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**HOMONYMY AND SYNONYMY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF
NEOPLATONISTS AND CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS**

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Central European University Private University

Vienna

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(Georgia)

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Author's declaration

I, the undersigned, **Giorgi Markozashvili**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

The present thesis studies the concepts of homonymy, synonymy and polyonymy in the late antique philosophy. The main objective is to explore the way these terms were employed in various philosophical and theological contexts. It starts with the analysis of the Greek commentators of Aristotle, where the meanings of these concepts are defined and clarified on the horizontal ontological level of the sublunary world. Then, it proceeds to the Neoplatonic hierarchical frameworks, where, by means of carefully selected samples, the specific appropriations of these notions are examined. Finally, it ends with the analysis of homonymy, synonymy and polyonymy in the controversy between the Cappadocian Fathers and Eunomius. This study aims to observe how these concepts were functioning in a variety of doctrinal settings and what were the common patterns that transcend the differences and particularities of philosophical schools.

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Introduction

Aristotle's *Organon* served as a conceptual toolbox for the intellectuals of late antiquity. It provided philosophers of the day with a set of technical terms by which they articulated their own doctrines and communicated with each other in theoretical debates. The integration of Aristotelian, Platonic and Stoic terms established one common philosophical language in the Greek-reading environment. Every philosophical school (Platonic, Christian, Peripatetic) was appropriating and using this language in their own doctrinal frameworks. The objective of my thesis is to examine two Aristotelian concepts from this collective philosophical toolbox: homonymy and synonymy. These terms are first introduced in the opening chapter of Aristotle's *Categories*. The later tradition added an additional pair of 'onymies': polyonymy and heteronymy. In my thesis, I will explore the way notions of homonymy, synonymy and polyonymy were employed in various doctrinal frameworks of late antiquity. By means of carefully selected samples, I aim to study in what manner these terms were adapted and appropriated in diverse philosophical and theological settings.

Much has been written about the importance of homonymy and synonymy and their crucial role in Aristotle¹ and Medieval philosophy of the 13th and 14th centuries;² the secondary literature about the function of these terms in the wide range of metaphysical, logical and Trinitarian

¹ Out of the numerous works written on Aristotle's treatment on homonymy, the most important and monumental is Christopher Shields, *Order in Multiplicity: Homonymy in the Philosophy of Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Also, see Terrence Irwin, "Homonymy in Aristotle," *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (1981): 523-544.

² To mention a few papers: a) For the Medieval reception of these concepts, see E. J. Ashworth, "Analogy and equivocation in thirteenth-century logic: Aquinas in context," *Mediaeval Studies* 54 (1992): 94-135; E.J. Ashworth "Analogy, Univocation, and Equivocation in some Early Fourteenth-Century Authors," in *Aristotle in Britain during the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Marenbon (Belgium: Brepols 1996), 233-247. Richard Cross, "Duns Scotus and Analogy: A Brief Note," *Modern Schoolman* 89 (2012): 147-54; b) Also, for the Byzantine reception of homonymy, see Christophe Erismann, "The Depicted Man: The Byzantine Afterlife of Aristotle's Logical Doctrine of Homonyms," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 59 (2019): 311-339; Ken Parry, "Aristotle and the Icon - Use of Categories by Byzantine Writers," in *Aristotle's Categories in the Byzantine, Arabic and Latin Traditions*, ed. S. Ebbesen, J. Marenbon, P. Thorn (Copenhagen: D. K. D. V. S. 2013), 35-58.

contexts is vast. Although a fair amount of research has been conducted concerning how these concepts were employed in the late antique philosophy,³ it has not yet received a systematic treatment and can be considered as a relatively underexplored topic. This thesis hopes to partially contribute to this topic by examining these notions in Greek commentators of Aristotle, Neoplatonists and Cappadocian Fathers.

My thesis consists of three main chapters that can be generally characterized as follows:

1. In the first chapter, I aim to unlock the Aristotelian toolbox and provide the precise meanings of homonymy, synonymy and polyonymy as they were conceptualized by the Greek commentators of Aristotle. Furthermore, I plan to present the stock examples that were repeatedly employed in various contexts to further clarify the intricacies surrounding the core concepts. The most significant part of this chapter is Porphyry's fourfold classification of homonymy: the variations between different forms of homonymy are crucial for my thesis as each type, based on their distinctive features, was carefully and pedantically employed by the subsequent late antique thinkers in their doctrinal inquiries. Since *Categories* was conceived as the introductory treatise in Logic and Physics, the Greek commentators were limiting their scope of analysis to the sublunary world and corporeal entities. Thus, this chapter will present exactly how these concepts functioned on the horizontal ontological level of the sensible items. The main argument of my thesis will emerge in this chapter since I will be making generalizations about the common patterns and strategies in which these terms were frequently embedded. I start with the technical chapter since it is important to first provide the necessary

³ To name a few most notable scholarly works: a) For the notion of homonymy in Neoplatonic authors, see Jan Opsomer "Syrianus on Homonymy and Forms," in *Platonic Ideas and Concept Formation in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, ed. G. van Riel and C. Macé (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 31-50; also, see John P. Anton, "Ancient Interpretations of Aristotle's Doctrine of Homonymy," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, N. 1 (1969): 1-18; b) For the notion of homonymy in Patristic authors, see Róbert Somos, *Logic and Argumentation in Origen* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2015), 93-105; Tina Dolidze, "The Cognitive Function Of Epinoia in CE II And Its Meaning For Gregory of Nyssa's Theory of Theological Language," In *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*, eds. L. Karfíková, S. Douglass, and J. Zachhuber (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 445-459.

theoretical background concerning synonymy and homonymy as they were defined and scrutinized by the Greek commentators, and only then proceed towards its particular applications in the various metaphysical doctrinal frameworks. Hence, this chapter lays the foundation for the following two, where I further explore how these technical terms operate in specific philosophical contexts.

2. The second chapter of my thesis is mainly concerned with how exactly the language of ‘onymies’ functioned in various Neoplatonic metaphysical doctrines. By means of carefully selected samples, I aim to analyze the particular doctrinal contexts where the concepts of homonymy and synonymy are at work. These terms were originally utilized in the horizontal ontology of Peripatetics. However, they underwent a considerable transformation in the vertical hierarchical systems of Neoplatonists, and once they were adapted and adjusted, they proved to be useful in a wide range of doctrinal frameworks. The main protagonists of this chapter are Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus and Syrianus. One of my objectives is to explore the way Athenian Neoplatonists framed their model-image ontology and the notion of causality in the language of ‘onymies’. Furthermore, the most significant part of this chapter will be about Iamblichus and the way his *voepà θεωρία* is closely connected to the notion of analogical homonymy. Based on the identification of several passages in Dexippus’ and Simplicius’ commentaries on *Categories*, I aim to reconstruct Iamblichus’ *voepà θεωρία*, his philosophy of language, and their close association with the concept of homonymy. Also, we continue to build on the theoretical groundwork provided by the first chapter: Porphyry’s classification of homonymy becomes relevant in analyzing the subsequent Neoplatonic thinkers since they were all cautiously selecting those types of homonymies from the Porphyrian toolbox that were most suitable for their own metaphysical inquiries.

3. The third and final chapter examines the theological controversy between the Cappadocian Fathers and Eunomius. I delve into how both theological parties employed the concepts of

homonymy, synonymy and polyonymy in articulating the Homousian and Anomoean Trinitarian doctrines. The main objective of this chapter is to observe the way these terms went through adaptations in new theoretical settings of Trinitarian theology and in exactly what way the above-mentioned authors found these concepts beneficial for their theological inquiries. The Porphyrian classification will remain relevant throughout the entire chapter since both the Cappadocian Fathers and Eunomius were meticulously employing the notion of homonymy from the Porphyrian conceptual toolbox.

The core argument of my thesis revolves around the notion that in spite of differences between various philosophical and doctrinal contexts of Neoplatonic and Christian thinkers, the employment of homonymy and synonymy have a certain continuity: there are common patterns and strategies in which these technical terms are repeatedly applied. Their usage is not randomized; it is structured into specific stable and unchanging frameworks that make a certain amount of generalizations possible: a) a homonymy is an apt tool by which late antique philosophers were trying to express the ontological disconnection and separateness between the given items; b) Synonymy was constantly employed to emphasize the ontological affinity and unity of multiple entities by placing and arranging them under one essence; c) Polyonymy highlighted the numerical identity of apparent multiplicity and reduced the seeming diversity to the mere nominal differences. I aim to prove that these generalizations transcend the distinctions of philosophical and ideological settings: First, I show how these generalizations are instantiated in the discussions of the sublunary world by Greek commentators; then, I'll proceed to the Neoplatonic hierarchical frameworks and examine how the same generalizations operate in the discussions about the relationship between the sensible and intelligible worlds by means of 'onymies'; and lastly, I will further explore the continuation of these common patterns in the Trinitarian theology of Cappadocians and their Anomoean opponents.

Chapter 1 - Homonymy and Synonymy: The Ancient Commentators

1.1. Introduction

‘Homonymy’ and ‘synonymy’ are the *termini technici* from the toolbox of Aristotelian logic and are introduced in the opening lines of *Categories*. These terms were repeatedly employed by the late antique philosophers in their metaphysical and theological inquiries. In Late Antiquity, Aristotelian logic was promoted by both Neoplatonist and Christian philosophers, and its utility was more or less a universally recognized fact. The reason for its attractiveness was the belief in logic’s propaedeutic value and its neutral status. After Andronicus, Aristotle’s logical works were collected and put together as *Organon* and were organized in the strict order of increasing complexity.⁴ The accepted rationale for the sequence of texts was pedagogical; It was believed that 1. *Categories* deals with simple terms that are atomic units of logic. 2. *De Interpretatione* examines propositions that are comprised of simple terms. 3. *Analytica Priora* introduces syllogism that has propositions as its building blocks. 4. *Analytica Posteriora* discusses demonstration and scientific methods. 5. *Topica* explores dialectical argumentation. 6. *De Sophisticis Elenchis* analyzes various types of fallacies. Hence, the ordering of *Organon* is based on the principle of increasing complexity: it begins with the elementary units and progresses towards more compound items and understanding of each subject matter presupposes the knowledge of its antecedent.⁵

⁴ About the thematic arrangement of *Organon*, see Michael Frede, "The Title Unity and Authenticity of the Aristotelian Categories," In *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 18. Also, about the formation of *Organon* and Andronicus’ contribution, see: Michael Griffin, *Aristotle’s Categories in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 226-228.

⁵ The pedagogical sequence of logical works is well attested among ancient commentators, see: Amm. in *Cat.* 5,6-22. Simpl. in *Cat.* 15,13-25. Porph. in *Cat.* 56,23-32.

After Porphyry, the treatises of *Organon* were established as propaedeutic texts for the beginners in philosophy and were incorporated into Neoplatonic and Christian philosophical education. The reason for its flexibility and adaptability in various philosophical curricula was the generally accepted belief that logic has a philosophically-neutral status and it can be compatible with any metaphysical system.⁶ Accordingly, in the Peripatetic tradition, logic was not included in the division of sciences since it was viewed as an instrument or a toolbox: a prerequisite discipline for any scientific or philosophical inquiry. For example, Ammonius believed that the theoretical sciences deal with the true or the false, whereas the practical sciences are concerned with the good and the bad; And logic, not having the status of science, is an instrument by which we can differentiate the good from the bad and the true from the false.⁷ His observations imply both the neutral status of logic and its value as an introductory discipline. Gregory of Nazianzus likewise emphasized the philosophical neutrality of logic and claimed that by itself, logic is neither beneficial nor hurtful: the acquisition of logical apparatus can have both favourable and harmful consequences, and its utility is completely dependent on the particular user.⁸ Consequently, in Late Antiquity, *Categories* was established as a starting point of the whole philosophical education: the prerequisite for the philosophical erudition was logic, and the introductory treatise of the logical corpus was *Categories*.⁹ Any intellectual with philosophical erudition was expected to know Aristotle's *Organon*, and it was commonplace

⁶ A few disclaimers are needed: I do not claim that Aristotelian logical teachings are free from his metaphysics, nor do I think that ancient commentaries on *Organon* are free from Platonic biases. However, there was a strong belief in its neutral status and compatibility to any metaphysical system. The majority of ancient philosophers took no notice of its strong ontological implications and tried to make Peripatetic logic compatible with their own school beliefs. Plotinus is definitely aware of the anti-Platonic commitments of Aristotle's *Categories* and its incompatibility with his doctrines (Enn. VI.1-3). Also, the recent scholarship has proved that Porphyry's seemingly neutral *Eisagoge* entails tacit Platonic biases, see. Riccardo Chiaradonna, "Porphyry and Iamblichus on Universals and Synonymous Predication," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 18 (2007): 123-140.

⁷ Amm. in *Cat.* 4,28-5,3. cf. Simpl. in *Cat.* 5,3-15.

⁸ Greg. Nazianz. *Or.* 43,11. Gregory asserts that speculative (θεωρητικόν) and investigative (ἐξεταστικόν) teachings of pagans are like fire that can burn on the one hand, and provide warmth on the other. His depiction of logical methods as a double-edged sword is similar to what Simplicius asserts when he cites certain people who hold logic to be an intermediary (μέσσον), having the potential to be both good and bad. cf. Simpl. in *Cat.* 5,16-18.

⁹ Simpl. in *Cat.* 1,2-4: προοίμιόν ἐστι τῆς ὅλης φιλοσοφίας (εἵπερ αὐτο μὲν τῆς λογικῆς ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ πραγματείας, ἡ δὲ λογικὴ τῆς ὅλης προλαμβάνεται δικαίως φιλοσοφίας).

for both Neoplatonists and Christians to employ *termini technici* of the Aristotelian toolbox in their own metaphysical and theological frameworks. However, the thinkers of various philosophical schools were not always acquainted with *Corpus Aristotelicum* directly; they also explored it through the numerous intermediary schoolbooks, compendia and exegetical works written in the form of commentaries. It was a commonly accepted fact that Aristotle's texts were written in an obscure and condensed manner.¹⁰ Accordingly, there was a demand for explanatory texts to clarify the ambiguous passages of Aristotle that were difficult to understand. The ancient commentators of the early imperial period and the late antique world tried to fill this gap by elaborating and elucidating Aristotle's texts with examples, new insights and systematic commentaries that advanced their thorough understanding. The commentaries on *Categories* were widely read and studied in the school settings; the most seminal of these commentaries were by Alexander, Porphyry and Iamblichus.

In what follows, I aim to delve into the concepts of homonymy and synonymy as they were represented by the Greek commentators of Aristotle. Firstly, I will make a rough description of how these terms were understood and provide explanations and paradigmatic examples that were used to clarify their meanings. Secondly, I plan to generalize the strategies, patterns and theoretical frameworks in which these aforementioned terms were employed; the usage of synonymy and homonymy was far from random; they were applied in certain theoretical strategies and schemes to accomplish certain theoretical goals. My objective is not to highlight the microscopic differences that separate one ancient commentator from another but to stress on their commonalities and agreements that will allow me to present their interpretations as a coherent unity. The general aim of this chapter is to provide a preliminary introduction to 'synonymy' and 'homonymy', which will enable me to avoid digressions from the main topic

¹⁰ Simplicius says that Aristotle often was regarded 'as more obscure than everyone' (ὡς πάντων ἀσαφέστερος); Simpl. in Cat. 7,11. Also, in nearly every ancient commentary on *Categories*, there is a section about Aristotle's obscurity (ἀσάφεια) and its causes. cf.. Simpl. in Cat. 6,19-7,22; Amm. in Cat. 7,7-14.

in the subsequent chapters where I will be dealing with particular adaptations of these terms in the Neoplatonic and Christian doctrinal frameworks. It is important to first provide the necessary clarifications of how these terms were conceptualized by Greek commentators and establish the core concepts since these authors were read and studied by later philosophers of Late Antiquity.

The main sources of my analysis will be commentaries on *Categories* by Porphyry, Dexippus and Simplicius. The large portion of Porphyry's short question-and-answer dialogue on *Categories* has survived. However, his lengthy commentary *Ad Gedalium* as well as Iamblichus' commentary on *Categories*, are lost; they can be partly reconstructed from Dexippus' and Simplicius' texts, which preserve numerous fragments and paraphrases of passages of these lost works. The evidence given by Simplicius suggests that Iamblichus was mainly following Porphyry's *Ad Gedalium* and that he was bringing his own 'noeric exegesis' (νοερὰ θεωρία) and Pythagorean [pseudo] Archytas' views into the Porphyrian interpretations.¹¹ Simplicius also concisely mentions Dexippus, whose short dialogue on *Categories* is extant. He claims that Dexippus was a student or follower of Iamblichus and that he did not contribute with any original or novel insights concerning *Categories* since his work was just a mixture of Iamblichus' and Porphyry's readings.¹² Simplicius further declares that his own commentary is much indebted to Iamblichus' lost work, as he mainly relies on his analyses.¹³ Thus, I will mainly be concerned with presenting the considerations of Porphyry, Iamblichus and Dexippus, whose texts served as the basis for the future Christian and Neoplatonic authors. Furthermore, this selection of authors is justified since they predate the Cappadocian Fathers, whom I will further cover in the third chapter. Occasionally, I will also

¹¹ Simpl. in *Cat.* 2,9-22. Also, see John Dillon, "Iamblichus' Noera Theōria of Aristotle's *Categories*," *Syllecta Classica* (1997): 65-77. I will deal with this topic in the following chapter about Neoplatonists.

¹² Simpl. in *Cat.* 2,25-29. Simplicius calls Dexippus "Ἰαμβλίχειος" that could have two possible meanings: he is either Iamblichus' immediate student and disciple, or just an adherent of his teachings.

¹³ Simpl. in *Cat.* 3,3-4.

refer to Ammonius and Philoponus since their illustrative examples and explanations are often useful and profitable for a better understanding of the object of our discussion.

1.2. The Fourfold Division of ‘onymies’

In his opening lines of *Categories*, Aristotle gives brief definitions of three technical terms: homonymy, synonymy, and paronymy.¹⁴ Afterwards, he presents his theory of categories, according to which all extra-mental items are reduced to ten types,¹⁵ and these ten types are not further reducible to one *summun genus*; Aristotle does not explicitly state the relevance of these three concepts with his theory of categories and the surrounding philosophical context. Thus, the Greek commentators of Aristotle were motivated to further elaborate on the meanings of homonymy, synonymy and paronymy to provide an explanation of their relation and significance to the core doctrine of categories. Porphyry, and other commentators after him, further add two types of ‘onymies’ that are absent in Aristotle’s *antepredicamenta*: polyonymy and heteronymy.¹⁶ Before I thoroughly examine each ‘onymy’ individually, it might be helpful to provide their sketchy description in advance:

a) Things are homonyms if they have a common name but different definitions with respect to the name.

¹⁴ Arist. *Cat.* 1a1-15.

¹⁵ Arist. *Cat.* 1b25-2a4. To further clarify this claim: It is false to say that homonymy is a word with two or more meanings. The Aristotelian formulation does not allow that reading. It is clear from the text that homonyms (ὁμώνυμα) are **things** with the common name and different definitions. Likewise, synonyms are not words with the same meaning, but rather they (συνώνυμα) are **things** with a common name and the same definition. The ontological understanding of ‘onymies’ is generally attributed to Aristotle, while the semantic interpretation of ‘onymies’ to Speusippus. For more comprehensive treatment of this subject, see John Anton, “The Aristotelian Doctrine of Homonymy in the Categories and Its Platonic Antecedents,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 4 (1968): 315-326.

¹⁶ Porph. *in Cat.* 60,25-33. cf. Simpl. *in Cat.* 22,22-23,8. Also, it is important to note that the concepts of ‘polyonymy’ and ‘heteronymy’ are not Porphyry’s invention. Many authors before him were actively using them in their technical sense (Boethus of Sidon, Alexander, Clement etc.). Ultimately, these concepts can be traced back to Speusippus, who reportedly divided names into tautonyms (ταυτώνυμα) and heteronyms (ἐτερόνυμα); and then further divided tautonyms into homonyms and synonyms; and heteronyms into polyonyms and ‘proper (ιδίως) heteronyms’. Simpl. *in Cat.* 38,19-39,4.

b) Things are synonyms if they have a common name, and the definition with respect to the name is also the same.

c) Things are heteronyms if they share neither definitions nor names.

d) Polyonym is a thing with many names, but the definition with respect to the names is the same.

