάδος φῶς ἐκλάμψει τοῖς λαμπροτέροις).¹²

The Father as source is evident again, from whom comes the manifestation of his Son. In a fully Trinitarian sweep, now there is the Spirit perfecting the revelation of the Trinity. It is the Spirit who consequently turns us in a course back to the Father through illumination. According to Nazianzen, illumination is needed in order to enter into a vision of God within which is Trinitarian nature of God is progressively revealed.

While we can trace here dynamic notions of going out and returning, it is through probing further into Nazianzen’s understanding of illumination that we begin to glimpse the nuances of his Trinitarian doctrine that will ultimately come into play when we make conclusions regarding the Father. The connections between illumination, vision, and the Spirit are sometimes implied and other times made more explicit in Nazianzen’s writings. It is in his use of the imagery of light, specifically when he speaks of the Spirit as *light*, that the connections come together. The Spirit is not simply one of the lights of the Trinity, an object of our spiritual vision—he enables “access” to the other divine lights. In the words of *Or.* 41.9, “[H]e is light and distributes light. . . . He is the Spirit. . . through whom the Father is known and the Son glorified, and by whom alone he is known (φῶς καὶ χορηγὸν φότης . . . Πνεῦμα . . . δι’ οὗ Πατὴρ γινώσκεται καὶ Υἱὸς δοξάζεται καὶ παρ’ ὧν μόνων γινώσκεται)”¹³ Put simply: the vision of God is *enabled* by the illuminating Spirit. The Spirit has primary epistemological importance, which is to say the content of *θεωρία* that we receive through illumination is *first received* on

account of the Spirit. In *Or.* 31.3, Nazianzen explains this dynamic through David's prophetic vision in Psalm 36:9: "In your light we shall see light." He then puts this "Trinitarianly," "We receive the Son's light from the Father's light in the light of the Spirit (ἐκ φωτὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς φῶς καταλαμβάνοντες τὸν Υἱὸν ἐν φωτὶ τῷ Πνεύματι)."14 In terms of the pattern, just as in the life of the Trinity, the Father is the source whose light is comprehended in light, so through the Spirit's illuminating work wrought in *θεωρία* we are led to the other divine persons by "adding" light to light. Clarity on what ultimately guides and orders this vision is the subject we are exploring.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF THE PATTERN

We will pick up *θεωρία* and themes of light in Nazianzen again as we attempt to reach some conclusions on the Father within his thought. Before that, though, let us briefly comment on the potential sources of the dynamic pattern we have been observing. As is well-known, Nazianzen is not in the habit of explicitly sourcing aspects of his theology, so it is difficult to know with any precision whom he appropriated and where. We can be fairly certain, however, of a measure of influence on the pattern in question from, first, a theological and, then, a philosophical source.

The likely theological source is, not surprisingly, Origen of Alexandria. Due to the appropriation of Origen's legacy by anti-Nicene theologians, Nazianzen had to be subtle in the ways he marshaled the Alexandrian theologian's categories. The schema of moving from the Father to the Son and to the Spirit, and then returning to the Father as the "goal" with which perfection is associated can be found in Origen's *De Principiis* I 3, 8:

God the Father of all things gives to beings existence (*Deus pater omnibus praestat ut sint*); participation in Christ, who is word or reason, makes them rational. From this it follows that they are worthy of praise or blame, because they are capable alike of virtue and of wickedness. Accordingly there is also available the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that those beings who are not holy by their nature may be made holy by participating in him (*ut ea que substantialiter sancta non sunt, participatione ipsius sancta efficiantur*). When therefore they obtain first their being from God the Father, secondly their rational nature from the Word, and thirdly their holiness from the Holy Spirit (*Cum ergo primo ut sint habeant ex*

deo patre, secundo ut rationabilia sint habeant ex uerbo, tertio ut sancta sint habeant ex spiritu sancto), they become capable again of receiving Christ in respect that he is the righteousness of God, those, that is, who have been previously sanctified through the Holy Spirit; and those who have been deemed worthy to advance to this degree through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, nevertheless will obtain the gift of wisdom according to the power of the working of Spirit of God (*et qui in hunc gradum proficere meruerint per sanctificationem spiritus sancti, consequuntur nihilominus donum sapientiae secundum uirtutem inoperationis spiritus dei*). And this is what I think Paul means when he says that “to some is given the word of wisdom, to others the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit” (1 Cor 12:8). And while pointing out the distinction of each separate gift, he refers all of them to the source of everything when he says, “There are diversities of operations, but one God, who works all in all” (1 Cor 12:6).¹⁵

We note that Origen is here describing the Trinitarian activity of God in creation but then he reverses the Trinitarian *taxis* (ordering or relations) in order to describe how “rational beings” are perfected through “ascent” to the Father. This is a deft mirroring of creation and redemption in the guise of a trinitarian divinization where the final stage of the progression is participation in God the Father. Karen Jo Torjesen details the process of “returning” to the Father,

[For perfection] there are stages which they must pass through, each of which is the appropriate preparation for the next. The work of the Holy Spirit is purification. He is the principle of holiness. Through participation in the Holy Spirit the soul itself becomes holy. This is the preparation stage which makes it possible for the soul to receive the wisdom and knowledge of Christ. As Logos, Christ is wisdom and knowledge and the soul receives the gifts of wisdom and knowledge through participation in the Logos. The final stage of this progression is participation in God the Father. Participation in the perfection of the Father means the perfection of the soul, its own complete likeness to God or divinization.¹⁶

There are obvious commonalities within Nazianzen to this Trinitarian schema in Origen. The shape and order is determined by the Father. What is more, just as the Father is source of the realm of creation as well as spiritual life, he is of a position to receive back the movement of spiritual growth found

in his creatures inhabited by the Holy Spirit. Not surprisingly, the hierarchical element within Origen's Trinitarian theology is pronounced within his articulation of this schema, as perfection is equated with the Father who stands as the one fully divine. Nonetheless, what shines through as potential framing influence on Nazianzen is the integration of a dynamic movement among the Trinitarian persons out from and returning to the Father, which is discerned through a spiritual progression.