This fourfold division of ‘onymies’ can be represented schematically as follows:¹⁷

| | Same Definition | Different Definition |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Same Name | Synonymy | Homonymy |
| Different Name | Polyonymy | Heteronymy |

Moreover, it should be remarked that all the commentators after Porphyry unanimously agree about the ontological status of ‘onymies’: they all emphasize that both synonyms and homonyms are things (πράγματα),¹⁸ i.e. extra-mental entities, rather than linguistic or mental items. Accordingly, the topic of our discussion is not concerned with the relation between linguistic expressions, but between extra-mental items and the way names are applied to different sorts of realities.

¹⁷ I have borrowed this table from Erismann’s paper, see Christophe Erismann, “The Depicted Man: The Byzantine Afterlife of Aristotle’s Logical Doctrine of Homonyms”, *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 59 (2019): 313.

¹⁸ Porph. *in Cat.* 61,17-19.: ὅτι περὶ τὴν φωνὴν οὐ ποιεῖ ὁμωνυμίαν ὁ χαρακτήρ λέξεως, τὰ δὲ **πράγματα** διαφορὰ εὐρεθέντα. cf. Simpl. *in Cat.* 24,10-13. Porph. *in Cat.* 61,24-27..

1.3. Synonymy

Let us begin with the notion of synonymy: the standard definition provided by Aristotle and ancient commentators is the following: things are synonyms (συνώνυμα)¹⁹ if they have a common name (ὄνομα κοινόν) and the definition (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) with respect to this name (κατὰ τοῦνομα) is likewise the same.²⁰ The traditional example is human (ἄνθρωπος) and ox (βοῦς): both the name “animal” (ζῷον) and its definition are applicable to these entities, and if we compose propositions “human is an animal” and “ox is an animal” – both will be true. In other words, human and ox are synonyms since the name ‘animal’ and its corresponding definitory formula ‘animate sensitive substance’ (οὐσία ἔμψυχος αἰσθητική) are attached to them. Similarly, Socrates and Plato are synonyms since both are called ‘human’, and its definitory formula ‘mortal rational animal’ (ζῷον λογικὸν θνητόν) is valid for both of them.

The ancient commentators drew several conclusions from the definition and examples stated above. Firstly, synonymy is a relation between two or more things; the necessary condition for synonymy is to have more than one entity related to one another in a certain way. Secondly, the expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας is understood in an inclusive way: οὐσία is not a *terminus technicus* of Aristotelian ontology that designates the first category of substance exclusively.²¹

In this particular expression, οὐσία was understood inclusively as having the meaning of

¹⁹ Roughly speaking, there are three linguistic ways to express synonymy: 1) the abstract noun “συνωνυμία” expresses the relation (σχέσις) between the word and its corresponding realities. 2) The neutral plural “συνώνυμα” refers to things (πράγματα). 3) And adverbial form “συνωνύμως” refers to a type of predication, usually with verbs “κατηγορεῖται” and “λέγεται”; for example, the name “animal” is synonymously (συνωνύμως) predicated of human and ox.

²⁰ Arist. *Cat.* 1a6-12. The Aristotelian definition of synonyms: συνώνυμα δὲ λέγεται ὧν τό τε ὄνομα κοινόν καὶ ὁ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ὁ αὐτός.

²¹ It seems that in antiquity, Nicostratus and his adherents were supporters of this view. They held that Aristotelian expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας allows homonymy only to be found in substance-items; see Simpl. *in Cat.* 29,25-6. The modern proponent of this position is John Anton, who claims that our inclusive understanding of Aristotle’s λόγος τῆς οὐσίας is deeply rooted in the ancient commentary tradition. He insists that the commentators, following Porphyry, have “misinterpreted” Aristotelian passage and took “extensive liberties to the text”. see John P. Anton, “Ὁ λόγος τῆς οὐσίας in Aristotle’s Categories,” *The Monist* 52 (1968): 252-267; and John P. Anton, “Ancient Interpretations of Aristotle’s Doctrine of Homonymy,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, N. 1 (1969): 1-18.

‘essence’, and λόγος τῆς οὐσίας was used interchangeably with ὁρισμός (definition) and λόγος ὁριστικός (definitory formula). This exegetical elaboration has an important consequence: synonyms are not limited to only substance entities because non-substantial items can also have a definition (ὁρισμός). If the conditions mentioned above are met, then items of any category (quality, quantity etc.) are also capable of forming a synonymy.

The third and the most important observation of ancient commentators is that synonyms form a genus or species: If A and B are synonyms, then they are generically (γένει) or specifically (εἴδει) one. In general, it was believed that there are three types of ‘sameness’ (ταυτόν) or ‘unity’ (ἓν):²²

1. Generic unity: when items are one in genus.
2. Specific unity: when items are one in species.
3. Numerical unity: when an item is one in number (ἓν ἀριθμῷ).²³

For example, both Socrates and Rocinante are indivisibly one with respect to their genus ‘animal’. However, they lack specific unity and can be further divided into different species (Socrates is a human, Rocinante is a horse). In turn, Socrates and Plato are both indivisibly one with respect to their species ‘human’. However, they are numerically different entities and species “human” is further divided into different individuals. The numerically one item is *individuum* or ἄτομον since it cannot be further divided into objects of lesser generality.²⁴ The

²² The *locus classicus* of the tripartite division of “sameness” is found in Arist. *Top.* 103a6-15. cf. Dexipp. in *Cat.* 30,16.

²³ Surprisingly, Aristotle’s example of numerical identity is the mantle (λῶπιον) and cloak (ἱμάτιον), which are the standard examples of polyonyms (Arist. *Top.* 103a10-11). The generic and specific unities are instances of synonymy, while the numerical unity is an instance of a polyonymy which signifies the stronger type of identity.

²⁴ For the notion of ‘individuum’ and the fuller treatment of the tripartite division, see Michael Frede, “Individuals in Aristotle,” in *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987): 51-53; cf. Dexipp. in *Cat.* 43,19-20.

relation between the genus and its species and individuals is that of synonymy since both the name and the definition of the genus are predicated of its subordinate items.²⁵ This has a further philosophical implication: In the Peripatetic framework, genus and species are essential predicates that give an answer to the question ‘what is A?’ (τί ἐστί;). For example, the answer to the question ‘what is Socrates?’ is ‘human’; and if we reformulate the same question for ‘human’, the answer will be ‘animal’. Also, a genus is placed with the *differentia* in the standard definitory formula. Therefore, if we borrow the scholastic mereological term, we can safely say that the genus is *pars essentiae* of a given item. Accordingly, if A and B are ordered under the same genus or species, then it follows that they have an essential unity (via their respective species or genera). In other words, if two entities are synonyms, then they are co-essential since they are subsumed under the same genus or species. The privative and apophatic appellations cannot form a synonymous group since they are incapable of forming a genus. Porphyry, in his *Sententiae* 19, discusses various types of ἀσώματα (incorporeals) and observes that they lack generic unity since the name ἀσώματα signifies all sorts of incorporeals that do not have any positive essential commonality. They are called ‘incorporeals’ by privation – by what they are not – and accordingly, they are unable to form a genus.²⁶ Aristotle’s above-mentioned condition of ‘same λόγος τῆς οὐσίας’ guarantees the positive essential commonalities among synonyms²⁷ and also eliminates the possibility for a common privative term to form a synonymous group.

When Porphyry and Simplicius are trying to build the bridges between the concept of synonymy and the doctrine of categories, they claim that synonyms establish intra-categorical relations.

²⁵ Porph. in *Eisag.* 15,20-21: καὶ τὰ μὲν γένη **συνωνύμως** κατηγορεῖται τῶν ὑφ’ ἑαυτὰ εἰδῶν. cf. Simpl. in *Cat.* 36,24-25; and Dexipp. in *Cat.* 22,1-5.

²⁶ Porph. *Sent.* 19. (10,1-11 Lamberz). Also cf. Porph. *Sent.* 42. (53,6-54,6. Lamberz), where Porphyry talks about various sorts of incorporeals (ἀσώματα): matter, abstracted form, limit, time, space. These entities do not form a generic unity since they are labeled ‘according to the privation’ (κατὰ στέρησιν). If they were named on the basis of a common λόγος τῆς οὐσίας – then they would have formed a synonymous group.

²⁷ see Dexipp. in *Cat.* 29,15-16. Where he insists that both genus and species are established based on their essential commonalities (ἀπὸ τῆς κοινότητος τῆς οὐσιώδους)

The commentators unanimously agree that there is no single overarching *summum genus*;²⁸ the whole point of the theory of categories is to classify beings into ten genera that are not further reducible to any lesser number of types. In *Eisagoge*, Porphyry claims that everything would have been synonymous if ‘being’ (τὸ ὄν) were a supreme genus. However, we have ten kinds of beings and, accordingly, ten sets of synonyms.²⁹ As a result, each category consists of items that are in a synonymous relation to one another. Porphyry presents each category as a genus-species tree where the *summum genus* is at the top, the *genera subalterna* in the middle, and *infima species* and individuals at the bottom. For example, if we describe the category of substance with the principle of increasing generality, we will get the following result: the individuals Socrates, Rocinante etc. at the bottom; followed by their respective superordinate *infima species* ‘human’ and ‘horse’; followed by their common *genera subalterna* ‘animal,’ and ‘body’, and finally, the set will be completed with the ‘substance’ as the most general item of its respective category.³⁰ If each category forms a distinct synonym group, then the doctrine of categories establishes ten distinct sets of synonyms that constitute the whole sensible reality exhaustively.³¹ Each category as a synonymous group can be presented as *Arbor Porphyriana* – as scholastics famously represented them.

To sum up, I would like to offer several generalizations: Synonymy always emphasizes the ontological affinity of things; it establishes the categorical and essential unity of given objects.

It can be stated here in anticipation of what follows that the late antique authors employed the

²⁸ In general, the usual suspects of single overarching *summum genus* were “One” and “Being” since they can be predicated of everything. However, the ancient commentators denied them having a status of genus. About Porphyry’s denial of universal synonymy and homogeneity, see Porph. *In Eisag.* 6,4-7: οὐ γάρ ἐστι κοινὸν ἐν γένος πάντων τὸ ὄν οὐδὲ πάντα ὁμογενῆ καθ’ ἐν τὸ ἀνωτάτω γένος, ὥς φησιν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης. ἀλλὰ κείσθω, ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς Κατηγορίαις, τὰ πρῶτα δέκα γένη οἷον ἀρχαὶ δέκα πρῶται. cf. Dexipp. *in Cat.* 11,25-12,1; 22,6.

²⁹ Porph. *in Eisag.* 6,5-11: εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ᾗ κοινὸν πάντων γένος τὸ ὄν, συνωνύμως ἂν πάντα ὄντα ἐλέγετο· δέκα δὲ ὄντων τῶν πρῶτων. Here, Porphyry excludes the possibility of universal synonymy of ‘Being’. One can call everything ‘existent’ or ‘being’ but not synonymously, rather only homonymously: κἂν δὲ πάντα τις ὄντα καλεῖ, ὁμωνύμως, φησί, καλέσει, ἀλλ’ οὐ συνωνύμως.

³⁰ Porph. *in Eisag.* 4,21-25.

³¹ Both Simplicius and Dexippus explicitly claim that synonymous things are always ranged under the same category. See Simplicius *in Cat.* 33, 25-27. Dexippus *in Cat.* 17,27-29. Since there are ten categories, we have ten types of synonymous things, accordingly.

concept of ‘synonymy’ to connect the apparent multiplicity and arrange them on a horizontal ontological level by highlighting their inherent essential likenesses. If A and B are synonyms, then they are ontological equals, ordered on the same ontological stratum since they share a common generic tree.³² In the Christian context, synonymy might refer to substantial unity of the Trinity, or it might even refer to Christological hypostatic unity of Christ’s natures. In Neoplatonic contexts, it might refer to the lack of unity between the intelligible and sensible realms or between the Forms and their sensible copies.³³ Porphyry and the commentators after him (minus Iamblichus) believed that the aim (σκοπός or πρόθεσις) of *Categories* was not to provide the all-inclusive classification of the whole realm of being as Plotinus had assumed in his *Enneads* VI.1-3, but to analyze the limited realm of the sensible beings.³⁴ They excluded the intelligible entities from the Aristotelian categorical scheme. While ‘onymies’ can be smoothly employed in the Aristotelian horizontal framework, their application and value become complicated in the Christian and Neoplatonic vertical structures, where beings are ordered in the complex hierarchical systems. What happens if the same name is employed for both intelligible and sensible entities? Can items of two different ontological strata form a genus? The authors were puzzled about the inquiries such as these, which naturally leads us to discuss another key concept – the homonymy.

³² The Peripatetic rule excludes the possibility of hierarchy among the synonyms; if one entity is prior and another posterior, then they are incapable of forming a synonymy. One cannot claim that human is more ‘animal’ than ox or vice versa, because genus is equally distributed among its subordinate items.

³³ These topics will be thoroughly covered in the following chapters 2 and 3.

³⁴ In general, Porphyry believed that πρόθεσις of *Categories* were the sensible objects referred to by the names of first imposition (πρωτὴ θέσις) as opposed to *De Interpretatione* that dealt with referents of second imposition names (δευτέρα θέσις). See Porph. *in Cat.* 57,20-59,2. and *ibid.* 91,7-12. While Porphyry does not explicitly affirm it, Simplicius seems to include the names of intelligible entities into *secunda impositio*. *Simpl. in Cat.* 73,30-74-2.

1.4. Homonymy and its Types

Aristotle describes homonyms (ὁμώνυμα)³⁵ as having only a name (ὄνομα) in common and different definitions (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) with respect to the name (κατὰ τοῦνομα).³⁶ Porphyry further classifies the homonymy into different types:³⁷ first, he divides it into two subkinds: 1. homonymy ‘from chance’ (ἀπὸ τύχης), 2. homonymy ‘from thought’ (ἀπὸ διανοίας). Then, he proceeds to provide a tripartite division of the latter type: a) homonymy ‘according to the similarity’ (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα), b) homonymy ‘from analogy’ (ἐκ τῆς ἀναλογίας) or ‘by analogy’ (κατ’ ἀναλογίαν), c) homonymy ‘from one and towards one’ (ἅφ’ ἐνὸς καὶ πρὸς ἓν).³⁸ All the kinds mentioned above are relevant to my subsequent chapters; Before I delve into the analysis of each individual type, it might be helpful to present this division in a more schematic manner:

Homonymy Types:

1. Chance homonymy
2. Dianoetic homonymy
 - 2a. Homonymy from the similarity
 - 2b. Analogical homonymy
 - 2c. Homonymy *ab uno et ad unum*

³⁵ There are three main linguistic means to express homonymy: 1) the abstract noun “ὁμωνυμία” expresses the relation (σχέσις) between the word and its corresponding realities. 2) The neutral plural “ὁμώνυμα” refers to things (πράγματα). 3) And adverbial form “ὁμωνύμως” refers to a type of predication, usually with verbs “κατηγορεῖται” and “λέγεται”.

³⁶ Arist. *Cat.* 1a1-6. The Aristotelian formulation of homonymy: Ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος.

³⁷ Porph. *in Cat.* 65,17-20. *Simpl. in Cat.* 31,22-32,19. Porphyry seems to be following a certain tradition that classified ‘onymies’ this way. To the best of my knowledge, the earliest source that contains this division is Clement’s *Liber Logicus* (8.VIII.24. 95,19-26). However, this taxonomy of homonyms can also ultimately be traced back to Aristotle’s Nicomeachean Ethics, where he discusses the homonymy of the ‘Good’, see *E.N.* 1096b26-28: οὐ γὰρ ἔοικε τοῖς γε ἀπὸ τύχης ὁμωνύμοις. ἀλλ’ ἄρα γε τῷ ἅφ’ ἐνὸς εἶναι ἢ πρὸς ἓν ἅπαντα συντελεῖν, ἢ μᾶλλον κατ’ ἀναλογίαν. Although, in this passage, it is not clear whether or not analogy can be identified with one of the classes of homonymies.

³⁸ Porphyry presents this homonymy as two different types: 1. “from one” (ἅφ’ ἐνὸς) and 2. ‘towards one’ (πρὸς ἓν). Porph. *in Cat.* 66,15-17. However, the later thinkers assimilated these two and Porphyry also remarks that the previous commentators sometimes treated these two types as one.

1.5. Homonymy from Chance

Homonyms are ‘from chance’ if the common name and its corresponding different definitions are unrelated. The paradigmatic example is the name ‘dog’ (κύων), which designates both the aquatic animal dog-fish and terrestrial dog. In other words, the common name κύων is applicable to two different species with two separate corresponding definitions (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας).³⁹ The main characteristic of chance-homonyms is the pure randomness of their appellation; there is no ontological basis in giving the name ‘dog’ to these two different species of animals; it just so happened that the name ‘dog’ was imposed on these two unrelated species of animals. However, one might assert their generic unity since the name ‘animal’, and its definition are applicable to both aquatic and terrestrial dogs.⁴⁰ The ancient commentators, following Porphyry, proposed several solutions to this problem. They emphasized the function of the expression ‘κατὰ τοῦνομα’: Two entities can be simultaneously homonyms *qua* name A (κατὰ τοῦνομα) and synonyms *qua* name B (κατὰ τοῦνομα). In other words, dog-fish and terrestrial dog are chance-homonyms insofar as they share a common name “dog”, but synonyms insofar as they share a common name „animal”.⁴¹ To reframe the point: sea dog and land dog are unrelated chance-homonyms only in virtue of them sharing the name “dog”; their dogness is simply a linguistic fact without any ontological basis. However, this does not exclude the possibility of them sharing a common genus and being synonymous with one another since they are both species of the ‘substance’ category.

³⁹ The examples aquatic (θαλάττιος) and terrestrial (χερσαῖος) dogs were paradigmatic and widely employed for the chance-homonyms. Traditionally, the class of irrational mortal animals were divided via *differentiae* winged, terrestrial and aquatic. Hence, aquatic and terrestrial dogs are essentially and specifically different. Simp. in *Cat.* 29,8-11; Dexipp. in *Cat.* 19,28-29 and 43,20-24.

⁴⁰ Since both dog-fish and terrestrial dog are animals and accordingly, the definitory formula ‘animate sensitive substance’ (οὐσία ἔμψυχος αἰσθητική) is true for both of them.

⁴¹ Porph. in *Cat.* 64,17-21; also cf. Amm. in *Cat.* 20,1-8; Simpl. in *Cat.* 30,24-27.

Another paradigmatic example of chance homonyms is the characters of Homer's *Illiad* – two Ajaxes: Ajax of Oileus and Ajax of Telamon.⁴² In this case, the same name “Ajax” is applicable to two different individuals. However, there is a problem with this illustrative example since the most concrete and general entities are not definable: the *summum genus* does not have a further superordinate genus, while individuals lack the constitutive *differentiae*. Therefore, Ajaxes cannot have a definition (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) *per genus et differentiam*. Porphyry further provides a solution to this problem: he introduces the notion of description (ὑπογραφή)⁴³ and claims that most general and most concrete items can be described via *propria* and illustrative examples. The most general entities (*summa genera*) can be described via ἰδιᾶ, while the most concrete items (*individua*) via ιδιότητα.⁴⁴ The consequence of Porphyry's solution is the following: the notion of ‘onymies’ is extended, so that it also includes proper names as suitable objects of λόγος τῆς οὐσίας.