The philosophical sources of Nazianzen's thought are complex and his appropriation largely contingent on their usefulness in articulating the unity and diversity of the Triune God. As John Dillon has pointed out, it seems there is a clear connection with a Plotinian schema in Nazianzen's pattern of the Father, though it must be viewed through a Porphyrian filter. Porphyry provides, Dillon contends, the metaphysical understanding for Nazianzen and other pro-Nicene theologians to appropriate the reality of co-ordinate persons within the Godhead.¹⁷ While Plotinus' hierarchical triad of the One, the Intellect, and the Soul asserts separation inimical to the equality of divine persons, his articulation of the triadic schema proved quite fertile for Nazianzen's conception of the "dynamic three." First there is a parallel noted by Dillon in the passage already quoted in *Or.* 29.2, where there is a movement from the Father which goes out and returns to him. In *Enn.* V, 2, 1, Plotinus states,

This, we may say, is the first act of generation (γέννησις): the One (ὄν), perfect because it seeks nothing, has nothing, and needs nothing, overflows (ὑπερρρύη), as it were, and its superabundance (τὸ ὑπερπλήρες αὐτοῦ) makes something other than itself. This, when it has come into being, turns back upon the One and is filled, and becomes Intellect by looking towards it (εἰς αὐτὸ ἐπεστράφη καὶ ἐπληρώθη καὶ ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπον καὶ νοῦς). Its halt and turning towards the One constitutes being, its gaze upon the One, Intellect (καὶ ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο στάσις αὐτοῦ τὸ ὄν ἐποίησεν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ θέα τὸν νοῦν).¹⁸

While Dillon is right to note the metaphysical incompatibility in Plotinus, the overlap in schema with Nazianzen—of going out and returning—is striking. Beyond schema, in *Or.* 29.2 there is also the direct use of the language of "convergence" (σύννευσις), which is explicitly found in *Enn.* III, 8, 11. Here Plotinus is commenting on the Good and the Intellect. Plotinus asserts the

simple independence of the Good that is in need of nothing. The Intellect, however, is completed by gazing upon the Good, the Good leaving a trace upon the Intellect through its influence. Plotinus writes,

The Good ... has given the trace of itself on Intellect to Intellect to have by seeing, so that in Intellect there is desire, and it is always desiring and always attaining (ἐπ' αὐτοῦ ἔχνοσ αὐτοῦ τῷ νῶ ὁρῶντι ἔδωκεν ἔχειν· ὥστε ἐν μὲν τῷ νῶ ἡ ἔφεσις καὶ ἐφιέμενος ἀεὶ καὶ ἀεὶ τυγχάνω), but the Good is not desiring—for what could it desire?—or attaining, for it did not desire [to attain anything]. So it is not even Intellect. For in Intellect there is desire and a movement to convergence (σύννευσις) with its form.¹⁹

Plotinus goes on to describe the Intellect in terms of light, the shadows of which are seen in “this beautiful universe (ὁ καλὸς οὗτος κόσμος).” Illumination is, of course, first received from the Intellect by turning toward the Good. This desire and move toward the Good that produces illumination in the Intellect pictures the dynamism of Nazianzen’s pattern, even if carries overtones of dependence contrary to pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. What is interesting is the Plotinian use of light to describe ability to move toward the Good, for it is Nazianzen’s use of light imagery that will add to not only the dynamism of Trinitarian life but also its discernment in *θεωρία*. This is not to draw a direct line from Plotinus to Nazianzen in their appropriation of light imagery, but for both it appears to evoke similar themes of dynamism and invitation to understanding while at the same time adding mystery to the depth of that understanding.

Having noted the dynamic Trinitarian pattern and its re-iterations throughout Nazianzen’s corpus with regard to creation, redemption, and illumination, as well as two potential sources of the schema, we are now in a position to observe what the texture of this pattern combined with light imagery might communicate about the Father in particular. In doing so I am well aware I am venturing into contested territory.²⁰ It is certainly my opinion that Nazianzen’s lack of clarity has contributed to the diverging interpretations of his theology when it comes to the place of the Father. While sorting through divergent interpretations of Nazianzen is a worthwhile task, space precludes such an investigation here. For now, my conclusions must be judged in light of the power of this dynamic pattern and the role it plays in providing description to Trinitarian life within Nazianzen’s writings.