The general philosophical implications of chance-homonymy are the following: 1. If A and B are chance-homonyms they do not form a genus or species *qua* their shared name. Accordingly, the word μόνον (‘only’) in the phrase ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν (only the name [is] common) is understood in its absolute sense: apart from the name, everything else is different in chance-homonyms with respect to their common appellation. 2. There is no ontological priority and hierarchy among chance-homonyms. Their designation is accidental, and as a result, we cannot claim that terrestrial dog is named more properly and primarily “dog” than its homonym counterpart aquatic dog. In other words, the name “dog” does not have a prime and derivative

⁴² Porph. *in Cat* 64,10-16; Simpl. *in Cat.* 29,1-5; Amm. *in Cat.* 16,1-5. Another commonly used example was two Alexanders: Paris from *Illiad* and Alexander of Macedon.

⁴³ Porph. *in Cat.* 64,14-16; Simpl. *in Cat.* 29,15-20. The explanation of ‘A’ via ὑπογραφή includes the illustrative instances of A and its unique properties. For more detailed treatment of this notion, see Jonathan Barnes, *Porphyry's Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 57-60.

⁴⁴ There is the following distinction between ἴδιον and ιδιότης: *summum genus* is describable by ἴδιον; and the individual by ιδιότης. ἴδιον (proprium) is one of Porphyry's five predicables. It is a unique non-essential property of one particular species or genus. For example, ‘literacy’ and ‘laughter’ are unique properties of human. ιδιότης (peculiar property) is a property unique for a given concrete entity. Porphyry famously calls an individual a unique assemblage (ἄθροισμα) of peculiar properties (ιδιότητα). Porph. *in Eisag.* 7,22-24.

designates. As a result, chance-homonyms are ontological equals (*qua* their shared name). 3. The employment of chance-homonymy tacitly implies the ontological unrelatedness and disconnectedness of the given entities. The late antique thinkers seldomly employed this type of homonymy in their metaphysical and theological inquiries, but when they did, it was to emphasize the complete dissimilarity and transcendence of one entity to another. However, the majority of late antique metaphysical systems allowed certain similarities between the sensible and intelligible worlds, which leads us to another type of homonymy – ‘from similarity’.

1.6. Homonymy from Similarity

Homonyms are ‘from similarity’ if they have a common name, and their corresponding definitions, while different, are nevertheless related. When Porphyry presents the illustrative samples for this type of homonymy, he puts forth the Aristotelian examples of a human (ἄνθρωπος) and the picture of a human (γεγραμμένον).⁴⁵ Here, the name “animal” (ζῷον) can be applied to both the human and its pictorial representation, but the definitions of each object are distinct since the picture is not an animal, only the pictorial resemblance of its original. Likewise, one can provide another example, such as Socrates and his statue (ἄγαλμα); the name ‘human’ (or ‘Socrates’) can be assigned to both of these objects, but with varying definitions correspondingly: Socrates is a rational mortal animal (ζῷον λογικὸν θνητόν), while this is not the case with his art-duplicate.⁴⁶

Consequently, the ancient commentators were elaborating on the meaning of this type of homonymy by presenting examples of the original and its mimetic representation. The philosophical implications of these examples are crucial for arriving at a better understanding

⁴⁵ Arist. *Cat.* 1a2-3. Porph. *in Cat.* 65,25-30. and *ibid.* 66,23-28. Porphyry formulates the Aristotelian example of γεγραμμένον in the language of εἰκών (image) and ὁμοίωμα (likeness) that has a tacit Neoplatonic implications.

⁴⁶ Simplicius claims that γεγραμμένον and Socrates do not fall under the same category: Socrates falls under the category of substance; while γεγραμμένον under the category of quality, since it is nothing but a certain mixture of colors. *Simpl. in Cat.* 21,13-20.

of their meaning. The homonyms ‘from similarity’ always imply the hierarchical relationship between the model (παράδειγμα) and its image (εικόν). In the Platonic framework, any mimetic artwork is ontologically inferior to its model as the former is the copy of the copy. Another interesting point with regards to the relation of the model with its image is that the name primarily and more properly is assigned to the model and only derivatively to its art-duplicate. The reason we call the statue by the name “Socrates” is because of its likeness to the original. Therefore, in this theoretical framework, the prime designates are the models, and the derivative designates are their mirror images. In other words, the names belong more to their prime bearers than their mimetic representations. This is not the case with the chance-homonyms where the ontological superiority is not implied, and accordingly, there is no conceptual space for the prime and secondary designations. All of Porphyry’s illustrative examples are taken from the empirically observable world; both human and its replica are physical objects, and although they are hierarchically arranged, they are nevertheless located inside the sensible realm. The hierarchical relationship has a further implication: While these homonyms are related, they nonetheless cannot form a genus or a species.

However, this type of homonymy was also employed in the context of the relationship between the transcendent forms and their sensible imperfect copies. The homonymy ‘from similarity’ will prove to be fruitful in the Neoplatonic framework, where it was commonplace to describe the successive grades of reality as the ordered sequence of image (εικόν) and imitation (μίμημα) of the higher intelligible realms.⁴⁷ The physical world was believed to be the image of the intelligible world, the transcendent Forms were understood as models (παραδείγματα) and

⁴⁷ Plotinus and Neoplatonists in general, present the levels of reality as the sequence of successive images: Intellect is an image of One, Soul of Intellect etc. Each grade of reality is an image of what lies above it. He frequently employs the language of reflection and imitation; the most frequently used terms for mimetic items are: μίμημα (imitation); εικόν (image); ὁμοίωμα (likeness); εἶδωλον (copy); And the linguistic expressions for originals are: παράδειγμα (model); ἀρχέτυπος (archetype). The homonymy ‘from similarity’ is framed in this type of model-image relation; although Neoplatonists were also aware that the model is not efficient and final cause in the Aristotelian example of homonymy.

archetypes (ἀρχέτυπα) to their sensible copies.⁴⁸ In general, the whole vertical hierarchy of being, from the One downwards until the matter, was presented as a causal relationship between the images and its archetypes where each level of reality is a likeness of what lies above it. Yet, in this type of homonymy, the model is just a passive original and not *causa efficiens* or *causa finalis*; it does not itself produce or generate its copies and is incapable of imprinting itself on its low-level replica.⁴⁹ This naturally leads our discussion to the concept of homonymy *ab uno et ad unum*.

1.7. Homonymy *ab uno et ad unum*

Homonyms are ‘*ab uno et ad unum*’ if they share a name, and their definitions, while not identical, are nevertheless associated in virtue of having a certain relation towards one common object. The examples Porphyry and Simplicius present might not be very informative: they claim that ‘health’ is a goal of a person getting well, of walking and of food; accordingly, these items are named ‘healthy’ after their respective one goal (i.e. health).⁵⁰ Another example is about ‘medical art’: we say that a drug is ‘medical’, a book is ‘medical’, and a scalpel is ‘medical’ because they have a certain relation to the art of medicine. The book is ‘medical’ as it covers the subject matters of medical art; a scalpel is medical because it is an instrument used in medical practices; drugs are ‘medical’ since doctors are using them for the treatment of illnesses.⁵¹ Before I delve into *ab uno* homonymy, a few preliminary remarks can be made based on the above-mentioned examples: 1) There is an asymmetrical and causal relationship between the core (the art of medicine or health) and the peripheral items that are named after it.

⁴⁸ For the detailed treatment of image-model relationship in Neoplatonists, see Andrew Smith, “Image and Analogy in Plotinus,” in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium of Ancient Philosophy*, ed. G. Gurtler and W. Wians (Leiden: Brill, 2012):1-19.

⁴⁹ However, this type of homonymy becomes relevant for Nikephorus and Theodore of Stoudite in Iconoclasm controversy. see Christophe Erismann, “The Depicted Man: The Byzantine Afterlife of Aristotle’s Logical Doctrine of Homonyms”, *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 59 (2019):311-339.

⁵⁰ Porph. in *Cat.* 66,12-15; Simpl. in *Cat.* 32,9-11.

⁵¹ Porph. in *Cat.* 66,2-11; Simpl. in *Cat.* 32,3-8.

A healthy diet and a healthy person are homonyms by having a certain relationship with the one common core-entity - 'health'. Accordingly, the core-item has a definitional priority since it is included in the definitions of other objects; furthermore, all the homonyms of this type get their name by means of a core object and not vice versa. There is also an additional causal dependency: if the core-entity is removed, then other items after it will also be removed; for example, if there were no 'health', then there would be no healthy diet, but not vice versa. The peripheral objects are dependent on the common core that gives them both the definitional content and the name. 2) Homonyms of this type are not directly related to each other; their web of connections will always ultimately end up with the focus point or a core. In other words, A and B are homonyms because they are both related to some third object - C; and the removal of C will co-remove both A and B.⁵²

When ancient commentators are attempting to bridge the concept of homonymy with the theory of categories, they explain that Aristotelian ten *summa genera* classify sensible 'beings'; however, they claim that the word "being" is predicated of each category homonymously; i.e. the expression "being" has different definitions in each category.⁵³ The theory of ten categories implies that there is no one overarching *summum genus*, and accordingly, not everything is synonymous with each other. As we have mentioned above, the whole sensible reality can be divided into ten groups of synonyms (ten categories); and each group is in a homonymous relation with one another. The notion of synonymy is the binding tool that establishes the ontological connections, whereas the concept of homonymy emphasizes its diversity and multiplicity. However, the type of homonymy they have in mind is not ἀπὸ τύχης but that of 'ab uno'. Everything can be called 'being', but the substance is primarily called so and other

⁵² About the ontological priority and its implications See Jonathan Barnes, *Porphyry's Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 248-254

⁵³ Porph. in *Eis.* 6,4-11; Porph. in *Cat.* 61,10-12; Dexipp. in *Cat.* 22,6-7: Ὅτι τὸ ὄν οὐχ ὥσπερ ἄλλοις δοκεῖ συνώνυμον, ἀλλ' ὁμώνυμον.

non-substantial categories only derivatively. The substance has both definitional and causal priority over the non-substantial entities, and accordingly, it has a superior ontological status. If we remove the substance, then all the non-substantial categories will be co-removed, but the opposite is not the case: substance can exist by itself and is not dependent on accidental categories.⁵⁴ Both the substance and the accidental categories share the name “being,” however, they do not form a genus since the substance is a core-entity, and accidental items are called being by virtue of having a relation to their substances. Accordingly, the relationship between them is that of an ‘*ab uno*’ homonymy. In contrast to other types of homonymies, ‘*ab uno*’ was considered as the closest to the synonymy. Porphyry and Simplicius sometimes call it the intermediary between homonymy and synonymy. Even though its incapability to form a genus, it still groups entities into a quasi-genus with a certain unity.

The ‘*ab uno*’ homonymy was frequently employed by Neoplatonist philosophers in their metaphysical inquiries. And it underwent significant adaptations in the vertical and hierarchical frameworks of Platonism. The reason they found this type of homonymy particularly attractive and useful is the following: 1. It organizes objects into a hierarchical arrangement where one object is prior while the others are derivative, perfectly fitting into the Platonic metaphysical framework where the intelligible entities have a superior ontological status compared to their sensible copies. 2. The relation between the prior and posterior entities is causal and teleological; the core object functions as both the efficient and the final cause. 3. It fits perfectly into the genealogical and emanationistic framework: the progenitor quasi-genus is placed in the intelligible world and functions as *causa finalis* and *causa efficiens* of its sensible copies. Also,

⁵⁴ The primary substance is the necessary condition for other categories to come into existence. The qualities “white” and “heavy” cannot exist on their own; it is always something that has a quality of “heavy” or “white”. The quantity “3 meters” cannot exist independently; there must always be something that has a height of “3 meters”. Hence, substance has an autonomous ontological status as opposed to its accidental counterparts.

the sensible objects are named in the “top-down” manner: they are named after their models in virtue of having a certain relation to it.

1.8. Homonymy from Analogy

Homonyms are ‘from analogy’ if the things with the common name are different by their definition but are nevertheless interconnected by virtue of certain common characteristic. Porphyry’s example is the following: the unit is called the “source” of a number; similarly, the point is called the “source” of a line; the spring is likewise called the “source” of a river, and the heart is called the “source” of an animal.⁵⁵ The collection of a unit, a point, a spring and a heart constitutes the class of homonyms since each shares a name but not the definition. Furthermore, the assignment of the name “source” is not coincidental or random: it reveals a particular interconnection between these items by means of some common property. Firstly, it has to be remarked that this type of homonymy groups together categorically different entities: the ‘unit’ falls under the category of quantity, whereas the ‘heart’ and ‘spring’ are ordered under the category of substance. Secondly, the common characteristic of these entities are not explicitly stated by Porphyry, but he seems to have relational properties in mind.

In general, the notion of analogy was imported into philosophy from ancient mathematics and Pythagorean tradition. It usually has many different meanings depending on the context and, thus, cannot be strictly defined. However, as Philoponus observes, any analogy should include at least four items: A is [related] to C as B is [related] to D. From this, we can guess the necessary conditions for Porphyry’s analogical homonymy: 1) There has to be a common name for both A and B by virtue of them having an identical relation to their respective counterparts C and D.⁵⁶ 2) The common name of A and B must not be coincidental; it has to stem from their

⁵⁵ Porph. *in Cat.* 65,34-66,4. Simpl. *in Cat.* 31,32-32,3.

⁵⁶ Phil. *In Cat.* 17,13-20. Although, Philoponus also asserts that in case of homonymies, we have only two items. A and B are homonymous and not C and D.

shared relational property. Consequently, we can describe analogical homonymy as an intermediary between the ‘chance’ and ‘similarity’ homonymies. On the one hand, it is similar to chance-homonymy as there is no implication of hierarchy or priority among the homonymous things. On the other hand, the common name is not produced from pure chance and reflects a certain ontological affinity.

Porphyry further introduces another neighbouring term, a “metaphor” (μεταφορά) and contrasts it with the analogical homonymy.⁵⁷ He claims that in the case of metaphors, a thing already has a name of its own, and another name is temporally employed as its substitute. For example, the lower part of a mountain is properly called a “slope”; however, a poet might call the lower part of a mountain its “feet” and transfer the name of the human’s lower part to the mountain’s lower region. According to Porphyry, Atticus and other philosophers have confused the analogical homonymy with the metaphor.⁵⁸ However, it seems like Dexippus, who might be following Iamblichus, also assimilates these two into one homonymy type.⁵⁹ He claims that the intelligible realm is ineffable and can only be described by projecting the language of the sensible realm to the intelligible. According to him, the ascription of the language of the sensible world happens by metaphorical and analogical homonymy. For Porphyry, σκοπός of *Categories* is the sensible realm; accordingly, the analogical homonyms he collects are all ontological equals and members of the sensible world. He aims to stay within the boundaries of the Peripatetic physics and avoid theologizing. We can label the use of homonymy that groups the entities of the same ontological stratum as ‘horizontal homonymy’. However, both Neoplatonists and Christians did not frequently use ‘horizontal homonymy’ since, in contrast to the Peripatetic worldview, their metaphysics was hierarchically ordered with multiple successive ontological levels. Accordingly, the concept of homonymy underwent significant changes and adaptations in the

⁵⁷ Porph. *in Cat.* 67,4-10.

⁵⁸ Porph. *In Cat.* 66,34-67,2. *Simpl. in Cat.* 32,20-33,20.

⁵⁹ Dexipp. *in Cat.* 41,25-30.

‘vertical’ metaphysical frameworks. Iamblichus was famous for his ‘noeric exegesis’ that extended the sensible meanings of Aristotelian categories and applied them to the transcendent and intelligible entities. The analogical extension of concepts and their application to the higher ontological realm implies the Porphyrian theory of *prima impositio*, according to which the primary referents of names are sensible objects. In this theoretical framework, the analogical extension involves the projection of physical and biological discourse up to the intelligible entities. Here, we have a vertical ‘bottom-up’ type of homonymy.

1.9. Polyonymy

At last, I will examine the third and final ‘onymy’ relevant to my thesis. A thing is a polyonym (πολυώνυμον) if it is signified by several names with the same definition.⁶⁰ In other words, if more than one name with the same meaning is applied to one reality, then the thing is called a polyonym. The standard examples are ἄορ (sword), μάχαιρα (blade) and ξίφος (brand).⁶¹ This example presents three names with one definitory formula and its corresponding one reality. Another paradigmatic example is that of λώπιον (mantle) and ἱμάτιον (cloak).⁶² Again, the same item is signified by varying linguistic expressions. The difference in polyonymy is not ontological but merely nominal or appellative. As we have already discussed above, the notion of synonymy is closely associated with the generic (γένει) and specific (εἶδει) unities.⁶³ In contrast, the concept of polyonymy is related to the numerical unity (ἐν ἀριθμῷ), which designates a stronger sense of identity. In *Topica*, Aristotle divides the notion of identity into three types.⁶⁴ There, he famously describes the numerical identity as “one thing” (τὸ πρᾶγμα

⁶⁰ Porph. *in Cat.* 60,29-30 and 69,1-10. There has to be one reality (ἐν πρᾶγμα) that is signified by several names (ὀνόματα).

⁶¹ This is a commonly referred example that will later come up in Trinitarian contexts. Porph. *in Cat.* 69,2; Amm. *in Cat.* 16,6; Simpl. *in Cat.* 38,26.

⁶² Porph. *in Cat.* 69,3. Simpl. *in Cat.* 36,15.

⁶³ Every generically one item forms a group of synonyms *qua* their shared name of the genus.

⁶⁴ Arist. *Top.* 103a6-15

ἔν) that has “more than [one] names” (ὀνόματα πλείω).⁶⁵ The illustrative examples he provides are λώπιον (mantle) and ἱμάτιον (cloak) that in later traditions will become the paradigmatic instances of polyonymy. Porphyry adds Roman proper names to the instances of polyonymy⁶⁶ since every Roman usually had multiple names with one corresponding signification. As a result, polyonymy became associated with the strictest and strongest sense of identity; it implies that there is only one extra-mental individual and reduces the seeming ontological diversity to the mere nominal and appellative differences.

Alexander of Aphrodisias, in his *Quaestio* 3.12, claims that the existence of polyonymy and homonymy is a sufficient reason to argue for the conventional imposition of the names. This opposes the naturalistic claim according to which the names are by nature attached to things. He insists that if the names were by nature, the phenomenon of polyonymy and homonymy would not have existed.⁶⁷ Dexippus and Simplicius attribute a similar view to [pseudo] Archytas and his Pythagorean followers.⁶⁸ They claim that there is no conceptual space for the homonymy and polyonymy in the naturalistic theory of names, where only one name is assigned to its proper concept and, ultimately, to its corresponding reality. This observation has a significant theoretical consequence: it affirms that any theory of homonymy and polyonymy presupposes the conventional theory of naming, which was adhered to by Porphyry and other ancient commentators after him. The late antique Christian philosophers found the notion of polyonymy profitable; it was employed to emphasize the ontological unity of the given object and to diminish the seeming ontological diversity to the mere nominal differences. Polyonymy expresses the strictest sense of indivisibility and identity; it implies that a given object is an ontological atom and can only be divided into several names with identical definition. This will

⁶⁵ Arist. *Top.* 103a10-11

⁶⁶ Porph. *in Cat.* 69,8-9: οὕτω δὲ καὶ οἱ Ῥωμαίων παιῖδες εἰώθασιν πολλὰ ἔχειν ὀνόματα ἕκαστος.

⁶⁷ Alex. *Quaest.* 3.12. (193,21-23. Spengel).

⁶⁸ Dexipp. *in Cat.* 17,1-3; Simpl. *in Cat.* 40,5-13. According to Dexippus, Pythagoreans referred to homonymy and polyonymy as anomalies (ἀνωμαλία).

become clearer in the later chapters during the review of Basil's depictions of Sabellian and Eunomian Trinitarian theories.

1.10. Conclusion

To sum up the results and conclusions of this chapter: Porphyry and the ancient commentators after him believed that σκοπός of *Categories* was limited to the sensible realm of being; accordingly, they were discussing the notions of synonymy, homonymy and polyonymy within the limits of the physical world. However, these concepts were employed by the late antique Neoplatonist and Christian philosophers in their hierarchical ontologies; and as a result, 'onymies' underwent a significant change and transformation.

We can observe the following common patterns and strategies in which 'onymies' were frequently used: 1. A synonymy is a conceptual tool by which the authors emphasize the ontological affinity and essential (specific or generic) unity of the given entities. It is employed when one tries to connect and arrange the apparent multiplicity on the same ontological stratum by highlighting their inherent essential likenesses. 2. In contrast, homonymy emphasizes the ontological detachment and disconnection between the given objects. It emphasizes the essential differences and draws our attention to the relative unlikeness and transcendence of one item to another. 3. The concept of polyonymy is used to reduce the apparent and seeming ontological diversity to the nominal and appellative differences.

The notion of homonymy was the subject of frequent employment as its applicability was extended to the intelligible and ineffable realms of being. We can further distinguish the various usages of homonymy based on its different types: a) The chance-homonymy highlights the complete dissimilarity, disconnection and transcendence of the one item to another without any hierarchical implications. b) The homonymy 'from similarity' emphasizes the essential difference and hierarchical relationship between the model and its imitation. Here, one pair of

homonyms always holds the superior ontological status over the other. c) The homonymy ‘*ab uno et ad unum*’ underlines the ontological hierarchy between the cause and its effects; its employment guarantees the existence of asymmetrically arranged objects out of which one item is ontologically and causally prior and others – posterior. d) The homonymy ‘from analogy’ is employed when one tries to extend the application of the concept of the first imposition to the intelligible and ineffable realms.

One can also divide the homonyms based on the tacit presuppositions concerning the naming and language. For example, homonymies ‘*ab uno*’ and ‘from similarity’ implies that an archetype or progenitor genus is named primarily (πρώτως) and truly (ἀληθῶς), and their imperfect copies or products are named after them derivatively. In this theoretical framework, the prime referents of names are intelligible entities, whereas their images and imitations get their names in virtue of their resemblance and causal dependence. This has a further implication: that all our ordinary discourse on the sensible world or physics is, in fact, metaphysical and homonymous. Hence, we have a “top-down” homonymy in the case of ‘*ab uno*’ and ‘from similarity’ types. However, if the names primarily refer to their corresponding sensible objects, then our discourse on metaphysics becomes physical and homonymous in a “bottom-up” fashion. In this theoretical framework, the prime designates of names are sensible entities, and intelligible objects are referred to only via analogical extension. Thus, analogical homonymy can be identified as “bottom-up” homonymy. Ironically, Aristotle was often accused of projecting the vocabulary of physics and biology to the intelligible realm of being, as opposed to Plato, who was known for theologizing the sensible world.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Simpl. in *Cat.* 6,27-30: “[Aristotle] always refuses to deviate from nature; on the contrary, he considers even things which are above nature according to their relation to nature, just as by contrast, the divine Plato, according to Pythagorean usage, examines even natural things insofar as they participate in the things above nature.” (Trans. by Michael Chase, *Simplicius: On Aristotle’s Categories* 1-4, 22).

Chapter 2 - Homonymy and Synonymy in Neoplatonists

2.1. Introduction

The notions of homonymy and synonymy underwent a considerable transformation in the specific ideological settings of Neoplatonic theoretical frameworks. Originally they were employed in the horizontal ontology of Peripatetics; However, once they were adjusted and adopted, they proved to be useful in the vertical hierarchical systems of Neoplatonists, whose central tenet was the assumption of the multiple degrees of reality. How are the names applied to the intelligible entities? How can we signify the sensible and intelligible items with the identical linguistic toolbox? One cannot forge a completely separate and distinct set of names exclusively for the intelligible realm of beings; accordingly, various strategies were employed to grasp and penetrate the intelligible: one approach was the language of negative theology that attempted to depict the transcendent reality by means of apophatic and privative expressions. Another approach was the emphasis on the double-nature of language that made the articulation of the intelligible possible via various types of homonymies. The present chapter deals with the cataphatic discourse of Neoplatonists and their positive employment of homonymy in their metaphysical inquiries. Generally, for Neoplatonists, the highest metaphysical principle – the One – is ineffable and, for that reason, beyond any discourse and comprehension. However, on the level of Intellect and the lower grades of reality, the linguistic expressions are more or less applicable. The relation between the corporeal and intelligible worlds is that of the image and its model that makes the cognition and application of names to the higher realities possible; Socrates can be relatively known by means of his portrait or his reflection in the mirror; but we should always have in mind that Socrates is not identical with his copy and that in fact, they are

essentially and categorically different. Likewise, the names can be analogically extended and stretched to the higher ontological levels of being but with a certain caution.

In what follows, I plan to examine the way concepts of homonymy and synonymy were appropriated by Neoplatonic thinkers. I will start by analyzing the reception of Aristotle's *Categories* by Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus. Afterwards, by means of samples, I will proceed to analyze how Plotinus, Iamblichus and the Athenian Neoplatonists, Syrianus and Proclus, employed these technical terms in their metaphysical inquiries. Special emphasis will be placed on the subchapter about Iamblichus since I plan to demonstrate how his νοερά θεωρία is closely associated with the notion of analogical homonymy.

2.2. Reception of *Categories*: Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus

Plotinus is famous for his criticism of Aristotle's theory of categories. He mounts his attacks in his first three treatises of the sixth Ennead (VI.1-3).⁷⁰ He tries to look at the Aristotelian philosophy through the Platonic lenses. For him, the distinction between the corporeal and intelligible worlds is a given fact. Plotinus introduces a new terminology by Platonizing the Aristotelian linguistic expressions and adapting them to the Platonic philosophical framework; For example, he transforms "πρωτή οὐσία" into "αἰσθητή οὐσία" (sensible substance) and "οὐσία ἐνταῦθα" ("the-here-substance") as opposed to οὐσία ἐκεῖ ("the-there-substance") or νοητή οὐσία (intelligible substance).

Plotinus was aware of the anti-Platonic commitments of Aristotle's *Categories* and, as a Platonist philosopher, he tried to undermine and tackle it from the Platonic perspective. His

⁷⁰ The thematic structure of these three Enneads is the following: VI.1 – the criticism of the Aristotelian and Stoic categories. VI.2.- establishing the categories of Plato's Sophist. VI.3 – the modifications and reduction of Aristotle's categories for the world of becoming.

interpretation of categories is purely ontological; he claims that σκοπός of Aristotle was to exhaustively classify the whole ontological world into ten *summa genera*.⁷¹ If we take the division of the intelligible world (κόσμος νοητός) and the sensible world (κόσμος αἰσθητός) for granted, then it follows that Aristotle's categories aim to cover both of these realms of being. This is the starting-point of criticism for Plotinus. He claims that the Aristotelian genera are only applicable to the sensible or corporeal world. According to him, by presenting his doctrine, Aristotle has projected the categories of sense-perception to the intelligible world. Plotinus argues that the realms of νοητός and of αἰσθητός are so different that they cannot be contained and framed by a single common scheme of the Aristotelian categories.⁷² He limits the scope of Aristotelian categories to the corporeal world and finds the categories of Plato's Sophist superior and more adequate for the intelligible world.⁷³ Plotinus also believes that Aristotle's categories are inadequate even for the sublunar realm of sensible beings. He modifies and reduces their number to five types.⁷⁴ The reverse-Platonic world of *Categories* is absurd for Plotinus: the intelligible substance cannot be ontologically inferior and dependent on the corporeal substance. These two substances are so different that they should not even be signified by the same name, "substance".⁷⁵ To sum up the criticism of Plotinus: 1. He claims that Aristotle's categories do not accomplish what it aims for: It does not successfully encompass the whole reality, since in principle, it is impossible to construct the overarching theory of categories that contain both νοητός and αἰσθητός realms. 2. He restricts Aristotle's theory of categories to the corporeal world, claiming that the objects of reference of this doctrine can only be extended to

⁷¹ For a comprehensive study about Plotinus criticism of *Categories* see Christos Evangelou, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry* (Leiden: Brill, 1988): 93-128.

⁷² cf. Plot. *Enn.* VI.1.2.1-10.

⁷³ *Categories* of Sophist (254a-255c): Being, rest, motion, identity, otherness. The whole *Ennead* VI.2. is the attempt to establish the superiority of Plato's genera over the Aristotle's categories.

⁷⁴ For the detailed analysis of the Plotinus' reduction and modification of categories and insertion of category of "kinesis" see Christos Evangelou, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry* (Leiden: Brill, 1988): 129-153.

⁷⁵ cf. Plot. *Enn.* VI.1.1.17-28, and for the detailed treatment of the homonymy of name "substance" see Pierre Hadot. "The harmony of Plotinus and Aristotle according to Porphyry," in *Aristotle Transformed*, ed. R. Sorabji (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1990): 134-138. also cf. Plot. *Enn.* VI.3.3.8-16 and VI.1.2.13-15.

the *αἰσθητός*-items. 3. The Aristotelian categories are even inaccurate for *αἰσθητός*-items, and they need to further undergo thorough modifications.

While Plotinus is famous for his hostile attitude towards Aristotle, his pupil Porphyry is renowned for introducing and instituting Aristotle's texts in the Neoplatonic curricula by writing extensive systematic commentaries on his various philosophical works. Porphyry did not follow his teacher in his refutations and tried to harmonize Aristotle with Plato, by giving the Aristotelian corpus the function of propaedeutic and elementary discipline. After Porphyry, Neoplatonist philosophers started to study Aristotle as an entry into Platonic metaphysics. They produced a plethora of exegetical works on the Aristotelian corpus. But how did Porphyry sidestep the criticisms of Plotinus? How did he make anti-Platonic tendencies of *Categories* compatible with Platonism? First of all, he disagreed with Plotinus and claimed that the Aristotelian theory of categories was never meant to describe the intelligible world. The referents of Aristotle's categories are physical objects, and it does not aim to classify the incorporeal entities.⁷⁶ Thus, by redefining the σκοπός of the work, he avoided the attacks of Plotinus, who claimed that Aristotle's categories had the ambition to classify the whole realm of ὄντα.⁷⁷ Porphyry also proposed a semantic interpretation of *Categories*. He argued that the theory of categories classifies the words insofar as they signify beings.⁷⁸ This semantic interpretation was influential because it helped establish Aristotle's *Categories* as a logical text. Porphyry accepted the ten genera as they were put forth by Aristotle and did not agree with Plotinus, who thought that these categories were even inadequate for the sublunar realm. So, Porphyry did not try to modify or reduce the number of Aristotelian categories.

⁷⁶ Porph. in *Cat.* 57,20-58,2.

⁷⁷ About the disagreement between Plotinus and Porphyry, see Christos Evangeliou, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry* (Leiden: Brill, 1988): 164-181.

⁷⁸ Porph. in *Cat.* 91,13-27.

Iamblichus' attitude towards Aristotle is simultaneously the continuation and the break of the antecedent Porphyrian and Plotinian interpretations. As we have already mentioned above, Porphyry harmonized Plato and Aristotle by restricting the latter's authority to the matters of logic and physics. Plotinus does not attempt to harmonize these two, because his interpretation of *Categories* is primarily ontological and not semantic (therefore, harmonization is impossible). In a sense, Iamblichus is the continuation and synthesis of both: he **harmonizes** Plato and Aristotle by **ontologically** interpreting *Categories*, without making any theoretical compromises.

Iamblichus is famous for his excessive incorporation of Aristotle's philosophy into the Neoplatonic philosophical framework.⁷⁹ He perceives Aristotle as a fellow Platonist and claims that *Categories* presents and encapsulates the metaphysical doctrines of the Pythagorean [pseudo] Archytas and Plato.⁸⁰ Iamblichus differs from his predecessors because unlike Plotinus he does not believe that the theory of categories is incompatible with Platonic doctrines. He also does not perceive categories as a propaedeutic level of training like Porphyry. On the contrary, he denies that the Aristotelian theory of categories is only restricted to the domain of corporeal entities; and argues that it can be extended to the whole, sensible and intelligible realms of being. Thus, Iamblichus claims that the Aristotelian categories are also applicable to the noetic world by further extending and stretching its limits.

Hence, Iamblichean interpretation implies that Aristotle's categories are applicable to the higher realities, and this is possible via analogy (κατ'ἀναλογίαν); One must not take the proposed categories literally (as they are presented on the surface-level) and apply them to the intelligible

⁷⁹ The famous example of his radical harmonization is his claim according to which Aristotle affirmed Plato's theory of ideas.

⁸⁰ For the identification of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy with the Pythagorean roots, see Jan Opsomer, "An Intellectual Perspective on Aristotle: Iamblichus the Divine," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. A. Falcon (Leiden: Brill, 2016): 342-345. Opsomer argues that the pseudo-Pythagorean figure of Archytas is the main reason for the radical harmonization of Aristotle with Plato.

world. The appropriation of the categories only works through the slight change of meaning, which is an integral part of the special method of Iamblichus - θεωρία νοερά (intellectual interpretation).⁸¹

Iamblichus provided the instances of the way Aristotelian categories of substance, time and location can be extended to the noetic domain via θεωρία νοερά. For our present purposes, I will only review his extension of the concept of substance. According to Aristotle, the primary substance has the capacity to receive the contraries; the same individual item can be hot and cold, wet and dry, etc.⁸² Iamblichus, by analogical reasoning, says that the contraries co-exist on the level of intelligible substance⁸³ as well: identity and otherness, motion and rest (categories of Sophist). The difference between the two co-existences is the following: while the contraries exist simultaneously on the intelligible level, they alternate in a temporal sequence on a corporeal level. Socrates cannot be simultaneously hot and cold, or dry and wet; that would undermine the law of non-contradiction. Hence, Iamblichus' argues that categories are applicable and extendable to the intelligible realm via slightly changing its literal meaning.

To sum up the reception of the Aristotelian category-scheme: 1. Plotinus criticizes Aristotle's categories and claims that Aristotle projects the genera of the sensible realm to the intelligible world. He also modifies the scheme and reduces its number to five. 2. Porphyry tries to preserve Aristotle's philosophy by assimilating it into the Neoplatonic curricula. He thought that Aristotle's aim was to create semantic categories applicable only to the corporeal realm studied by physics and logic. Also, he did not reduce or modify the number of categories and deemed them adequate for the intended original purposes. 3. Iamblichus via analogical exegesis of

⁸¹ For the detailed analysis, see John Dillon. "Iamblichus' Noera Theōria of Aristotle's Categories," *Syllecta Classica* (1997): 65-77. and Michael Griffin, "What has Aristotelian dialectic to offer a Neoplatonist? A possible sample of Iamblichus and Simplicius on the Categories 12, 10-13, 12," *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, no. 6 (2012) 173-185.

⁸² *Cat.* 4a10-22

⁸³ *Simpl. In Cat.* 116,25-117,15. (Simplicius paraphrase of Iamblichus' "Pythagorean" extension of Categories).

θεωρία νοερά applied categories to the intelligible realm and thus extended its applicability. He tried to demonstrate that Aristotle's categories convey metaphysical doctrines and are in total harmony with Plato's theology.

2.3. Plotinus: The Homonymy of Substance

The first treatise of the sixth *Ennead* is presented as a sequence of puzzles and difficulties (ἀπορίαι).⁸⁴ The aim of Plotinus is to undermine the Aristotelian categorical scheme on multiple levels: he first tries to highlight that Stagirite's ten genera do not encompass the intelligible realm of beings; he then rejects the unity of each genus for the sensible sublunary world. Thus, on the one hand, he argues that sensible and intelligible entities are not synonymous with each other since they are incapable of forming a genus. And on the other hand, he even denies the synonymy of each genus in the limited scope of the corporeal world:

[P1] For they say, and say rightly, that 'being' is not **synonymous** in all ten; but we should rather ask them this first, whether the ten are there in the same way in the intelligible beings as in the sensible beings.^{85 86}

[P2] If the things there can be brought under one genus with those here below, or whether the term 'substance' is used **homonymously** of that there (ἐκεῖ) and this here (ἐνταῦθα). But if this is so, then there are more than ten genera. But if "substance" is said **synonymously** there as here, it will be absurd for it to mean the same thing when applied to primary beings and those which come after them, since there is no common genus of things among which there is priority and posterity.⁸⁷

Plotinus denies the possibility of the same categorical scheme for both the intelligible and sensible entities. Hence, Aristotelian categories are incapable of synonymous predication that ranges over the items of two different degrees of reality. Plotinus also denies the homonymous relation between the all ten sensible and intelligible genera. He only allows the homonymy of

⁸⁴ Simplicius always groups Plotinus with his predecessors Nicostratus and Lucius. It seems that his ἀπορίαι were based on the earlier traditions.

⁸⁵ Plot. *Enn.* VI.1.1.18-21.

⁸⁶ All the passages from Plotinus (P1-P8) are by Armstrong, with my modifications and adaptations.

⁸⁷ Plot. *Enn.* VI.1.1.23-28.

the first category - “substance”. However, he emphasizes the radical and essential difference between the substances of two different ontological levels. Plotinus’ rationale for his denial of synonymy between the sensible and intelligible substances is the following: 1. There is no essential κοινόν between them that would allow a synonymous predication. If there were a genus prior to the intelligible and sensible substances, then either corporeal substance would be incorporeal or incorporeal substance – corporeal.⁸⁸ 2. The series of posterior and prior items cannot form a genus. In other words, the entities that are ordered hierarchically cannot make a synonymous group.

Furthermore, Plotinus tries to avoid the homonymy of “substance” by claiming that there is no οὐσία or τὸ ὄν in the sensible realm. Following Plato’s *Timaeus*, he divides the whole universe into the realm of being (τὸ ὄν) and the realm of becoming (γινόμενον); and consequently claims that substance (οὐσία) can only be found in the intelligible world whereas its sensible equivalent can be rightly designated as γένεσις, rather than οὐσία.

[P3] We must in our discussion first of all make a distinction between what we call **being (τὸ ὄν)**, about which at present our investigation would be correctly conducted, and what others think is being, but we call it **becoming (γινόμενον)**, and say that it is never really real (ὅντως δὲ οὐδέποτε ὄν).⁸⁹

[P4] First of all we should consider what is the ‘**so-called substance**’ (λεγομένη οὐσία), agreeing that the corporeal nature can only be called ‘substance’ **homonymously**, or should not **properly** (οἰκείως) be called ‘substance’ at all but ‘**becoming**’ (γένεσις), because it is adapted to the concept of things in flux.⁹⁰

Here, we can already get a glimpse of Plotinus’ project: he is trying to even deny the homonymy between the entities of these two realms by making a proper (οἰκείως) and separate designations for both respective spheres. He first denies the applicability of Aristotelian ten categories to the

⁸⁸ The argument can be framed as follows: the prior genus of corporeal and incorporeal substances is either corporeal or incorporeal, there is no *tertium quid*. Therefore, either “corporeal substance” is predicated of incorporeal substance, or vice versa. Both options would eventually lead us to the ridiculous conclusions. cf. Plot. *Enn.* VI.1.2.4-8.

⁸⁹ Plot. *Enn.* VI.2.1.16-20.

⁹⁰ Plot. *Enn.* VI.3.2.1-4.

intelligible world and establishes separate genera (of Plato's *Sophist*) for the sphere of intelligible. Then, in the sublunary world, he substitutes οὐσία with γένεσις to avoid misunderstandings and emphasize the radical difference between the entities of these two different ontological strata. In addition, he uses the word γένος exclusively for the intelligible world and κατηγορία for the sensible and argues that the word 'genus' is often used homonymously.⁹¹ Contrary to Peripatetics, Plotinus does not think that γένος is just a common essential predicate; he emphasizes that it also has to be a principle (ἀρχή) and, accordingly, have a function of efficient cause and of the constituent intelligible element.⁹² To sum up, Plotinus is trying to highlight the difference between the intelligible and sensible entities by means of eliminating the homonymy and trying to find and attach separate names to the different ontological realities.