THE PATTERN AND THE FATHER

Central to my conclusions regarding this dynamic pattern and the Father is the *monarchia*. There are distinct places within his writings where Nazianzen identifies the Father with the monarchy (e.g., *Ors.* 20.6-7; 23.6-8; 25.15-16). However, as we noted in the consequential passage of *Or.* 29.2 quoted earlier, Nazianzen also appears to identify the *monarchia* with the three persons, rather than being the possession of the Father alone. Nazianzen explicitly states here that he does not uphold the *monarchia* of a single person. Is Nazianzen being inconsistent or simply comfortable being less than clear due to the mystery at hand? In arriving at a conclusion, it is important to note the overall sense of this passage. It and *Or.* 23.8 speak to the dynamic movement of the Godhead among the divine persons. Yet, even within this movement, as Nazianzen goes on to argue in the very next chapter (29.3), the Son and Spirit are *from* the Father. This dynamic nature apparently creates the flexibility to consider that there is a certain irreversibility to the “starting point” of the Godhead *and* that the nature of the “movement” in the Godhead, where the two spring forth from the one in their respective ways, creates a divine receptivity with the monarchy also seen as in some sense possessed by all three. An argument for the complementarity of the Father possessing the monarchy and, because of the dynamism flowing out of the “abundant” Father, speaking of the monarchy being found in all three as well, is strengthened by Nazianzen’s reference to “convergence (σύννευσις)” in this passage. While it must be said his language is vague, it seems that Nazianzen is saying the “extension” of the monarchy beyond the Father is upheld in that there is a convergence toward the source. That is to say, while out of the one abundant Father flow the divine riches possessed by the Son and Spirit, there is a “return” or “convergence” from the Spirit and Son returning to the Father. This hints at the later doctrine of *perichoresis* where there is a dynamic movement of the persons toward one another, though here it certainly seems that movement flows out of and returns to the Father—the “beginning” and “end” of the dynamic movement of the Trinity. Consequently, because of the lack of clarity in Nazianzen’s use of *monarchia*, perhaps it is better to conceive of his thought in terms of the dynamics of Fatherhood and see monarchy as a subset of Fatherly dynamism.

Such an interpretation is perhaps confirmed by examining Nazianzen's flow of thought in *Or.* 42.15. Here he is again dealing with the dynamic nature of the Godhead. He separates "beginning" and "without beginning" from being an element of the nature of God, since "nature is never a designation for what something is not, but for what something is (οὐδεμία γὰρ φύσις ὃ τι μὴ τόδε ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ὃ τι τοδε."²¹ For each of the three persons there is simply one nature: God. That one nature is first associated with the Father:

The unity [among the divine persons] is the Father, from whom and toward whom everything else is referred, not so as to be mixed together in confusion, but so as to be contained, without time or will or power intervening to divide them ("Ἐνωσις δὲ ὁ Πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ καὶ πρὸς ὃν ἀνάγεται τα ἐξῆς οὐχ ὡς συναλείφεισθαι, ἀλλ' ὡς ἔχεσθαι, μὴτε χρόνου διείργοντος μὴτε θελήματος μὴτε δυνάμεως).²²

Tracing Nazianzen's lines of thought is not easy. He is dealing in a variety of contexts with differing theological enemies, often with rhetorical constructions designed more to evoke the mysterious character of his subject than provide crystal clarity. Nonetheless, we gain an overall sense of the dynamic nature of the Triune God in his thought when we consider the Father. From the Father we see Nazianzen's willingness to associate the unity of the three with him, "God" in the primary position of the Son and Spirit coming from him. Yet, as the two come from him, they "return" to him, in the words of Brian Daley, in a "timeless, unchanging rhythm."²³ Thus it is appropriate, in a certain sense, to say the Father's monarchy is the monarchy of the whole Godhead for in the dynamic, superabundant life springing forth from him there is a movement that goes from one to two to three only to return back to him in unity.

CONCLUSION

The dynamic movements of the Trinitarian persons within Nazianzen's thought provide understanding for the variety of ways he articulates the *monarchia*. I think we are on firm footing in stating Nazianzen holds to the monarchy of *the Father*, so long as that is understood within the dynamic movements of the Godhead—perhaps it would be better, though, to highlight dynamic Fatherhood and consider Nazianzen's notions of monarchy

according to it. That is to say, we are able to account for the variety of ways Nazianzen articulates the monarchy if we connect it to both the Father and the dynamic movements of the Godhead. And rather than this seeking to probe more deeply into the divine mystery than is appropriate, such an account adds to the overall mystery.

When Nazianzen begins probing the divine mystery of the Trinity, he highlights that not only does mystery designate the nature of God; it especially refers to the Father. The very construction and content of Nazianzen's "multi-volumed" works on the Trinity (if I may so call the *Poemata Arcana* and *Theological Orations*) indicate nothing much at all can be said of the Father in a direct sense. Only by examining his relations of derivation with the Son and Spirit do we begin to move out of apophatic determinations of who he is. Within the Triune relations we do understand the Father's unique position as the "starting point"—as the origin and cause—and so to conceive the monarchy as his unique possession is appropriate. As Father, this means he never becomes Father, nor accumulates anything to his "fatherhood," nor loses it—he is always Father in the distinctive manner in which he has one eternal Son, and from him come both the Son and Spirit.²⁴ Yet to consider Fatherhood as "dynamic" takes into account the sense of movement within the Trinity, where all that is the Father's springs forth in the Son and Spirit and then returns as the Son and Spirit converge upon their source. Such movements create that "timeless, unchanging rhythm" within the Godhead resulting in the rather fluid vision of unity and diversity Nazianzen returns to again and again. One such statement is found in the famous passage of *Or* 40.41: "When I first know the one I am also illumined from all sides by the three; when I first distinguish the three I am also carried back to the one (Οὐ φθάνω τὸ ἕν νοῆσαι καὶ τοῖς τρισὶ περιλάμπομαι· οὐ φθάνω τὰ τρία διελεῖν καὶ εἰς τὸ ἕν ἀναφέρομαι)."²⁵ The fluidity of this vision—even its "virtual simultaneity"—matches the fluidity of the divine life itself as described by Nazianzen.