The real reason why Plotinus tries to differentiate these two spheres of realities even nominally is the following: For Plotinus, in the intelligible world, everything is substance, while in the realm of flux and becoming, self-subsistent items cannot be found. The entities of the sensible realm are the aggregates of qualities, quantities and matter:

[P5] It was said about the qualities that are mixed together with others, matter and quantities, it effects the completion of sensible substance, and **this so-called substance** (λεγόμενη οὐσία) is this compound of many, and **is not a "something"** (τι) **but a "something like"** (ποῖόν).⁹³

Therefore, Plotinus establishes the radical dissimilarity between these two spheres of being and supports the idea of having a separate linguistic toolbox for the entities of different ontological

⁹¹ Plot. *Enn.* VI.2.2.18-19. Plotinus claims that the sensible genus is just an imperfect imitation of the intelligible one. And argues its homonymy and tries to eliminate this homonymy by substituting the word γένος with κατηγορία for the sublunary world.

⁹² For a detailed study about Plotinus' usage of γένος and κατηγορία, see A.J. de Haas, "Did Plotinus and Porphyry Disagree on Aristotle's 'Categories'?", *Phronesis* 46 (2001): 492-526.

⁹³ Plot. *Enn.* VI.3.15.25-27. cf. Plot. *Enn.* II.6.1.7-8. and Plot. *Enn.* II.6.1.42.

levels. However, in emphasizing their otherness, he often employs the stock examples of καθ' ὁμοιότητα-homonymy:

[P6] For it is absurd to put '**being**' (τὸ ὄν) under one genus with **non-being** (μὴ ὄντι), as if one were to put **Socrates** and his **portrait** (εἰκόνα) under one genus.⁹⁴

[P7] And the rational form (λόγος) of man is the being a "something", but its product in the nature of body, being an image (εἶδωλον) of the form, is rather a sort of "something like". It is as if, the **visible Socrates** being a man, his **painted image** (εἰκών), being colours and painter's stuff, was called Socrates; in the same way, therefore, since there is a rational form (λόγος) according to which Socrates is, **the perceptible Socrates should not rightly (ὀρθῶς) be said to be Socrates**, but colours and shapes which are **representations** (μιμήματα) of those in the form.⁹⁵

In P6, Plotinus tries to intensify the contrast by characterizing the realm of becoming as μὴ ὄν (non-being) and the intelligible world as τὸ ὄν (the Being). They cannot form a genus, and hence, it is absurd to discuss their synonymy. However, he also employs the language of εἰκών (image) and παράδειγμα (model) and argues that Socrates and his pictorial representation do not constitute a genus. As we have already seen, this is a stock example of καθ' ὁμοιότητα-homonymy, taken from Aristotle's *Categories*. In P7, he first argues that the corporeal world is devoid of substances; since here, everything is a quality-like entity which is called εἶδωλον (reflection) and ἀποτέλεσμα (product) of its respective Form. Then, he presents a simile of Socrates and his artistic representation (εἰκών) and claims that it is not right to attach the name "Socrates" to his portrait since it is only a mixture of colours that imitate the real Socrates. Similarly, the sensible items are just a mixture of qualities that imitate the intelligible Forms. This simile is of utmost importance, because it simultaneously emphasizes the relative likeness and essential difference between the entities of two separate ontological strata. The relationship between the Intelligible Forms and their corporeal replicas is analogous to Socrates and his pictorial representation. Hence, they are homonyms καθ' ὁμοιότητα.

⁹⁴ Plot. *Enn.* VI.2.1.23-25.

⁹⁵ Plot. *Enn.* VI.3.15.29-37.

The example of a sensible individual and its artistic replica is the standard way to represent the relation between the image and its archetype. However, for Plotinus, the superior way to depict their relationship is the simile of an object and its reflection in the mirror.⁹⁶ The mirror-image figure has the following advantages: 1. It captures the transcendence of the intelligible world since the item reflected in the mirror is ἔξω; 2. It also emphasizes the illusory nature of the corporeal realm because the reflection only points towards the real entity, but it itself is not real. The reflection of Socrates is not human (mortal, rational animal) but only its deficient appearance and imitation.⁹⁷ 3. There is a relative likeness and unlikeness between the item and its reflection. 4. The last and the most important: for reflection to exist, the constant presence of the object is necessary; The reflection ontologically depends on the presence of the original.

Therefore, in contrast to the example of the original and its art-duplicate, the simile of mirror-image adequately expresses the causal relationship between the model and its image. It can sometimes be substituted with the imagery of reflected shadow (σκιῶ) that also requires the constant presence of the original object. Hence, even though Plotinus wants to employ different linguistic tools for the separate ontological strata, he cannot escape the homonymy between the images and their corresponding models since the whole reality consists of a sequence of successive images: Each grade of reality is characterized as an image of what lies above it.

Thus, Plotinus reluctantly allows the homonymy of substance, but he often mockingly calls it “the so-called substance” (οὐσία λεγομένη) to emphasize its copycat nature.⁹⁸

[P7] For this reason, we must look for more genera, and they are different in the sensible world from those in the intelligible world, since **this world is different**

⁹⁶ Concerning mirror metaphors, see Frederic M. Schroeder, “Plotinus and Language,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 336-355.

⁹⁷ The reflection does not indicate itself, but its outer-object; it is a manifestation of an object in the medium of mirror. Similarly, for Plotinus, the sensible items are not substances, but rather manifestations and activities of their respective Formative principles reflected via the medium of Receptacle. cf. Plot. *Enn.* II.6.3.

⁹⁸ For οὐσία λεγομένη references, see P4 and P5.

from that one, and [its constituents] are not [named] **synonymously**, but rather **homonymously**, that is, **as an image** (εἰκών).⁹⁹

[P8] But observe in other things also how movement and life are clearly separated from Being, even if not in the true Being, yet in the **shadow** (σκιᾶ) and that is said to be Being **homonymously**. For as in the **portrait** (εἰκών) of a man many things are wanting, and especially the decisively important thing, life (ζωή), so in the things perceived by sense Being is a **shadow** (σκιᾶ) of being, separated from that which is most fully, being, which was life in the archetype.¹⁰⁰

To sum up, one of the aims of Plotinus is to diversify the language of intelligible from the language of sensible. He is frequently trying to employ and establish the names for exclusively sensible or intelligible realms by means of substitutes (γένεσις-οὐσία; κατηγορία-γένος; etc.). However, since the corporeal cosmos is the image, reflection and shadow of the intelligible, he reluctantly allows certain analogies and homonymies that capture the hierarchical likeness of model-image relation.

2.4. Iamblichus: Homonymy and θεωρία νοερά

Thanks to John Dillon's remarkable study,¹⁰¹ we know that Iamblichus by θεωρία νοερά applied the Aristotelian categories to the higher intelligible beings and was not content to remain in the Porphyrian limited scope of the sublunary realm. We also know that his notion of θεωρία νοερά is closely associated with the analogy or analogical extension of the category-concepts. However, to the best of my knowledge, it has not yet been connected with the notion of homonymy. Still, it is tempting to deduce that θεωρία νοερά was conducted by means of homonymy since it implies that the name "substance" is applicable to the two completely different strata of being. In what follows, I will try to collect the evidence from Dexippus and

⁹⁹ Plot. *Enn.* VI.3.1.18-21.

¹⁰⁰ Plot. *Enn.* VI.2.7.10-14.

¹⁰¹ John Dillon, "Iamblichus' Noera Theōria of Aristotle's Categories," *Syllecta Classica* (1997): 65-77; also, see Jan Opsomer, "An Intellectual Perspective on Aristotle: Iamblichus the Divine," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. A. Falcon (Leiden: Brill, 2016): 342-345.

Simplicius that will verify my hypothesis according to which θεωρία νοερά was closely connected with the analogical homonymy.

Since Iamblichus' commentary on *Categories* has not survived and there is no direct evidence that θεωρία νοερά was closely related to the notion of homonymy, I will try to find the vestiges of Iamblichus' doctrine by analyzing certain unattributed passages of Dexippus and ascribe it to his teacher. My methodology is based on the following four presuppositions: 1. We know from Simplicius' testimonia that Dexippus did not contribute with any novel or original insights and was mainly following Porphyry's *Ad Gedalium* and Iamblichus' lost work. 2. Porphyry limited the σκοπός of *Categories* to the sublunar world and did not go beyond the sensible entities. 3. We also know that Iamblichus did not only base his own commentary on Porphyry's *Ad Gedalium*, but also diverged from it by adding his θεωρία νοερά that analogically extended the Aristotelian categories to the higher intelligible realms of being. 4. It is also significant that Dexippus is quite reserved in ascribing and quoting other thinkers, as he only mentions Iamblichus once throughout his whole treatise.¹⁰² Hence, it can be safely assumed that the passages in Dexippus that diverge from Porphyry in employing the Aristotelian categories beyond the sublunary world of being (θεωρία νοερά) can be ascribed to Iamblichus. Let us now look at our first fragment:

[I1] So since intelligible reality is **ineffable** (ἄρρητον), he [Aristotle] makes use of the name of 'substance' **metaphorically** (κατὰ μεταφοράν) and **analogically** (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν) from what is familiar to sense-perception. For all things that share a name share it in one of three ways; either homonymously or synonymously, or one thing having the name **primarily** (κυρίως), the other **metaphorically**; homonymously, as the foot of an artefact (organon) with respect to other feet of artefacts; synonymously, as a knife is said to be 'sharper' than another knife or a sound than a sound - for a knife is not said to be sharper than a sound, as the sharp is different in two cases; primarily and **metaphorically**, as in the case of a human foot and the feet of mountains. So, since (intelligibles) are **ineffable**, he uses the name 'substance' **metaphorically** (of them), making them knowable through things sensible and perceived by us. For sensible substance will be **homonymous** with intelligible substance,

¹⁰² Dexip. in *Cat.* 5,9.

representing it only **by analogy**, but it will be synonymous with physical substance, representing it by its very composition.¹⁰³

The following observations can be deduced from this passage: a) Contrary to Porphyry, Dexippus goes beyond the sensible reality and extends the concept of “substance” to the higher intelligible realms of being. He argues that the name “substance” is homonymously and ‘by analogy’ predicated of sensible and intelligible substances. b) Against Porphyry, he first assimilates the notions of metaphor and analogy and contrasts them with homonymy and synonymy. But afterwards, he further assimilates the concept of analogy with homonymy and argues that the sensible substance is ‘by analogy’ homonymous with intelligible substance. c) The analogical homonymy he employs is explicitly ‘bottom-up’-type: the names primarily (κυρίως) refer to sensible entities (‘what is better known to us’) and only by analogical extension to the higher intelligible items (‘what is better known by nature’). Therefore, I argue against Pierre Hadot, who famously attributed the authorship of this passage to Porphyry,¹⁰⁴ and claim that this passage is, in fact, Iamblichean since it employs θεωρία νοερά and is incompatible with the Porphyrian analysis. It also strictly follows the pattern of Simplicius’ depictions: First, the name ‘substance’ is placed within the sublunar realm of being as it refers to the sensible entities (σκοπός of Porphyry); And then, the layer of θεωρία νοερά is added to the Porphyrian analysis. It seems that Iamblichus, in his noeric exegesis, was employing the homonymy κατ’ ἀναλογίαν from the Porphyrian toolbox in his vertical metaphysics.

Also, the assimilation of the notions of metaphor and analogy is significant. As we have already discussed, Porphyry argues that in metaphor, a thing already has a name of its own, and another name is temporally employed as its substitute.¹⁰⁵ If the name “substance” is metaphorically

¹⁰³ Dexip. in *Cat.* 41,18-30. Translation by J. Dillon, with my adaptations.

¹⁰⁴ see Pierre Hadot “The harmony of Plotinus and Aristotle according to Porphyry,” in *Aristotle Transformed*, ed. R. Sorabji (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1990): 134-138. Hadot famously attributed I1-passage to Porphyry; however, his study predates John Dillon’s work on θεωρία νοερά and hence, completely ignores the predominant Iamblichean aspects of the given fragment.

¹⁰⁵ Porph. in *Cat.* 67,4-10.

extended to the intelligible realm, then it follows that the intelligible entities have their own names, and the names of the sensible discourse is employed only temporarily and as their substitutes. However, Dexippus also argues that the intelligible world is ‘ineffable’ and hence, without any proper name. This problem can be resolved in the following way: (a) The fact that the intelligible realm is called ‘ineffable’ makes a stronger case for the authorship of Iamblichus as opposed to Porphyry since it opposes the Plotinian and Porphyrian epistemological optimism that is connected with the doctrine of the undescended soul. Iamblichus and his more pessimistic epistemology is a better suspect for the source of this passage. (b) Also, Iamblichus, in his *De Mysteriis*, famously presents his naturalistic theory of names in an obscure manner.¹⁰⁶ He discusses the names that the theurgists recite and claims that even though such names are unknowable (ἄγνωστον) to us, they are meaningful to the Gods who revealed them to us. According to him, the divine names are either revealed to us via the Intellect of Gods or remain absolutely ineffable (ἄφθεγκτον) and intellectually united with them (Gods). Furthermore, he also argues that the ‘barbaric’ languages are superior to the Greek since they are more ancient, conservative and their sounds are more adequate materializations of the divine.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the above-mentioned puzzle can be resolved in the following way: 1) The intelligible entities have their own names but are unknowable and ineffable to us; 2) some existent names are more adequate than others. 3) Accordingly, the analogical homonyms are metaphors, as they temporarily substitute the real names of the divine with the analogically extended designations of the sensible realm. In the Iamblichean framework, the whole rational discourse on metaphysics becomes metaphorical, analogical and homonymous. One either extends the limits of Aristotle’s categories by θεωρία νοερά, or gets involved in the theurgic practices and ritualistic incantations. Consequently, I argue that the ineffability of the intelligible realm, the

¹⁰⁶ Iamb. *De Myst.* VII.4.

¹⁰⁷ About more comprehensive treatment of this passage, see Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the soul: the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (Kettering: Angelico Press, 2014): 201-212.

analogical and homonymous extension of the sensible discourse to the intelligible, and the assimilation of metaphor and analogy can only be explained by attributing this passage to Iamblichus and not to Porphyry.

If we agree about the authorship of the above-mentioned passage, then the *locus classicus* of θεωρία νοερά becomes more comprehensive:

[I2] Iamblichus points out this characteristic (ιδίωμα) of substance in a more Pythagorean way **by extending it by analogy** (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν) **to all substance**. ‘In intelligible substance’, he says, ‘movement and rest, samenesses and othernesses belong to substance simultaneously, and there the contrariety exists in substance not successively but simultaneously.’¹⁰⁸

The name “substance” is extended by means of analogical homonymy, and accordingly, it is predicated homonymously of both sensible and intelligible substances. The extension occurs based on some one particular ἴδιον or ιδίωμα (non-essential property).¹⁰⁹ This way of looking at θεωρία νοερά fits well with Simplicius’ testimony about Iamblichus’ method; since he is simultaneously following Porphyry, by using his toolbox of ‘onymies’ and theory of *prima impositio*, and Pythagorean [pseudo] Archytas, by theologizing via analogical exegesis.

Furthermore, I would like to attribute several other passages to Iamblichus from Simplicius’ commentary. In general, Simplicius is very modest about his contributions and original insights and claims that he is mainly following Iamblichus’ and Porphyry’s works. In his commentary, there are several unattributed passages that employ the Iamblichean project of θεωρία νοερά. We know Porphyry’s theory of first and second impositions of names. According to him, the names were primarily imposed on sensible objects and secondarily on linguistic and mental items.¹¹⁰ Again, he does not go beyond the scope of logic and physics. However, Simplicius,

¹⁰⁸ Simpl. in Cat. 116,25-29. All the fragments from Simplicius (I2-I4) are translated by M. Chase, with my adaptations and modifications.

¹⁰⁹ *Summa genera* do not have definitions and can only be extended by their non-essential attributes.

¹¹⁰ For example, the names “verb,” “name,” “noun,” “genus,” “species” are of *secunda impositio*.

following Porphyry in his *prima impositio*, adds intelligible entities among the *secunda impositio*:

[I3] He [Aristotle] is primarily discussing the things of this world, for these are what are immediately signified by words, since they were both the first things to be known, and the first to acquire names, whereas the intelligibles are not to be seen. Those who have **contemplated** (θεασάμενοι), having taken their starting point in sensible things, have grasped that the **intelligibles are ineffable** (ἄρρητα); therefore, making a slight alteration (παρεγκλίνοντος), they spoke of ‘humanness’ or of ‘Man-in-himself’ or of ‘the primary Man’. Thus, the lover of the contemplation (φιλοθεάμων) of beings could easily **pass from these things over to the intelligibles**, by making use of **analogy**.¹¹¹

Here, Simplicius is either paraphrasing Iamblichus or talks about him as a φιλοθεάμων - the one who loves θεωρία. According to him, the lover of θεωρία does not limit himself to the sensible realm of beings, but goes beyond the corporeality into the intelligible world by imposing names via analogy. The inclusion of intelligible entities among the referents of the second imposition is not Porphyrian and might be Iamblichus’ innovation, who followed Porphyry and occasionally added θεωρία νοερά to his interpretations. The language in which Simplicius frames his observations are also Iamblichean: The intelligibles are called ‘ineffable,’ the transition from sensible to the intelligible occurs by means of ‘analogy,’ and there is a special emphasis on the cognate expressions of θεωρία: θεασάμενοι and φιλοθεάμων. Furthermore, it seems to me that this passage aims to harmonize Porphyry and Iamblichus: Simplicius, in opposition to Plotinus’ ἀπορία, claims that the σκοπός of *Categories* is the realm of sensible beings; however, one can stretch and extend the limits of these categories and go beyond the corporeal world which is exactly what Iamblichus does.

Interestingly, following this passage, Simplicius positively discusses the possibility of the homonymous applicability of the whole Aristotelian categorical scheme to both intelligible and sensible entities. This is a bald move for Simplicius as it goes radically against Plotinus and

¹¹¹ Simpl. in *Cat.* 73,33-74,3.

partially against Porphyry; since Plotinus explicitly denies the possibility of homonymy of the whole Aristotelian scheme and only mildly allows the homonymy of ‘substance’. Let us look at the passages:

[I4] It is obvious that this transition by means of **analogy** from sensible things to these intelligible ones is appropriate for Aristotle, since, having previously posited matter and form as principles among sensible and intelligible things, he again declares them to be the same by **analogy** and yet other, differing by their mode of subsistence. In the case of the ten genera as well, then, **what is there to prevent identity by analogy from being preserved, along with otherness, in the case both of intelligibles and of sensibles?**¹¹²

[I5] If, then, there are ten genera in this world, and ten identical ones in the intelligible as well, is the community between the things of this world and the intelligibles **homonymous** or **synonymous**? It is neither homonymous nor synonymous in the simple sense of the terms, but as **deriving from one thing and relative to one thing** (ἄφ’ ἐνὸς καὶ πρὸς ἓν).¹¹³

Both of these passages are anti-Plotinian and pro-Iamblichean. We can, of course, attribute this theory of homonymy to Simplicius and consider it as his original insight. However, it would be highly unlikely for such a harmonizing figure as Simplicius to openly polemicize against his venerated predecessors. Also, this theory does not have a consistent continuation throughout his text; only sporadic and episodic: when he discusses θεωρία νοερά of divine Iamblichus.

2.5. The Form and its Sensible Copy: Syrianus and Proclus

Neoplatonic metaphysics implies that the world has an order (τάξις) and is hierarchically structured. The whole universe consists of descending sequence of degrees of realities, from the highest intelligible level down to the sublunary world of sense-perception.¹¹⁴ Roughly speaking, the following relations can be observed between the proximate ontological levels: 1. The neighbouring grades of realities have the model-image relationship; each stratum of being

¹¹² Simpl. in Cat. 74,20-26.

¹¹³ Simpl. in Cat. 74,26-31.