As Nazianzen contemplates God he is not led to a nature with certain common attributes that set it apart. He is led, rather, to the divinity of the *Father*—the "personal way of the supreme being's existence: how he is; how he acts."²⁶ This means the integration of *θεωρία* and *θεολογία* within Nazianzen's thought entails a "journey" through the personal relations of the Godhead. From the standpoint of the seeker, the Spirit plays a crucial

role in “casting” the contemplative vision: he “brings” light to the knower; he illuminates the seeker; he opens up the possibility of divine knowledge. But that vision opened up by the Spirit carries the theologian in the convergence to the “one” then out to the “three” and then, again, to the “one.” This “dizzying” *θεωρία* is a product of the Father’s initial “action”—the Father as *verb*—that gives rise to the divine life manifest in three distinct persons. Yet, these divine persons are continually moving toward one another rather than existing in static separation.

The generative power “moving out” from the Father is not explicitly characterized as that of “love” within Nazianzen, nor the convergence; but the “rhythmic” going forth and returning has the Father as the beginning and end. Such a rhythmic reciprocity patterns the “give and return” that marks the dynamics of biblical love (e.g., Eph 5:1-2). *Fatherhood* in Nazianzen, then, has a fruitful and self-giving quality, setting love “in motion” and enabling its full reception, even compelling its return. Such movements are most clear and defined in his Trinitarian description as discerned through *θεωρία*, yet they are even glimpsed in the aforementioned movements out from the Father resulting in creation and redemption. As creatures receive the strong medicine of the Word, they are drawn back to the good Father in order to receive his benefits. His Fatherhood is an unceasing generous fount with dynamics “spilling out” of the eternal life in order to bring divine goods to creatures in and through the Son and Spirit.

The Spirit’s involvement in this “rhythmic reciprocity” is crucial, for he is often presented by Nazianzen as the “perfection” of the Trinity. It is he that enables the “dyad” to move beyond constriction as another eternally equal manifestation of the Father’s generosity. Nazianzen’s theological attention to the status of the Spirit as eternally proceeding from the Father is not incidental to the overall role he plays in his Trinitarian vision. His essential epistemological role is in opening up to human beings knowledge of the divine light. That is to say, he brings “illumination” even as he draws one into the threefold light of the Godhead. His drawing in, however, follows the “rhythms” of the Godhead, so that convergence upon the unity of the Father is the lodestar of that vision.

Yet, rather than the vision “settling” on the Father’s light, it moves out and in among the dazzling threefold lights of the Godhead. Is there something here of there being too much light to take in, so it races to and fro?

Is there something to the Father that “repels” attention as his selfless generosity moves “outward” to the other persons? Whatever is the case, the connections between light imagery, the Spirit, and the contemplation of the Triune character of God deepens our consideration of the mystery of the Father. Movement toward the source of light never settles but sends one back out only to return again and again as the seeker is drawn into an infinite source of light that gradually illumines even as it continually exceeds one’s grasp.

The extensive consideration given to the *dynamic* nature of the Fatherhood of God has the result of mitigating overly rigid notions of rank or position within the Godhead, and, consequently, heeds Nazianzen’s warning not to “show a perverse reverence for divine monarchy (τὴν μοναρχίαν κακῶς τιμῆσης).”²⁷ Interestingly, this strong warning comes soon after one of Nazianzen’s clearest assertions of the Father’s monarchy.²⁸ On the one hand, Nazianzen’s teaching on the monarchy of the Father is quite traditional and occupies an essential place in his Trinitarian theology. On the other hand, his conception of the teaching in terms of the dynamic outflow and convergence has a “balancing” effect on notions of rank and position that are often emphasized in light of the monarchy. This brings us briefly again to the persistent suggestion within Nazianzen’s teaching of the later doctrine of *perichoresis*. To be sure, Nazianzen himself did not elaborate on this term. But within the sweep of his thought we see the divine persons in or with one another through a dynamic movement toward unity. While the convergence is upon the source, that is, the Father, it entails the co-presence of each of the divine persons. Consequently, Nazianzen has found a way to at times clearly uphold a traditional sense of the monarchy of the Father while at the same time providing the “theological tools” for a robust expression of divine three-in-oneness.