¹¹⁴ Here, I am intentionally omitting the highest principle – the absolute One, and the lowest principle – the matter, since they cannot be qualified as ‘being’. The matter was characterized as non-being since it is a pure potentiality and can only be described via privations. And the absolute One transcends being and any kind of causality; for this reason, it can be only talked about via remotions and negations.

is an image (εἰκών) of what lies above it, and correspondingly, the higher reality is characterized as a model (παράδειγμα) of its corresponding proximate lower level. Therefore, the progression from one ontological level to another always entails the accompanying similarities and differences. 2. The relationship between the grades of realities is causal and asymmetric; the higher generates and exercises causality on its corresponding inferior levels of being. In the Neoplatonic framework, the true cause always transcends its effect¹¹⁵ and accordingly, the real causal explanation of any given entity or phenomenon can only be found on the higher transcending ontological levels. 3. The above-mentioned two points together make it possible to observe another relation: There is an inequality between the causes and their effects since the products or effects are images of their causes; In other words, the cause is always ontologically superior and greater than its effect.¹¹⁶ 4. The transition from one ontological stratum to another is characterized by a decrease in perfection and unity on the one hand, and an increase in complexity on the other.

As a result, we can conclude that the Neoplatonic world is a cosmos with a hierarchical structure, a unified whole with an inherent order. Therefore, there is no conceptual space for (a) complete otherness or disconnection (b) and absolute unity between the causally related ontological strata of being. In other words, there is no chance-homonymy (ἀπὸ τύχης) and synonymy between the different levels of reality: If they were chance-homonyms, then they wouldn't have been similar or causally related.¹¹⁷ And likewise, if they were synonyms, then the hierarchical degrees of realities would have collapsed into the horizontal ontology. For this reason, the Athenian Neoplatonists, Syrianus and his student Proclus, were carefully selecting and employing the specific types of homonymies from the Porphyrian toolbox to express the

¹¹⁵ Procl. *El. Theol.*, 75: πᾶν τὸ κυρίως αἴτιον λεγόμενον ἐξήρηται τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος.

¹¹⁶ See A.C. Lloyd, "The Principle That the Cause Is Greater than Its Effect," *Phronesis* 21 (1976): 146-156.

¹¹⁷ The radical otherness excludes the possibility of having a similarity (ὁμοιωτής) and causal relationship.

relation between the intelligible and sensible worlds. In what follows, I will try to present Syrianus' and Proclus' applications of homonymy as mutually complementary views and argue that they assimilated καθ' ὁμοιότητα and ἅφ' ἐνὸς καὶ πρὸς ἓν homonymies in the context of the relationship between the intelligible Forms and their imperfect copies.

How are the transcendent Forms and their sensible copies related? First of all, we know that they share a name: For example, both 'the idea of equality' and its sensible instantiations¹¹⁸ are called "equal", and both the sensible human and its transcendent Form are designated as "human". Now, if they share a name, then it follows that they are either homonyms or synonyms. However, according to Syrianus, it is impossible for them to be synonyms since they are placed on completely different ontological strata. The synonyms always form a genus and are ordered on an identical ontological level. In other words, there is no synonymy between the hierarchically ordered entities. Also, if one allows their synonymy, then the infamous *Third Man Argument* will be activated with the increasingly many superordinate Forms *ad infinitum*.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Syrianus argues that a Form and its sensible copies cannot be chance-homonyms since that would imply the absolute disconnection between these two types of entities. Yet, the commonality of their name is not random, as sensible objects acquire their name and properties by virtue of their participation in their corresponding Forms. In general, Syrianus believes that the world is a well-made and well-structured cosmos, and as a result, "a likeness from chance, even among the perishable [entities] is the rarest occurrence".¹²⁰ The examples of ἀπὸ τύχης likenesses in the sublunar world are the instance of two Ajaxes or a terrestrial and aquatic dogs. However, this type of randomness is alien to the intelligible realm.

¹¹⁸ E.g.: Two deficiently equal sticks or stones.

¹¹⁹ Jan Opsomer has brilliantly demonstrated one of the functions of homonymy for Syrianus in his polemics against Alexander of Aphrodisias. According to him, the claim of homonymy between the Forms and their copies nullifies the *Assumption of Self-Predication* and refutes the *Third Man Argument* of Aristotle and Plato's *Parmenides*. see Jan Opsomer "Syrianus on Homonymy and Forms," in *Platonic Ideas and Concept Formation in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, ed. G. van Riel and C. Macé (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 31-50.

¹²⁰ Syr. in *Metaph.* 118,30-31: ἡ μὲν ἀπὸ τύχης ὁμοιότης ἐν τοῖς φθαρτοῖς μόνοις ἐπισυμβαίνουσα σπανιωτάτη ἐστί.

The question remains unanswered: how are the Forms and their copies related? Let us see the way Syrianus frames his answer into the language of ‘onymies’:

[S1] “But neither are the Forms **synonymous** with things of this realm, nor are they **homonyms from chance** (ἀπὸ τύχης), but only in the way that a **model** (παράδειγμα) is related to an **image** (εἰκόνι) of itself, and specifically when the model **generates** the images in virtue of its essence, and causes them to **revert** (ἐπιστρέφει) it.”¹²¹

In this passage, Syrianus is carefully trying to select the right type of ‘onymy’ from the Porphyrian toolbox that matches and adequately expresses the relationship between the Form and its deficient sensible instantiation. Interestingly, nearly all alternative options are discussed: he first denies them having a synonymous relation, and them being chance-homonyms for the reasons discussed above. Then he turns to the language of παράδειγμα (model) and εἰκόν (image), which are the stock examples of homonymy ‘from similarity’ (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα). This option is more suitable and appropriate since it expresses the hierarchy between the given entities and places a special emphasis on their likeness and similarity. However, Syrianus further adds two qualifications to the model-image relation: the model has to generate its image and cause its ultimate reversion. The homonymy ‘καθ’ ὁμοιότητα’ and the standard model-image relation is not a sufficient and satisfactory device to express the peculiar relationship between Forms and their sensible copies. Porphyry’s examples were taken from the sublunar realm: a human being and his portrait. The portrait is not necessarily made by the very person who is depicted on the image, and hence, there is no necessary causal relationship between the homonyms ‘from similarity’. However, for Syrianus, the relation between the sensible objects and their intelligible Forms has to be causal and accordingly, he adds two qualifications that are reminiscent of *ab uno ad unum* (ἄφ’ ἑνὸς καὶ πρὸς ἓν) homonymy: the image has to be

¹²¹ Syr. in *Metaph.* 114,35-115,3. All the fragments from Syrianus (S1-S5) are translated by O’Meara and J. Dillon, with my modifications and adaptations.

derived from the Form and reverted back towards it. Thus, Syrianus assimilates these two types into one to express their peculiar connection.

Furthermore, besides the four causes of Aristotle (formal, material, efficient, and final), Syrianus employs and talks about the ‘paradigmatic cause’. Roughly speaking, the Platonic classification of causes originated from the specific interpretation of Timaeus’ cosmogonic myth:¹²² 1. The receptacle was taken as *causa materialis*. 2. The copies and images entering the receptacle were understood as immanent forms and were deemed as *causa formalis*. 3. The demiurge was an obvious candidate for *causa efficiens*. 5. The idea of Good functioned as *causa finalis*. And lastly, the blueprint of demiurge: paradigms or intelligible forms were interpreted as the paradigmatic cause (*causa exemplaris*). The Aristotelian fourfold division of causes and his physical efficient causality was severely criticized by Athenian Neoplatonists. According to them, the comprehensive explanation of nature is only possible via principles that transcend the sublunary realm since it lacks the capacity for self-movement and self-sufficiency. Now, Syrianus further claims the identity of the efficient, final and paradigmatic causes of sensible entities. He thinks that the Forms of the intelligible realm are simultaneously the creators, paradigms and the objects of striving:

[S2] “For the separable Forms, according to his theory, are final causes (τελικά αἴτια) and objects of striving for all things, and causes of the well being (τὸ εὖ) and order (τάξις) and eternity of the cosmos.”¹²³

[S3] “The Forms constitute the most proper and comprehensive and separable causes of all things within the cosmos, both **creative** (ποιητικάς) and **paradigmatic** (παραδειγματικάς) and **final** (τελικάς)”.¹²⁴

¹²² About the Neoplatonic taxonomy of causes, see Carlos Steel, “Why should we prefer Plato's Timaeus to Aristotle's Physics?,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 78 (2003): 175–187; and Carlos Steel, “Neoplatonic versus Stoic Causality: The Case of Sustaining Cause,” *Quaestio* 2 (2002): 77–96.

¹²³ Syr. in *Metaph.* 117,28–30.

¹²⁴ Syr. in *Metaph.* 117,10–12. Neoplatonists did not consider the formal and material causes as the true causes; they never transcend their effect and are always function as the constitutive components. Thus, they were called ‘subsidiary’ causes and were limited to the sublunary world as opposed to creative, final and paradigmatic ones.

If we take this into consideration, then the previous ‘onymy’ passage (S1) will become more clear: Syrianus employs the notion of homonymy that assimilates the ‘*ab uno*’ and ‘from similarity’ types to express the causal relationship between the Forms and their sensible copies. καθ’ ὁμοιότητα homonymy expresses the paradigmatic cause, whereas ‘*ab uno*’ homonymy is a device to frame the efficient and final causality; However, Syrianus assimilates paradigmatic, final and efficient causes, and correspondingly, he fuses ‘from similarity’ and ‘*ab uno*’ homonyms to adequately express the complex relationship between the Forms and their homonymous corporeal images.

Syrianus frequently employs the stock examples of ‘καθ’ ὁμοιότητα’ homonymy to emphasize the hierarchical relation between the entities of two different ontological levels and the impossibility of any kind of definitory or essential unity.

[S4] “Even if the Forms were definable, it would not be necessary that we should employ the **same definitions** in respect of things of this realm and of their paradigms; for indeed the same account is not to be given of the **image of Socrates** and of **Socrates himself**, even though the image has come into being in accordance with the form of Socrates.”¹²⁵

[S5] “For it is not the case that things of this realm are synonymous with the relevant Form. When, after all, would **images** become **synonymous** with their own **original**?”¹²⁶

Also, by employing the language of model-image relation, his aim is to highlight the cognitive value of sensible copies since the knowledge of intelligible is only possible via the sensible cosmos, its image. Syrianus tries to avoid the radical transcendence and disconnection on the one hand, and radical and essential likeness on the other:

[S6] “For if we always cognise images by reference to their models, how is it possible, when this sensible cosmos (κόσμος αἰσθητός) is an image of the intelligible (νοητός), not to **recognise** (γνωρίζεσθαι) the latter also through the medium of the former?”¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Syr. in *Metaph.* 115,27-31.

¹²⁶ Syr. in *Metaph.* 111, 37-38.

¹²⁷ Syr. in *Metaph.* 116,29-31.

Proclus, who follows his master in his footsteps, provides further interesting insights and employs the notion of homonymy in the context of his theory of language.¹²⁸ According to him, the primary referents of names are not the sensible objects of the sublunar realm. Also, he attacks the conventionalists who suppose that names of the first imposition are items of sense-perception, and it is only via metaphorical and analogical extension that names can refer to the intelligible entities.¹²⁹ For Proclus, names are imposed by nature; they primarily refer to the transcendent Forms, and only derivatively to their imperfect sensible replicas.¹³⁰ The rationale for his theory is the following: The sensible item is a deficient copy and image of its corresponding Form; accordingly, the name should primarily signify the model and only derivatively, based on its resemblance, to its image. It would be odd if one would call “Socrates” primarily to his portrait or mirror-reflection and only by analogical extension to the actual Socrates. Similarly, Proclus argues that there exists no perfect equality in the sensible world; all equal objects are deficiently equal.¹³¹ Accordingly, the name “equal” (ἴσον) primarily (πρώτως) refers to the Form of Equality and only derivatively (δευτέρως) to its imperfect instantiations, based on their relative resemblance and participation in the archetype. Another example Proclus provides is a fiery object: one does not attach the name “fire” (πῦρ) to the fiery object (πυροειδές) primarily, and only derivatively the actual fire (the source).¹³² The Forms are like originals, and the particulars are like deficient images or reflections: they fall short and are deficient in respect to their respective Forms.

[Pr1] Consequently, if names are images in words of the objects to which they apply, they **refer primarily** (πρώτως) to immaterial Forms, and **derivatively**

¹²⁸ For a comprehensive treatment about Proclus’ philosophy of language, see R.M. van den Berg, *Proclus’ Commentary on the Cratylus in Context: Ancient Theories of Language and Naming* (Leiden: Brill, 2008): 93-211.

¹²⁹ Procl. in *Parm.* 849,19-27.

¹³⁰ Procl. in *Parm.* 850,9-11.

¹³¹ All sensible ‘equal’ items fall short of having a perfect or pure equality (καθαρῶς ἴσον); cf. Procl. in *Parm.* 850,16-19.

¹³² Procl. in *Parm.* 850,19-20.

(δευτέρως) to sensible things, so that things in this world derive both their being and their designation from that world.¹³³

[Pr2] Thus we see that the term “man” is **correctly** (κυρίως) applied to the intelligible Form, but not correctly nor **truly** (ἀληθῶς) to the sensible man.¹³⁴

After he establishes his theory about the natural origin of language and naming, Proclus employs the notion of homonymy to express the peculiar relationship between the Forms and their sensible replicas.

[Pr3] The statement that sensible things are “**homonymous**” with intelligible ones is made according to Platonic theory, which states that the names for things Here descend to them from those entities, as in the case of things which are **homonymous** as **deriving from and referring to a one** (ἅφ’ ἐνὸς καὶ πρὸς ἓν)—which, indeed, Aristotle too sometimes classes as **homonyms**. Let no one, then, expect **an identical definition** (τὸν αὐτὸν ὁρισμὸν) of particulars and their Ideas, since the latter are unconnected and entirely superior to the former, as is proper for transcendent causes in relation to their effects.¹³⁵

[Pr4] Plato declares things Here to be **homonymous** with things There, and **homonymous** in the sense of participating in them. Wherefore he proclaimed a relation of **likenesses** (ὁμοιότητα) between them.¹³⁶

Here, we have a clear and explicit formulation of the following theses: 1. Since sensible things are named after their respective Forms, we have a ‘top-down’ homonymy. 2. The language of homonymy is employed to express the hierarchical relationship between the entities of two different degrees of reality. 3. The relation is causal, and accordingly, unlike his master, Proclus explicitly identifies it with the ἅφ’ ἐνὸς καὶ πρὸς ἓν homonymy. 4. Also, like Syrianus, he assimilates ‘*ab uno*’ with καθ’ ὁμοιότητα-type since the Forms are paradigmatic, final and creative causes of their corporeal images.

¹³³ Procl. *in Parm.* 851,8-12. All the passages from Proclus (Pr1-6) are translated by Morrow and Dillon, with my modifications and adaptations.

¹³⁴ Procl. *in Parm.* 851,5-7.

¹³⁵ Procl. *in Parm.* 939,

¹³⁶ Procl. *in Parm.* 939,30-32.

There is another interesting passage where Proclus briefly and superficially discusses the history of how philosophers employed the notions of synonymy and homonymy in expressing the relationship between the Forms and their sensible particulars:

[Pr5] when we speak of man, i.e. use the term “man,” we use it in one sense as an image of the divine Form and in another sense when we refer to a visible man. **Some persons** have thought that Plato is using his terms synonymously, **and others** that he is using them homonymously, when he uses the same names for intelligibles as for sensibles. My opinion is that he is using them homonymously, **though in a different way from that which they presuppose**. For “man” is not an homonymous term in the sense of a bare name applied to two different things, but as being **primarily a likeness** of the intelligible reality, and **secondarily** of the sensible thing; for this reason man is not the same thing when we are speaking of the intelligible as when we refer to the sensible man.¹³⁷

This is a very interesting passage since Proclus differentiates the types of homonymies based on the prime and derivative referents of names. He groups his predecessors into three groups:

1. The ones who claimed that Plato synonymously predicated names of the Forms and their sensible particulars. Here, we can safely assume that he has Alexander and other Peripatetics in mind.¹³⁸ 2. There were also some who argued for the homonymy of Forms and their particulars; Proclus includes himself in this group. However, this group can further be divided into two subgroups: (a) The ones who apply names primarily and truly to the sensible objects and via an analogical extension to the intelligibles. (b) Others, including Proclus, make intelligible forms the prime and proper referents of names and only derivative and secondary referents the sensible copies. I would argue that the first group consists of Iamblichus and Dexippus¹³⁹ since their usage of homonymy implies the metaphorical and analogical extension of names of a prime imposition to the intelligible entities. However, Proclus seems to be reluctant to openly oppose

¹³⁷ Procl. *in Parm.* 851,18-32.

¹³⁸ The presupposition of synonymy was crucial for Peripatetics for *The Third Man Argument* to work as it allows the *Assumption of Self-Predication*.

¹³⁹ Porphyry can also be included in this group because of his theory of *prima impositio*; however, we do not have enough evidence about his opinion about the names of intelligible realities as he limits himself to the sphere of physics and logics.

the divine Iamblichus since he is one of the most venerated authorities for Athenian Neoplatonists. Interestingly, when Proclus is criticizing the conventionalist view of naming, he employs the same terminology as Dexippus did in the passage we have already discussed:

[Pr6] Thus if they should call God an eternal living being, and “living being” denotes the perceptible being, then this sensible thing will have the name primarily (πρώτως), and God will have it derivatively (δευτέρως), as a result of our **transferring** (μεταφερόντων) the name to him by **analogy** (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν), and it will not matter whether we call God “living being” or by any other name that we choose to put upon him.¹⁴⁰

Here, Proclus mocks those people who think that the divine beings are named by metaphorical and analogical employment of designations of sensible entities. This passage is very reminiscent of the methodology of Dexippus and Iamblichus that we have discussed above.

¹⁴⁰ Procl. in *Parm.* 849,27-33.

Chapter 3 - Homonymy, Synonymy and Polyonymy: The Cappadocian Fathers

3.1. Introduction

The fourth century was the period of great theological upheavals and disputes that had far-reaching consequences in the formation of Christian dogmas. The central trinitarian controversy was between two theological parties: the Anomoeans, represented by Eunomius, and the Homousians, represented by the Cappadocian Fathers. One of many topics of this polemical debate was about how linguistic descriptions apply to God, what they denote, and how successfully the names can represent the divine entities. The protagonists of this controversy, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus, were actively engaged in the dispute with Eunomius and both parties put forth their own unique ontology and semantic theories: The Cappadocians famously emphasized the consubstantiality of Trinitarian *personae*; while Eunomius proposed the extreme Arian view and postulated the complete unlikeness of Father and Son that resulted in the denial of their consubstantiality.

In the debate between Anomoeans and Homousians, numerous Aristotelian and Stoic terms became significant; The role of Aristotle's *Categories* and its late antique commentators became especially important since both parties were repeatedly employing logical terminology to articulate the possible unity and division in Trinity. In what follows, I aim to explore how exactly the concepts of homonymy, synonymy and polyonymy gained currency in Cappadocian theology. I start with a concise presentation of the debate; And will try to avoid the detailed analysis of the intricacies of this dispute since it was an extremely complex and multifaceted discussion.¹⁴¹ Instead, I will present the gist of the controversy and the general overview of the

¹⁴¹ In the the present format and objective of my thesis, it is impossible to delve into the details of the Anomoean controversy.

main tenets of both Anomoeans and Homousians. Afterwards, by means of carefully selected samples, I will depict how Cappadocian Fathers articulated their Trinitarian doctrines in the language of ‘onymies’ and what were the common patterns and strategies in which these concepts were utilized.