Such being the case, categories like relational “authority” in recent evangelical Trinitarian theology are out of place within the structures or Nazianzen’s thought. While there is one way of reading the *monarchia* in Trinitarian theology that carries with it the entailment of the Father having authority within the Trinity, according to Pro-Nicene theologians, such as Nazianzen, subsequent positions of subordination among the divine persons do not follow. In a bare sense “authority” could denote origin (*auctor*) and so would not be completely foreign to Nazianzen’s view of the Father as the

source (ἀρχή) or cause (αἴτιος). In its more robust connotations, however, it communicates such notions as a division of power or eliciting obedience within the eternal Trinity. These are ideas Gregory would see as foreign to the unity of the Godhead, even if that unity finds its impulse in the Father.²⁹ Inversely, “subordination” could denote simply being “ordered under,” an idea again consistent with Nazianzen’s use of ἀρχή and αἴτιος for the Father and the consequent *taxis* of the Trinity. Such a claim, though, must be so carefully nuanced in order to avoid misunderstanding that it is generally unhelpful. Indeed, Nazianzen would find use of subordination language as dividing the glorious unity of the Godhead:

We do not weigh out the Godhead, nor do we divorce the one and inaccessible nature from itself by unnatural differences (Οὐ γὰρ θεότητα ταλαντεύομεν οὐδὲ τὴν μίαν καὶ ἀπρόσιτον φύσιν ἀποξενούμεν ἑαυτῆς ἐκφύλοις ἀλλοτριότησιν). Nor do we cure one evil by another, dissolving the impious contraction of Sabellius by a more impious separation and division (διαρέσει καὶ κατατομῇ). This was the disease of Arius ... Without honoring the Father, he dishonored what proceeded from him by maintaining unequal degrees in the Godhead (διὰ τῶν ἀνίσων βαθμῶν τῆς θεότητος). But we recognize one glory of the Father, the equality of the Only-begotten, and one glory of the Son, the equality of the Holy Spirit. And we believe that to subordinate anything of the three is to destroy the whole. We venerate and acknowledge three with respect to attributes; one, with respect to Godhead (Καὶ ὁ τι ἂν τῶν τριῶν κάτω θῶμεν, τὸ πᾶν καθαιρεῖν νομίζομεν, τρία μὲν ταῖς ιδιότησιν, ἓν δὲ τῇ θεότητι σέβοντες καὶ γινώσκοντες).³⁰

It is no question that, consistent with other Pro-Nicene theologians, Nazianzen’s Trinitarianism involves a delicate balance that accounts for the precise relation between order and equality among the divine persons. The Father is at the center of that “balance”—indeed, he is crucial for holding these claims together.³¹

Nazianzen’s theology is a rhetorical theology requiring our attention to the *way* he argues as much as to the words he uses. There is a suppleness to the theological constructions he chooses to employ depending on the enemies before him and whether he is writing verse or speaking an oration. Finding absolute consistency of expression among these is a fool’s errand. Gregory had several ways of putting his teaching. Nevertheless, this article

has sought to enter into the structures of his Trinitarian thought in order to find a coherence to the unity and diversity of the Godhead through a dynamic conception of the Fatherhood of God.

¹ A version of this article was presented as a paper at the 2016 annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society.

² Or. 23.8; SC 270:296-298, 1-15; Vinson, 137: Ἐγὼ...θεότητος ἀρχὴν εἰσάγων ἄχρονον καὶ ἀχώριστον καὶ ἀόριστον τὴν τε ἀρχὴν τιμῶ καὶ τὰ ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπίσης τὴν μέν, ὅτι τοιούτων ἀρχὴ τὰ δέ, ὅτι οὕτως καὶ τοιαῦτα καὶ ἐκ τοιούτου μῆτε τῷ ποτὲ μῆτε τῇ φύσει μῆτε τῷ σεπτῷ διεργόμενα, ἐν ὄντα διηρημένως καὶ διαιρούμενα συνημμένως εἰ καὶ παράδοξον τοῦτο εἰπεῖν οὐχ ἦτον ἐπαινετὰ τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσεως ἢ καθ' ἑαυτὸ ἕκαστον νοουμένον τε καὶ λαμβανόμενον. Τριάδα τελείαν ἐκ τελείων τριῶν, μονάδος μὲν κινήσεως διὰ τὸ πλούσιον, δυάδος δὲ ὑπερδαθείσης ~ ὑπὲρ γὰρ τὴν ἕλην καὶ τὸ εἶδος, ἐξ ὧν τὰ σώματα ~, Τριάδος δὲ ὀρισθείσης διὰ τὸ τέλειον, πρώτη γὰρ ὑπερβαίνει δυάδος σύνθεσιν, ἵνα μῆτε στενὴ μὲν θεότης, μῆτε εἰς ἄπειρον χέηται. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀφιλότιμον, τὸ δὲ ἄτακτον καὶ τὸ μὲν ἰουδαϊκὸν παντελῶς, τὸ δὲ ἑλληνικὸν καὶ πολύθεον.

In my examination of Or. 23 I have made use of Martha Vinson's English translation, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: Select Orations* (The Fathers of the Church 107; Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003) and the Greek in *Discours 20-23* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1980).

Even though Nazianzen does not directly refer here to the Father as the source and the Son and Spirit as "what issues from he source," it is my understanding that this passage cannot be understood within his Trinitarian theology other than by these associations.

³ SC 250:178, 6-18; Wickham, 70: Ἡμῖν δὲ μοναρχία τὸ τιμώμενον μοναρχία δὲ, οὐχ ἦν ἐν περιγραφῇ πρόσωπον ~ ἐστὶ γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἐν στασιάζον πρὸς ἑαυτὸ πολλὰ καθίστασθαι ~ ἀλλ' ἦν φύσεως ὁμοτιμία συνίτησι, καὶ γνώμης σύμψνοια, καὶ ταυτότης κινήσεως, καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ σύννευσις... ὥστε κἀν ἀριθμῷ διαφέρει, τῇ γε οὐσία μὴ τέμνεσθαι. Διὰ τοῦτο μονάς ((ἀπ' ἀρχῆς)), εἰς δυάδα κινήσεια, μέχρι τριάδος ἐσθι. Καὶ τοῦτο ἐστὶν ἡμῖν ὁ Πατήρ, καὶ ὁ Υἱός, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα ὁ μὲν γεννητῶρ καὶ προβολεύς, λέγω δὲ ἀπαθῶς, καὶ ἀχρόνως, καὶ ἀσωμάτως τῶν δέ, τὸ μὲν γέννημα, τὸ δὲ πρόβλημα, ἢ οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἂν τις ταῦτα καλέσειεν, ἀφελῶν πάντη τῶν ὁρωμένων.

In my examination of the *Theological Orations* I have made use of Frederick Williams and Lionel Wickham's English translation, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002) and the Greek in *Discours 27-31* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1978).

⁴ SC 358:120, 1-6; Daley, 121: τὸ κινεῖσθαι μόνον τῇ ἀετῆς θεωρίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἔδει χεθῆναι τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ὀδεῦσαι, ὡς πλείονα εἶναι τὰ εὐεργετούμενα ~ τοῦτο γὰρ τῆς ἄκρας ἦν ἀγαθότητος ~, πρῶτον μὲν ἐννοεῖ τὰς ἀγγελικὰς δυνάμεις καὶ οὐρανίους καὶ τὸ ἐννόημα ἔργον ἦν, Λόγω συμπληρούμενον καὶ Πνεύματι τελειοῦμενον.

In my examination of Ors. 38 I have made use of Brian Daley's English translation, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (The Early Church Fathers; London: Routledge, 2006) the Greek in *Discours 38-41* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1990).

⁵ SC 358:120, 12-13; Daley, 121: ἄτε περὶ Θεὸν οὐσας καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἐκ Θεοῦ λαμπομένας τὰ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα, δευτέρας ἐλλάμψεως.

⁶ SC 358:122, 6-9; Daley, 121: ἐπαινετὸν μὲν τῆς καθ' ἕκαστον εὐφυνίας, ἀξιεπαινετώτερον δὲ τῆς ἐξ ἀπάντων εὐαρμοστίας καὶ συμφωνίας, ἄλλου πρὸς ἄλλο τι καλῶς ἔχοντος καὶ πάντων πρὸς ἅπαντα, εἰς ἐνὸς κόσμου συμπλήρωσιν.

⁷ SC 358:122, 10; Daley, 121.

⁸ Or. 38.13; SC 358:132, 8; Daley, 123.

⁹ Or. 38.25; SC 358:138, 4-6; Daley, 125: Τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀποστολὴν εἶναι νόμισον, ἐρ' ὃν ἀναφέρει τὰ ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ ὡς ἀρχὴν τιμῶν ἄχρονον καὶ τοῦ μὴ δοκεῖν εἶναι ἀντίθεος.

¹⁰ Or. 31.27; SC 250:328, 1; Wickham, 138.

¹¹ Or. 31.29; SC 250:334, 30; Wickham, 140.

¹² Or. 31.26; SC 250:325, 4-17; Wickham, 137: Ἐκῆρυσσε φανερώς ἡ Παλαιὰ τὸν Πατέρα, τὸν Υἱὸν ἀμυδρότερον. Ἐφανέρωσεν ἡ Καινὴ τὸν Υἱόν, ὑπέδειξε τὸ Πνεύματος τὴν θεότητα. Ἐμπολιτεύεται νῦν τὸ Πνεῦμα, σαφεστέρων ἡμῖν παρέχον τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δῆλωσιν... ταῖς δὲ κατὰ μέρος προσθήκαις, καὶ, ὡς εἶπεν Δαυὶδ, ((ἀναβάσσει)), καὶ ((ἐκ δόξης εἰς δόξαν)) προόδους καὶ προκοπαῖς, τὸ τῆς Τριάδος φῶς ἐκλάμψιεν τοῖς λαμπροτέροις.