3.2. Eunomius and Cappadocians

The main disagreement between Eunomius and the Cappadocian Fathers concerns the relation between the Trinitarian *personae*: Eunomius, following his teacher Aetius, postulated teaching that affirms the ontological superiority of the Father over the Son. His theological framework accepts the Trinity with a strict hierarchical structure and one supreme monarchic creator God that transcends everything and has no ontological equals. Apart from the first principle itself, everything is deemed as creation and completely unlike (ἀνόμοιον) and incomparable (ἀσύγκριτον)¹⁴² to Father. Also, Eunomius is famous for his epistemological optimism, according to which God’s substance (οὐσία / φύσις) is knowable by our human reasoning and can be adequately described or signified by the name “unbegotten” (ἀγέννητος); this designation was thought to be exclusively only appropriate to Father.¹⁴³ The result of this reasoning is the Anomoean Trinitarian theology that assumes the substantial (κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν) unlikeness (ἀνομοιότης) of Trinitarian *personae*. To sum up Eunomius’ main theological tenets:

1. Father and Son are not consubstantial.
2. Son is a creature or a product (κτίσμα, ποίημα,

¹⁴² Eun. *Apol.* 9,3-11 (Vagg. 42-44); Here, Eunomius claims that two items cannot be compared with each other, if they do not have anything in common. Also, see Eun. *Apol.* 11,15-16 (Vagg. 46). Basil, eager to find inconsistencies in Eunomius’ doctrines, argues that his opponent is contradicting himself by imposing the name ἀσύγκριτος (incomparable) to God; since Eunomius previously claimed Father to be ‘greater’ (μείζον) than Son. Firstly, Basil alludes to the fact that something cannot be simultaneously μείζον and ἀσύγκριτος. Secondly, he invokes Aristotle’s *Categories*, and claims that substance does not admit ‘more’ or ‘less’; see Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 25-26 (SC 260-266).

¹⁴³ Eun. *Apol.* 7,9-11 (Vagg. 40); also 8,17-18 (Vagg. 43).

ποιούμενον or γέν(ν)ημα¹⁴⁴) of Father. 3. The substance of Father is his unbegottenness (ἀγεννησία) and is correctly denoted by the name “unbegotten” (ἀγέννητος).

In contrast, the Cappadocian Fathers were promoting the Homousian theory of Trinity, according to which the *personae* are consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) and, consequently, ontological equals. They denied the hierarchical structure of the Anomoean Trinity and the demotion of the Son to a creature or a product. They allowed the begetting of Son but not its creation. Both Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, in their portrayal of Eunomian doctrines, claim that Eunomius is trying to substitute the name “Father” (Πατήρ) with “unbegotten” (ἀγέννητος),¹⁴⁵ because it does not support his doctrine since ‘begetting’ (γεννᾶν) emphasizes the unity of substance, while the creation (ποιεῖν / κτίζειν) undermines it.¹⁴⁶ Let us analyze this assumption a little bit closer: human begets human, and horse begets horse; a substance or a form of one biological organism is hereditarily transferred to its offspring.¹⁴⁷ A horse cannot beget a dog or vice versa. Therefore, the begetter and begotten are always the same in substance, and the process of γεννᾶν always occurs between the consubstantial items. However, this is not the case with the creation or production: the maker and the product are always necessarily substantially different. The blacksmith does not and cannot create a human. Now, if we apply these terms to Cappadocian and Eunomian theologies, both of their convictions become clearer. On the one hand, Eunomius

¹⁴⁴ The word γέννημα is derived from its corresponding verbal equivalent γεννᾶν; while γένημα is a nominal form of γίνεσθαι. About the differences and intricacies of these terms, see G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: S.P.C.K., 1952), 151-155; And also Milton V. Anastos, “Basil’s *Kata Eunomiou*, A Critical Analysis,” In *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic, Part I*, ed. P. Fedwick (Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1981), 73-74.

¹⁴⁵ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 16, 24-27 (SC 228-230); Here, Basil expresses his discontent about Eunomius’ silence about the names “Father” and “Son”, and his emphasis on the designations “unbegotten” and “begotten”. For Basil, the objective of this substitution is to highlight the unlikeness between Son and Father: Ἀνόμοιον γὰρ βουλόμενος τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ τὸν Μονογενῆ Υἱὸν καὶ Θεὸν ἐπιδείξει, τὸ μὲν τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ὄνομα σιωπᾷ, ἀπλῶς δὲ περὶ ἀγεννήτου καὶ γεννητοῦ διαλέγεται.

¹⁴⁶ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* II. 6,19-21 (SC 305, 26); Basil asserts that the notion of begetting is hostile for Eunomian teaching: Ὅτι τὸ μὲν γεγεννησθαι **πολέμιον** οἶδε τοῖς δόγμασιν ἑαυτοῦ; while the concept of creation is a friend and an ally: τὸ δὲ πεποιῆσθαι **φίλον** καὶ **σύμμαχον** ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὑποθέσεσι. cf. Eun. *Apol.* 9,1-3 (Vagg. 42).

¹⁴⁷ The standard Aristotelian mantra that is repeated throughout the *Corpus Aristotelicum*: ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπον γεννᾷ. He also always makes sure to remark that the begetter and its offspring are identical in species (ὁμοειδής), but not in number (ἀριθμῷ).

promotes the names ποίημα and κτίσμα to denote Son because the notion of ‘creation’ tacitly implies the substantial difference between the maker and its product. Also, there is an additional advantage to this term: if Father is the supreme, transcendent and perfect entity, then its product will be a lesser being,¹⁴⁸ and we will automatically get a strict hierarchical structure of Trinity where the ontological superiority of Father over his creature is affirmed. On the other hand, the Cappadocian Fathers are placing their bets on the names “Father” (Πατήρ) and “Son” (Υἱός), since it implies the concept of ‘begetting’ which in turn implies the substantial unity between the cause and its effect, their ontological co-ordination and equality.¹⁴⁹ The Cappadocian Fathers report an additional claim made by their opposing party - that they denied the divinity (θεότης) to Son,¹⁵⁰ which can be easily deduced by the above-mentioned implications of the concept of ποίημα.

The Cappadocians also oppose the epistemological optimism of Eunomius.¹⁵¹ According to them, even the substance of corporeal items is not graspable by our cognitive apparatus, let alone the divine substance of Father.¹⁵² They deny the possibility for privative (στερητικός) terms, such as ἀγεννησία or ἀγέννητος, to denote substances.¹⁵³ There are several reasons why ἀγέννητος is incapable of signifying substance: a) The substance is a primary being, and its

¹⁴⁸ If A is absolutely perfect, then it follows that any item different from A is less perfect and consequently, we get a hierarchical structure.

¹⁴⁹ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* II. 6,19-21 (SC 305, 26); Here (as elsewhere), Basil claims that the begetter and its offspring are always characterized as having an ontological affinity, while the maker and its product are alien to each other: Ὅτι τὸ μὲν γεγεννησθαι πολέμιον οἶδε τοῖς δόγμασιν ἑαυτοῦ, τοῦ γεννηθέντος οἰκείως ἔχειν ὀφείλοντος πάντως καὶ ἀπαρallάκτως πρὸς τὸν γεννήσαντα· τὸ δὲ πεποιησθαι φίλον καὶ σύμμαχον ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὑποθέσεσι, διὰ τὸ ἀλλοτρίου καὶ ξένου, καὶ πάντη ἀνοικείου πρὸς τὸν ποιήσαντα τὴν ἔννοιαν παριστᾶν.

¹⁵⁰ Greg. Nazianz. *Or.* 29. 13, 23-26 (SC 250, 204).

¹⁵¹ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 13, 36-44 (SC 299, 218-220); Here, Basil claims that for Eunomius, God manifests not only in name, but also in substance: Εὐνομῖος δὲ, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐ τὸ ὄνομα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὴν αὐτοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν ὁ Θεὸς ἐνεφάνισε. In contrast, Basil claims that God’s substance is incomprehensible (ἀπερινόητος) and ineffable (ἄρρητος), see Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 14,45-46 (SC 299 224).

¹⁵² Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 12,30-48 (SC 299, 214-216).

¹⁵³ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 15, (SC 299, 224-226); Here, Basil maintains that the expression ἀγέννητος does not denote τί ἐστίν (what it is) of subject; it rather falls under the rubric ὅπως ἐστίν (how it is) or ὅθεν γέγονε (from where it came from). In contrast, Eunomius claimed that ἀγέννητος was neither qualitative nor privative term; since the latter, according to Aristotle’s *Categories*, implies the preceding possession of γέννησις. see Eun. *Apol.* 8, 7-18 (Vagg. 42).

significatory name should reveal to us the essential positive information about the object; however, ἀγέννητος does not tell us what God is, but precisely what it is not (that it is not γέννημα); b) Even if we suppose for a moment that ἀγέννητος is the unique and most appropriate name of Father, it still cannot denote a substance: Both Adam and Moses have a substantial unity, since they are both human (ἄνθρωπος), even though the former is ἀγέννητος (since he was created, not begotten) and the latter – γεννητός; c) If ἀγέννητος expresses the substance of Father, and γεννητός of Son, then it follows that Son is consubstantial with the rest of the world of biological organisms.¹⁵⁴ Instead of postulating the substantial difference, the Cappadocian Fathers divide the Trinity by the ‘identifying features’ (ιδιώματα) or peculiar properties (ιδιότητα) that are excluded from the formula of substance: Both Peter and Paul are substantially one, since they both participate in humanity (ἄνθρωπότης); however, they are also different in virtue of them having different sets of ιδιώματα and ιδιότητα (different parents, different children, height, weight etc.).¹⁵⁵ Similarly, the names “Father” and “Son” denote the unique and identifying features of their bearers, and none of them is significatory of substance. In addition to these names, there are numerous privative and epinoetic names that are shared by all *personae* of Trinity based on their activities (ἐνεργεῖαι), such as ἄναρχος (without principle) ἄφθαρτος (incorruptible) ἀμερής (partless) φώς (light) ζωοποιός (life-giver) ἀσύνθετος (without composition) etc. In contrast, Eunomius believes that only one name is appropriately (ὀρθῶς) and rightly (ἀληθῶς) predicated of Father, and that is ἀγέννητος. The possible source of his doctrine is his belief in God’s absolute simplicity and partlessness: If God is without any parts, then it can only be described by one linguistic item;¹⁵⁶ according to him, the employment of various names might introduce the composition into the nature of God. Furthermore, there

¹⁵⁴ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* II. 10,1-15 (SC 305, 38); For Basil, the underlying implication of this claim is that Son is even more similar to us, than to Father.

¹⁵⁵ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* II. 4,1-43 (SC 305, 18-22).

¹⁵⁶ See George Karamanolis, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (Bristol: Acumen Publishing, 2013.), 120-129.

are two possible outcomes for Eunomius if the multiplicity of names is predicated of Father: either these names are empty (μάταιος), or they all have the same meaning (σημαινόμενον) - which is identical to ἀγέννητος. This theory further implies that there cannot be a single common predicate that is applicable to both Father and Son.

In response to Eunomius' quasi-naturalistic theory of language, the Cappadocian Fathers emphasized the conventional aspect of naming. For example, Gregory of Nyssa claimed that the names of God are either invented by humans or revealed to us by the Scripture.¹⁵⁷ And it is not God's substance that they refer to, but rather His activities (ἐνεργεῖαι) or relations (σχέσεις). We can clarify his point by some examples presented in his *Ad Ablabium*: a) The name "life-giver" (ζωοποιός) is used in Scripture to denote God. Gregory argues that this name does not signify what God is but rather to what He gives (i.e. life). The object signified is the activity and not nature.¹⁵⁸ b) the name "incorruptible" (ἄφθαρτος) does not signify what God is but rather what God does not suffer or undergo (i.e. corruption or decay). Thus, by employing the name "incorruptible", we do not express what God is but what God is not.¹⁵⁹ Another key term in the discussion of the applicability of names to God was ἐπίνοια.¹⁶⁰ Eunomius was famous for his rejection of any kind of usefulness of epinoetic (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν) designations to God.¹⁶¹ Since God is one and simple, and the name ἀγέννητος has a privileged status, he deemed epinoetic designations as empty (μάταιος) and fictitious (ἀνυπόστατος). In contrast, Basil, and his brother after him, promoted ἐπίνοια and made it central to their argument.¹⁶² What is ἐπίνοια? According to Basil, epinoetic terms are produced via close inspection or reflection of our mind on the already formed concepts (νοήματα). The concepts (νοήματα) are initially

¹⁵⁷ Greg. Nys. *Ad Abl.* 42, 20-22 (GNO III/1) 42, 20-22. Furthermore, the names of human invention must also ultimately be based on the God's known activities that He has revealed to humanity via Scripture.

¹⁵⁸ Greg. Nys. *Ad Abl.* 43,24-44,25 (GNO III/1)..

¹⁵⁹ Greg. Nys. *Ad Abl.* 43, 20-24 (GNO III/1).

¹⁶⁰ About the history and the Stoic origin of ἐπίνοια, see Christopher Stead, "Logic and the Application of Names to God," In *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium I*, ed. M. Brugarolas (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 341-356.

¹⁶¹ Eun. *Apol.* 8,1-7 (Vagg. 40-42).

¹⁶² Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 6-7 (SC 299, 182-192).

formed through the sensory perceptions of external objects; however, our mind has a faculty that produces other notions and their corresponding designations through the close inspection directed at our already formed concepts;¹⁶³ this faculty¹⁶⁴ analyzes and discriminates different aspects or activities of the very concept that was already formed. To further clarify this point, let us see the example that Basil provides: initially, we have to have a sense-perception of the grain (σῖτος) in order to form its corresponding concept and name. However, after it is formed as a concept (νόημα), our mind can invent additional notions and their respective names by epinoetic process (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν) that distinguishes its various features (ιδιώματα): for example, the same grain can be signified by the names 'fruit' (καρπός), 'seed' (σπέρμα) and 'nourishment' (τροφή).¹⁶⁵ All of these three names denote a certain aspect or an identifying feature (ιδίωμα) of the initially formed concept of grain. The name καρπός emphasizes the future state of the grain, σπέρμα – its past state, while the τροφή its utility for an animal. Basil further claims that various notions of accidental features of objects are similarly formed (colors, magnitudes, shapes etc.).¹⁶⁶ By employing the notion of ἐπίνοια, Basil emphasizes the fact that the same reality can be described by multiple designations and their respective notions: the names “grain”, “fruit”, and “seed” can be the same in reality (κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν) but different epinoetically (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν). Hence, Basil concludes that the multiplicity of divine names is allowable since they are formed epinoetically and designate different activities or aspects of God that were revealed by Scripture.

¹⁶³ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 6,41-44 (SC 299, 186): Here, Basil clarifies the difference between the initial concepts (νοήματα) formed from the sensory experience (ἀπὸ τῆς αἰσθήσεως), and ἐπίνοια that are produced via inspection of these very concepts (νοήματα), and are described as more precise (ἀκριβεστέραν) and refined (λεπτοτέραν).

¹⁶⁴ I mean epinoetic faculty. Note that ἐπίνοια can mean both our human cognitive faculty, and the notions that are produced by this very faculty. See Tina Dolidze, “The Cognitive Function Of Epinoia in CE II And Its Meaning For Gregory of Nyssa’s Theory of Theological Language”, In *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*, eds. L. Karfiková, S. Douglass, and J. Zachhuber (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 445–447.

¹⁶⁵ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 6,44-52 (SC 299, 186).

¹⁶⁶ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 6,25-29 (SC 299, 184). About the types of notions ἐπίνοια covers, and its Plotinian origins, see John A. Demetracopoulos, “Glossogony or Epistemology? Eunomius of Cyzicus’ and Basil of Caesarea’s Stoic Concept of epinoia and Its Misrepresentation by Gregory of Nyssa,” In *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*, eds. L. Karfiková, S. Douglass, and J. Zachhuber (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 387-397.

The main themes of the Anomoean controversy mentioned above were sometimes framed in the language of ‘onymies’; the representatives of both theological parties found the concepts of *Antepredicamenta* particularly suitable and profitable for their own philosophical inquiries. Homonymy, synonymy and polyonymy were considered to be apt tools for the problems of Trinitarian unity and diversity, the applicability of names to the divine entities and other similar semantic and ontological issues. We can now proceed to the analysis of the particular passages where the ‘onymies’ are employed in various philosophical and theological contexts.

3.3. Gregory Nazianzus: The homonymy of “God”

We have already mentioned that Eunomius denied the divinity of Son and claimed that only Father is worthy of the name ‘God’. However, it seems that it was extremely difficult to successfully defend that thesis, as various passages from Scripture affirmed the divinity to Son. The faith (πίστις) that Eunomius himself cites is explicit about Son’s status of God since it was written that “We believe... and in one only-begotten Son of God, **God the Word**, our Lord Jesus Christ..”¹⁶⁷ How did Eunomius support his claim against the already firmly established tradition? In his *Oration* 29, Gregory of Nazianzus converses with the imaginary anonymous interlocutor from the Anomoean party. Interestingly, as it turns out, the main argument with which Anomoeans defended themselves was the claim that the name “God” is homonymously predicated of Father and Son. Let us take a glimpse of the first passage of Gregory:

[G. Nz. 1]

Our position, of course, is that horses, humans, oxen, and each item that comes under the same species (ὑπὸ τὸ αὐτὸ εἶδος) have a single definition (εἷς λόγος ἐστί). Whatever shares in the definition (μετέχῃ τοῦ λόγου) is properly (κυρίως) called by that name, and whatever does not share in it is not properly called by the name. Thus, in the same way, there is a single substance (μίαν οὐσίαν), nature (φύσιν), and name (κλήσιν) of God, even though the titles are distinguished along with the distinct conceptions (ἐπινοίαις) about him. Whatever is properly called ‘God’ (θεόν) is God and whatever he is in his

¹⁶⁷ Eun. *Apol.* 5,1-7 (Vagg. 38).

nature is a true name (ἀληθῶς) for him - granted that real truth is contained in facts (ἐν πράγμασιν), not in names (μὴ ἐν ὀνόμασιν). These people, though, act as if they were afraid of leaving any opposition to the truth untried. They acknowledge the Son as “God” (θεὸν), when forced by reason and proof-texts to do so, but only as a **homonym** (ὁμώνυμον). He shares (κοινωνοῦντα) the name and the name alone!^{168 169}

As we can see, according to Anomoean Trinitarian theory, the name ‘God’ is predicated homonymously of Father and Son and hence, they are rendered as homonyms.¹⁷⁰ We can deduce the rationale for this claim on the basis of the general theory proposed by Eunomius: If one postulates the complete unlikeness and disconnection of Father and Son, then there is no conceptual space for any shared synonymous predicates since a common predicate implies that something is κοινόν and ultimately - ὅμοιον. Instead, Eunomian theology emphasizes that Father and Son are so different (ἀνόμοιον) that they ontologically cannot share anything with each other: that is why Eunomius claims that there is no comparison (σύγκρισις) between Father and His creatures (including Son). One can only find similarities in names (ἐν ὀνόμασιν), but not in things (ἐν πράγμασιν). For Eunomius, Father is absolutely one (ἕν) and unique (μόνον) and has complete superiority (ὑπεροχή) over His creations; allowing a common synonymous predicate will undermine the whole Anomoean theological framework.

This passage is also interesting for several other reasons: It starts with the examples of synonyms: i.e., items that are arranged under one species (ὑπὸ τὸ αὐτὸ εἶδος) via the same definition (εἷς λόγος ἐστί). For example, Peter and Paul have the same definition (mortal rational animal) and, accordingly, are placed under the same species (human). And since they share in the same definition (μετέχῃ τοῦ λόγου), they are properly (κυρίως) and truly (ἀληθῶς)

¹⁶⁸ Greg. Nazianz. *Or.* 29. 13, 14-26 (SC 250, 204).

¹⁶⁹ All the translations of Gregory Nazianzus (G.Nz. 1-5) are by Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams, with my modifications and adaptations.