- ¹³ SC 358:334-336, 15-23; Harrison, 151-152. In my examination of *Or.* 41 I have made use of the Nonna Verna Harrison's English translation, *Festal Orations* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008) and the Greek in *Discours 38-41* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1990).
- ¹⁴ *Or.* 31.3; SC 250:280, 20-21; Wickham, 118.
- ¹⁵ *Prin.* 1 3, 8; SC 252:162, 272-292; Butterfield, 48-49: *Deus pater omnibus praestat ut sint, participatio uero Christi secundus id, quod uerbum (uel ratio) est, facit ea esse rationalia. Ex quo consequens est ea uel laude digna esse uel culpa, quia et uirtutis et malitiae sunt capacia. Propter hoc consequenter adest etiam gratia spiritus sancti, ut ea que substantialiter sancta non sunt, participatione ipsius sancta efficiantur. Cum ergo primo ut sint habeant ex deo patre, secundo ut rationalia sint habeant ex uerbo, tertio ut sancta sint habeant ex spiritu sancto : rursus Christi secundus hoc, quod iustitia dei est, capacia efficiuntur ea, quae iam sanctificata ante fuerint per spiritum sanctum ; et qui in hunc gradum proficere meruerint per sanctificationem spiritus sancti, consequuntur nihilominus donum sapientiae secundum uirtutem inoperationis spiritus dei. Et hoc puto Paulus dicere, cum ait quibusdam sermonem dari sapientiae, aliis sermonem scientiae secundum eundem spiritum. Et designans unanquamque discretionem donorum, referat omnia ad uniuersitatis fontem et dicit: Diuisiones sunt inoperationum, sed unus deus, qui operatur omnia in omnibus.*
 In my examination of *Prin.* I have made use of the English translation by G. W. Butterworth in *Our First Principles* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2013) and the Greek in *Origène: Traité Des Principes, Tome I* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1978).
- ¹⁶ *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1986), 71.
- ¹⁷ John Dillon, "Logos and Trinity," in *The Philosophy in Christianity* (ed., Godfrey Vesey, 1-14; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 10-14. Dillon writes, "For Porphyry..., the First Principle is the Father of the intelligible triad. This betokens a significant simplification even of Plotinus' metaphysical scheme, and is certainly in stark contrast to the much greater elaboration of those of Iamblichus and his successors.... Porphyry also, however, maintained the absolute transcendence of the first God.... For Porphyry, it would seem, the first principle, the Father, while maintaining his "incomparable superiority", also presides over a triad made up of Potency of Life, and Activity (*energeia*) or Intellect. The fact that the Intellect contemplates the Father, in so far as it can (and we must suppose that Porphyry maintained the distinction made by Plotinus between the One in itself and the One as object of intellection), does not compromise the Father's non-co-ordination with anything else ... Only in Porphyry's version of the doctrine [of the triad], itself a creative development on *Chaldaean Oracles*, do we find what we want, and even in Porphyry there are subtleties which most Christians missed, or chose to miss. Porphyry does seem to distinguish between the One (a term he still maintained), or Father, viewed "in himself", and the One as object of intellection (*noeton*), in which capacity he is properly "Father of the noetic triad". He was thus able to accept all of Plotinus' characterizations of the One, while still "telescoping" it into what in later Neoplatonism, certainly (from Iamblichus on), was seen as a quite distinct level of reality, the Intelligible, or One-Being."
- ¹⁸ Armstrong, *Ennead V*, 58-59: *καὶ πρώτη οἷον γέννησις αὐτῆ· ὃν γὰρ τέλειον τῷ μηδὲν ζήτησι μηδὲ εἶσθαι οἷον ὑπερεπέρῃ καὶ τὸ ὑπερπλήρες αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο· τὸ δὲ γενόμενον εἰς αὐτὸ ἐπεστράφη καὶ ἐπληρώθη καὶ ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπον καὶ νοῦς οὗτος. καὶ ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο στάσις αὐτοῦ τὸ ὃν ἐποίησεν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ θέα τὸν νοῦν.* In my examination of the *Enneads* I have made use of both the English translations and Greek of A. H. Armstrong, trans., *Ennead*, 6 vols. (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966-88).
- ¹⁹ Armstrong, *Ennead III*, 398-401: *Τὸ μὲν... ἐπ' αὐτοῦ ἵχνος αὐτοῦ τῷ νῷ ὁρῶντι ἔδωκεν ἔχειν ὥστε ἐν μὲν τῷ νῷ ἡ φρεσις καὶ ἐπιμένους αἰ καὶ αἰ τυχάνων, ἐκεῖ<νο> δὲ οὕτε ἐπιμένους—τινος γάρ;—οὔτε τυχάνων· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπιέτω. Οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ νοῦς. "Φρεσις γὰρ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ καὶ σύννευσις πρὸς τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ.*
- ²⁰ For diverging views, see: Christopher Beeley, "Divine Causality and the Monarchy of God the Father in Gregory of Nazianzus," *HTR* 100:2 (2007): 199-214; idem, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Richard Cross, "Divine Monarchy in Gregory of Nazianzus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14 (2006): 105-16; Volker Henning Drecoll, "Remarks on Christopher Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God. In your Light We Shall See Light*," *SJT* 64:4 (2011): 456-473; John Egan, "Primal Cause and Trinitarian Perichoresis in Gregory Nazianzen's *Oration 31.14*," *SP* 27 (1993): 21-28; Andrew Louth, "St Gregory of Nazianzus on the Monarchy of the Father," in *Gott Vater und Schöpfer: Forscher aus dem Osten und Westen Europas an Quellen des gemeinsamen Glaubens* (eds., Isabel de Andia and Peter Leander Hofrichter; Innsbruck: Tyrol, 2007).
- ²¹ SC 384:80-82, 9- 10; Daley, 147. In my examination of *Or.* 42 I have made use of Brian Daley's English translation, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (The Early Church Fathers; London: Routledge, 2006) and the Greek in *Discours 42-43* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1992).

- ²² Or. 42.15; SC 384:82, 17-20; Daley, 147. Nazianzen argues similarly (from 1 Cor 8:6) for the unity of the Godhead being found in the Father in Or. 39.12, though without the corresponding notions of divine movement: ““For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things,” and one Holy Spirit in whom are all things. The phrases “from whom” and “through whom” and “in whom” do not divide natures (μὴ φύσεις τεμνόντων)—for then there could be no change of prepositions or of the order of the words—but rather express the peculiar characteristics of one unconfused nature (ἀλλὰ χαρακτηριζόντων μιᾶς καὶ ἀσυγχύτου φύσεως ἰδιότητος)” (SC 358:172-174, 1-6; Daley, 133).
- ²³ Brian E. Daley, S.J., *Gregory of Nazianzus* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 46.
- ²⁴ Or. 25.16: “We should believe that the Father is truly a Father, far more truly father, in fact, than we humans are, in that he is uniquely, that is, distinctively so, unlike corporal beings; and that he is one alone, that is, without mate, and Father of one alone, his Only-Begotten; and that he is a Father only, not formerly a son; and that he is wholly Father, and father of one wholly his son, as cannot be affirmed of human beings; and that he has been Father from the beginning and did not become Father in the course of things. We should believe that the Son is truly a Son in that he is the only Son of one only Father and only in one way and only a Son. He is not also Father but is wholly Son, and Son of one who is wholly Father ... We should also believe that the Holy Spirit is truly holy in that there is no other like him in quality or manner and in that his holiness is not conferred but is holiness in the absolute, and in that it is not more or less nor did he begin or will he end in time. For what the Father and Son and Holy Spirit have in common is their divinity and the fact that they were not created, while for the Son and the Holy Spirit it is the fact that they are from the Father. In turn, the special characteristic of the Father is his ingenerateness, of the Son his generation, and of the Holy Spirit his procession” (Vinson, 171-172).
- ²⁵ SC 358:294, 17-19; Harrison, 137. In my examination of Or. 40 I have made use of the Nonna Verna Harrison’s English translation, *Festal Orations* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2008 and the Greek in *Discours 38-41* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1990).
- ²⁶ John McGuckin, “Gregory of Nazianzus,” in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Part 1 (ed., Lloyd Gerson; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 491.
- ²⁷ Or. 25.18; SC 284:200, 1; Vinson, 173. In my examination of Or. 25 I have made use of Martha Vinson’s English translation, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: Select Orations* (The Fathers of the Church 107; Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003) and the Greek in *Discours 24-26* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1981).
- ²⁸ Or. 25.15: “Define... for us our orthodox faith by teaching us to recognize one God, unbegotten, the Father, and one begotten Lord, his Son, referred to as God when he is mentioned separately, but Lord when he is named in conjunction with the Father, the one term on account of his nature, the other on account of his monarchy; and the Holy Spirit proceeding, or, if you will, going forth from the Father, God to those with the capacity to apprehend things that are interrelated.... Neither should we place the Father beneath first principle, so as to avoid positing a first of the first, thus necessarily destroying primary existence; nor say that the Son or the Holy Spirit are not without beginning. Thus we shall avoid depriving the Father of his special characteristic. Paradoxically, they are not without beginning, and, in a sense, they are: they are not in terms of causation, since they are indeed from God although they are not subsequent to him, just as light is not subsequent to sun, but they are without beginning in terms of time since they are not subject to it...” (Vinson, 170-171).
- ²⁹ See ft. 22 above. Similarly, in Or. 40.41 Nazianzen begins a long section on the Triune God by asserting “the one divinity and power, found in unity in the three, and gathering together the three as distinct (τὴν μίαν θεότητά τε καὶ δύναμιν ἐν τοῖς τρισὶν εὐρισκομένην ἐνικῶς καὶ τὰ τρία συλλαμβάνουσαν μεριστῶς)” and then closes that same sentence by saying each divine person is “God because of the consubstantiality, one God because of the monarchy (ἐκεῖνο διὰ τὴν ὁμοουσιότητα, τοῦτο διὰ τὴν μοναρχίαν)” (SC 358:292-294, 7-17; Harrison, 136-137).
- ³⁰ Or. 43.30; SC 384:192-194, 9-21; McCauley, 53: Οὐ γὰρ θεότητα ταλαντεύομεν οὐδὲ τὴν μίαν καὶ ἀπόρσιτον φύσιν ἀποξενούμεν ἑαυτῆς ἐκφύλοις ἀλλοτριότησιν οὐδὲ κακῶ τὸ κακὸν ἰώμεθα, τὴν ἄθεον Σαβελίου συναρεσιν ἀσεβεστέρᾳ διατρέσει καὶ κατατομῇ λύοντες, ἣν Ἄρειος νοσήσας, ὁ τῆς μαγίας ἐπώνυμος, τὸ πολὺ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διέδεισε καὶ διέφθειρεν, οὗτε τὸν Πατέρα τιμῆσας καὶ ἀτιμάσας τὰ ἐξ αὐτοῦ διὰ τῶν ἀνίσων βαθμῶν τῆς θεότητος. Ἀλλὰ μίαν μὲν δάξαν Πατρὸς γινώσκουμεν τὴν ὁμοτιμίαν τοῦ Μονογενοῦς, μίαν δὲ Υἱοῦ τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος, Καὶ ὁ τι ἂν τῶν τριῶν κάτω θώμεν, τὸ πᾶν καθαιρεῖν νομιζόμεν, τρία μὲν ταῖς ἰδιότησιν, ἐν δὲ τῇ θεότητι ἐβρόντες καὶ γινώσκοντες. In my examination of Or. 43 I have made use of Leo P. McCauley, SJ’s English translation, *Funeral Orations by Saint Gregory of Nazianzus and Saint Ambrose* (The Fathers of the Church 22; Washington,

DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953) and the Greek in *Discours 42-43* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1992).

- ³¹ To my knowledge, the best article seeking to hold together Pro-Nicene order and equality within Trinitarian discourse is Steven D. Boyer's "Articulating Order: Trinitarian Discourse in an Egalitarian Age," *Pro Ecclesia* 18:3 (2009): 255-272.