¹⁷⁰ cf. Eun. *Apol.* 21,8-20 (Vagg. 60-62), where Eunomius, by citing carefully selected Scriptural epithets of Father (μόνος ἀληθινὸς θεός, μόνος σοφός, μόνος ἀγαθός) implicitly states his theory of homonymy; the function of emphatic μόνος and ἀληθινός is to deliberately distinguish Father from Son; since Son is also a subject of the same predicates, but without emphatic μόνος and ἀληθινός. Simultaneously, in the same passage, he claims that his intention is not to take away the status of divinity (θεότης) from Son. However, as it turns out, he only gives Son a privileged status among the creatures since the world was created through Him.

called the name of the species (i.e., “human”). However, if, for example, a picture of a human is designated by the name “human” and is not of the same definition as Peter and Paul, then it follows that the picture is not called “human” properly (κυρίως). So far, Gregory has described a classic example of synonymy and its peculiarities. However, right after his depictions of synonymy among biological organisms, he proceeds toward an analysis of God. Surprisingly, he makes an analogy between the biological synonyms with the specific (εἶδει) unity and Trinitarian *personae* that have different epinoetic names (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), and are nevertheless united in the name “God” that denotes one substance and nature (μίαν οὐσίαν εἶναι, καὶ φύσιν καὶ κλησιν). Therefore, it can be safely assumed that we have two types of Trinitarian discourse formulated in the language of ‘onymies’: The first affirms the synonymous relationship of *personae*, and the second asserts the homonymous relationship of divine persons.¹⁷¹ As in other cases, homonymy is used as an apt tool to emphasize ontological disconnection and transcendence, while synonymy is employed to highlight the ontological affinity and equality of given items. Also, it must not escape our notice that the analogy between biological synonyms and Trinitarian synonyms is based on Aristotelian secondary substance (δεύτερα οὐσία), since specific (εἶδει) and generic (γένει) unities of biological organisms are instances of Aristotle’s secondary substance. Hence, when Gregory ascribes one substance and nature to God, the meaning of the expression μίαν οὐσίαν is modelled analogically from the δεύτερα οὐσία of Aristotle.

Furthermore, on the basis of Gregory’s analogy, the synonymy and homonymy of Trinitarian *personae* can also be deduced from our previous analysis of ‘begetting’ (γεννᾶν) and ‘creation’ (ποιεῖν). In the world of living corporeal entities, both the begetter and the begotten are necessarily synonyms since they share a secondary substance through the hereditary

¹⁷¹ In other words: 1. the Cappadocians would claim that whatever is predicated of Father is also synonymously predicated of Son and Holy Spirit (with the exceptions of their titles); 2. In contrast, the Anomoeans would make a case that if A is said of both Father and Son, then it is predicated homonymously.

transmission of species (Both Adam and Seth are humans). Therefore, it is not strange for Gregory, who promotes the notion of γεννᾶν, to have the synonymous view of Trinity, and for the opposing party that emphasizes the importance of words κτίσμα and ποίημα to have a homonymous conception. It has to be noted that the notion of secondary substance is not taken literally but analogically, similar to Iamblichus' νοερά θεωρία. However, this passage highlights the fact that the unity of Trinitarian substance is modelled after the secondary substance and not after the primary one.

We have already seen how Anomoeans claimed the homonymous predication of the name “God”. However, the question still remains: which type of homonymy are they alluding to? Let us see another passage of Gregory’s *Oration* 29 that follows right after the one cited above:

[G. Nz. 2]

When we make them the rejoinder, “Well, do you really mean that the Son is not ‘God’ (θεός) in the proper sense (κυρίως) of the word, in the same way that a picture (γεγραμμένον) of an animal is not an animal (ζῷον)? In that case, how can he be God, supposing he is not ‘God’ in the proper sense?” they answer, *Why shouldn’t they be homonyms (ὁμώνυμα) and used in the proper sense in both case?*

They instance the Greek word for “dog” (κύνα), which can be used in the proper sense to mean both a terrestrial dog (χερσαῖον) and an aquatic dog (θαλάττιον) – since they are the type (εἶδος) of homonyms (ὁμώνυμα) that are said properly (κυρίως) – and any other case where something bears the same title it shares equally (ἐπ’ ἴσης) with something else of a different nature.¹⁷²

This is a very curious passage where Gregory presents two types of homonymy from the Porphyrian toolbox: homonymy ‘by similarity’ (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα) and ‘by chance’ (ἀπὸ τύχης). The main unanswered question is the following: Which one do Anomoeans employ in their attempts to separate Father and Son? The stock examples of both types of homonymy are presented: an animal (ζῷον) and its pictorial representation (γεγραμμένον) for the καθ’ ὁμοιότητα-type; And as for the ἀπὸ τύχης-type: an aquatic (θαλάττιον) and terrestrial

¹⁷² Greg. Nazianz. *Or.* 29. 14,1-9 (SC 250, 204).

(χερσαῖον) dogs. As we have already discussed in the previous chapters, there is a huge difference between these two types of homonymy: one emphasizes unrelatedness, dissimilarity and randomness, while the other highlights the hierarchical relationship between the archetype and its image. Furthermore, the similarity-homonymy also implies the prime and secondary designates: one type of entity is named κυρίως (properly) and ἀληθῶς (truly), while others are named only derivatively (δευτέρως), based on their resemblance to their archetype. However, this is not the case with the chance-homonyms; there is no conceptual space for names that are imposed κυρίως or δευτέρως, since the commonality of the name occurs randomly, without any ontological basis: the name κύων is an equally common name for two different species that are unrelated.

Gregory's conversation with his anonymous imaginary interlocutor proceeds in the format of questions and answers: he asks if the predication of the name "God" of divine persons follows the model of καθ' ὁμοιότητα homonymy; the answer of Anomoean interlocutor is negative. He gives the standard examples of chance-homonymy and claims that Father and Son are ὁμώνυμα ἀπὸ τύχης. Let us see Gregory's response in the next passage:

[G. Nz. 3]

In these instances, dear fellow, you are putting two natures under the same name, not making one superior to (ὑμείνω), or prior to (πρότερον) the other, or one more true to its name than the other. There is nothing attached to the names to force that conclusion - the terrestrial and the aquatic are equally entitled to the same Greek name, "dog" - and why not?¹⁷³

Here, Gregory shows the corollaries that follow the reasoning of his imaginary interlocutor: If the ἀπὸ τύχης homonymy is employed in the Trinitarian context, then it follows that one item is not ontologically prior (πρότερον) or superior (ὑμείνω) to another. Eunomius famously postulated the temporal priority of Father over Son; he claimed that just as creator or begetter

¹⁷³ Greg. Nazianz. *Or.* 29. 14,9-17 (SC 250, 204-205).

precedes its product or offspring, so does Father precede its creatures (including Son). In response to this, the Cappadocian Fathers were asserting the coeternity of divine persons and the atemporal begetting of Son. In the above-cited passage, the word *πρότερον* emphasizes temporality, while *ὑμείνω* signifies the ontological pre-eminence.¹⁷⁴ However, Gregory seems to be puzzled about the selection by his imaginary interlocutor about the homonymy-type since it excludes ontological hierarchy and undermines the Eunomian Trinitarian framework.¹⁷⁵ The conversation continues:

[G. Nz. 4]

But things of the same and things of differing status can have the same name. Yet when it comes to God, you attach an awe-inspiring solemnity to him, a transcendence of every essence and nature which constitutes the unique nature of God's deity (φύσις θεότητος), so to say. You ascribe this to the Father but then rob the Son of it and make him subordinate (ὑποτιθείς). You give the Son second place (δεύτερα) in reverence and worship. Even if you endow him with the syllables which make up the word "similar," (ὅμοιον) you in fact truncate his godhead (θεότητα), and make a mischievous transition from parity to disparity in the usage of homonymy (ὁμωνυμίας). The result is that a pictured (γραπτός) and a living man (ἄνθρωπος) are apter illustrations for you of the Godhead (θεότητι) of Father and Son than the above-mentioned dogs.¹⁷⁶

[G. Nz. 5]

Alternatively, you must concede that the fact that they have a common name (κοινωνίαν τῆς κλήσεως) puts their natures on the same level, even if you are making out that they are different; in that case, you have ruined your "dog" example, which you hit on to illustrate a disparity of natures. What does it matter that the animals you distinguish are homonyms, if they are on the same level? The point, after all, of having recourse to "dogs" and homonymy (ὁμωνυμίαν) was to prove disparity (ἀνισότημα), not parity (ἰσότημα). How could anyone stand more clearly convicted of self-confuting blasphemy?¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ To apply this analogy to our homonymy examples: Socrates' existence precedes the existence of his pictorial representation. Accordingly, archetype is *πρότερον*, while its image - *δεύτερον*. Also, the picture acquires its name on the basis of its resemblance to the original. Accordingly, the model is ontologically *ὑμείνω*, while its representation - *ἦττον*. For Gregory, this is a perfect fit for the Eunomian theological framework, since it captures both the pre-existence and pre-eminence of Father over Son.

¹⁷⁵ Both aquatic and terrestrial dogs are called "dog" without any hierarchical implications. They are equally (ἐπ' ἰσῆς) designated by the common term. Gregory is baffled by the decision of his opponents since he deems their analogy unfit and incompatible with their own doctrinal framework.

¹⁷⁶ Greg. Nazianz. *Or.* 29. 14,17-27 (SC 250, 205).

¹⁷⁷ Greg. Nazianz. *Or.* 29. 14,27-35 (SC 250, 205).

It was a common Cappadocian trope to mockingly reveal logical inconsistencies of their Anomoean opponents and claim that they did not know their Aristotle or Chrysippus. In the passages cited above, Gregory claims that the apter illustration for the Anomoean Trinitarian theology is the καθ' ὁμοιότητα-type since it emphasizes both the ontological and the temporal hierarchies. Since ἀπὸ τύχης-type does not express the subordination or inequality (ἀνισότημα), his interlocutor should have used καθ' ὁμοιότητα-type instead. So why did his Anomoean interlocutor choose the chance-homonymy? A possible rationale for his decision is the following: Even though καθ' ὁμοιότητα-homonymy expressed the ontological hierarchy and priority of Father over Son, it also postulates a relative likeness between the archetype and its image. The notion of the image implies a certain resemblance to its original, which undermines the Eunomian doctrine of complete dissimilarity and unlikeness of Father and Son. Accordingly, one can argue that ἀπὸ τύχης-type is more suitable since it emphasizes complete unrelatedness and randomness. Interestingly, Gregory's corrective remarks also have a textual basis, since Eunomius, in his *Apology*, labels Son as εἰκών (image) of Father; however, he adds that Son is an image of Father via similarity of activity and not substance.¹⁷⁸ The Eunomian doctrine of complete dissimilarity and incomparability of Father only concerns his substance. Accordingly, if Father is incomparable (ἀσύγκριτον), the ἀπὸ τύχης-type might be a better fit for Anomoean theological framework. All in all, Gregory's *Oration* 29,13-14 preserves a way in which two opposing theological parties articulated intra-Trinitarian relationships of the divine persons in the language of 'onymies': Anomoeans employed a notion of homonymy to separate and disconnect Trinitarian *personae*; while Gregory and his fellow Homousians, used a notion of synonymy to unite the divine persons, and at the same time preserve their individuality.

¹⁷⁸ Eun. *Apol.* 24,1-22 (Vagg. 64-66). Also, see Anne Keidel, "Eunomius' Apologia and Basil of Caesarea's Eunomium," In *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*, eds. L. Karfiková, S. Douglass, and J. Zachhuber (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 487-488.

3.4. The Cappadocians and Eunomius about λόγος τῆς οὐσίας

The distinction between the substance and non-substantial properties is the central tool to the Cappadocian Fathers against their Anomoean opponents. Out of all the names for Father, Eunomius placed all his bets on ἀγέννητος and claimed that it had the power to express divine substance. The Cappadocian Fathers did not miss the opportunity and were always eager to remind Eunomius of the impossibility of his statement. One of the means by which they argued against Eunomius was the employment of the Aristotelian expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας (the formula of being or definition). As we have already seen, this very expression is used by Aristotle to define homonymy and synonymy: the identity of λόγος τῆς οὐσίας produces synonyms, while its diversity – homonyms.¹⁷⁹ The analysis of Cappadocians was conducted by use of ‘bottom-up’ analogies; they were presenting biological or inanimate items as illustrative examples on the basis of which they were making conclusions about the Trinity.

Eunomius famously asserted that the differences in names implied the diversity of substances. The multiplicity of names guides us towards the corresponding multiplicity of things.¹⁸⁰ Accordingly, the part of his argument about the substantial difference between Father and Son was their diverse designations. In opposition to this claim, Gregory of Nyssa invoked the examples of humans, their essential identity and accidental diversity:

[G. Ny. 1]

Not all things that have the **same formula of being** (λόγον τῆς οὐσίας τὸν αὐτὸν) will similarly agree in the application of the formula (λόγου) in a ‘particular reality’ (ὑποστάσει). Peter, James and John were the same as each other in **the formula of being** (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας), since each of them is a

¹⁷⁹ Arist. *Cat.* 1a1-6; 1a6-12.

¹⁸⁰ Eun. *Apol.* 18,13-14 (Vagg. 56); also, 12,3-4 (Vagg. 48).

man, but in the characteristics (ιδιώμασι) of each particular reality (ὑποστάσεως), they were not the same as each other.^{181 182}

In this passage, Gregory highlights the opposition between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις and their corresponding λόγοι. Peter and John are identical insofar as they are the same in substance (both of them are human); however, they are different in hypostasis, which consists of a bundle of ‘identifying features’ (ιδιώματα).¹⁸³ Accordingly, the name “human” expresses their unitary substance, while the names “Peter” and “John” their hypostases and grasp various features (ιδιώματα) that fall outside their definition.¹⁸⁴ Gregory frames this distinction in the language of ‘onymies’, since the expression “the same formula of being” (λόγον τῆς οὐσίας τὸν αὐτὸν) is a definition of synonymous items.¹⁸⁵ Accordingly, the synonymy of biological creatures is the basis for Gregory to understand intra-Trinitarian relations. We can now take a glimpse of a passage by Basil, who uses the same expression in relation to the Trinitarian *personae*:

[Bs. 1]

But if someone takes the commonality of the substance to mean that one and the **same formula of being (τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον)** is observed in both, such that if, hypothetically speaking, the Father is conceived of as light in his substrate, then the substance of the Only-Begotten is also confessed as light, and **whatever one may assign to the Father as the formula of his being (τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον), the very same also applies to the Son.** If someone takes the commonality of the substance in this way, we accept it and claim it as our doctrine. For this is how divinity is one. Clearly, their unity is conceived to be a matter of **the formula of the substance (κατὰ τὸν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον).** Hence while there is a difference in number (ἀριθμῶ) and in the distinctive features (ιδιότησι) that characterize each, their unity is observed in the formula of the divinity.^{186 187}

¹⁸¹ Greg. Nys. *Contr. Eun.* I. 227 (GNO I 93, 6-11).

¹⁸² All the passages of Gregory of Nyssa [G.Ny.1-6] are translated by Stuart George Hall, with my modifications and adaptations.

¹⁸³ The accidental characteristics that fall outside the definition and are peculiar to them. cf Bas. *Adv. Eun.* II. 4,1-43 (SC 305, 18-22), where Basil makes an identical claim by employing ιδιώματα and ιδιότητα; and concludes that names “Father” and “Son” are revelatory of ιδιώματα, not οὐσίαι.

¹⁸⁴ In other words, λόγος of substance is the species human; while the λόγος of hypostasis are various ιδιώματα.

¹⁸⁵ He also uses the verb ἀποδόσει that is also reminiscent of the Aristotelian formulation.

¹⁸⁶ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 19, 32-44 (SC 240-242).

¹⁸⁷ Translation by Mark Delcogliano, with my adaptations.

Here, Basil explicitly formulates his synonymous conception of the Trinity: what is the commonality (κοινόν) between divine persons? According to this passage, it is their shared λόγος τῆς οὐσίας or λόγος τοῦ εἶναι¹⁸⁸ that serves as the foundation for many common predicates they share. Accordingly, for Basil, whatever is said of Father, can also be predicated of Son. However, there are exceptions to this rule: since they are numerically (ἀριθμῶ) different, there are a couple of names that are uniquely predicated of each divine person. For example, the names “Father” and “unbegotten” are exclusively said of Father; similarly, the expressions “only-begotten” and “Son” are only predicated of Son. According to Basil, These names denote their ‘peculiar features’ (ιδιότηα) that fall outside the definitory formula (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας). We can see the striking similarities between Gregory’s and Basil’s illustrations and the language in which they frame their ideas. The unity and diversity between Trinitarian persons are analogous to the above-mentioned example of Peter and John. Now, let us see how the third Cappadocian, Gregory Nazianzus, formulates the same idea:

[G. Nz 1.]

For to us, there is but One God, the Father, of Whom are all things (ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα), and One Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things (δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα); and One Holy Ghost, in Whom are all things (ἐν ᾧ τὰ πάντα); yet these words, ‘of whom’, ‘by whom’, ‘in whom’, do not denote a difference of nature.. ...but they characterize the ‘peculiar features’ of a nature (φύσεως ιδιότηας) which is one and unconfused.¹⁸⁹

And when I speak of God you must be illumined at once by one flash of light and by three. Three in Individualities (ιδιότηας) or Hypostases (ὑποστάσεις), if any prefer so to call them, or persons (πρόσωπα), for we will not quarrel about names so long as the syllables amount to the same meaning; but **One in respect of the formula of being (κατὰ τὸν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον)** — that is, the Godhead.^{190 191}

¹⁸⁸ It is clear from this passage that Basil uses them interchangeably.

¹⁸⁹ Greg. Naz. *Or.*39. 12,1-6 (SC 358, 172-174).

¹⁹⁰ Greg. Naz. *Or.*39. 11,13-17 (SC 358, 170-172)

¹⁹¹ Fragments G. Nz 1-2 are taken from “Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers” (Series 2. In 14 vols. Volume 07), with my modifications and adaptations.

As we can see, Gregory Nazianzus frames the diversity and unity of Trinitarian *personae* in the same way: The identity of divine persons is formulated by means of Aristotelian expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας, and for their distinctions, the word ιδιότητα is employed that signifies the class of features which are external to definition, and accordingly, do not denote “what it is to be A”.

The next step in our inquiry is to see how this distinction between substance and non-substantial items was utilized against the Eunomian claim about ἀγέννητος. The main question of this debate was the following: is it possible for the name ἀγέννητος to signify the divine substance? If one successfully proves that ἀγέννητος cannot be included in the definitory formula, but rather it expresses ιδιότης, then the Eunomian doctrine will be undermined. Again, the standard argument for the Cappadocians was to illustrate its impossibility on the level of biological organisms and then project it to the Trinitarian *personae*. The stock examples involved Adam, who was labelled as πλάσμα (product), and Abel (or Seth). Let us see how Gregory of Nyssa discusses this subject:

[G. Ny. 2]

The first man [Adam] and the one sprung from him [Abel], though they get their being (τὸ εἶναι) in a different way from each other, the one by the coupling of parents, the other by shaping from the dust, are both believed to be two and by **definitory formula** (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας) are not split from each other;

Both former and latter are human, and their **formula of being** (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) is the same for them both: each is mortal, and rational too, and similarly capable of thought and knowledge. If then the formula (λόγος) for humanity is not altered in the case of Adam and Abel by the change in the way they are generated, since neither the order nor the manner of their coming to be imports any change in nature.¹⁹²

Here, Gregory’s main argument can be formulated in the following way: 1. Adam was created, while Abel was begotten. 2. If Adam was not begotten, then it follows that he is unbegotten

¹⁹² Greg. Nys. *Contr. Eun.* I. 496 (GNO I 169,20-170,8).

(ἀγέννητος). 3. Even though Abel was begotten, he is still one in substance with Adam since both are human (ἄνθρωπος). 4. Therefore, being unbegotten does not express the substance and is outside the formula of being (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας). The only possible way out for Eunomius is to claim that Adam's substance is not expressed by ἄνθρωπος but rather by ἀγέννητος;¹⁹³ however, it was very unlikely for any intellectual to assert that; since it was commonly accepted that the name of the species denotes the substance of biological items. The claim of synonymy is of utmost importance since it emphasizes the fact that Adam and Abel are called by the common name “human” with the identical corresponding definition, even though they are of different origins: one is πλάσμα and another – γέννημα. They retain their humanity and, at the same time, are two different individuals. Now, let us see how Gregory of Nazianzus makes the same case:

[G. Nz 2]

For ‘peculiar property’ (ιδιότης) is unchangeable; else how could ‘peculiar property’ (ιδιότης) remain, if it were changeable, and could be removed from one to another? But they who make Unbegotten (ἀγεννησίαν) and Begotten (γέννησιν) **natures of homonymous gods (φύσεις Θεῶν ὁμωνύμων)** would perhaps make Adam and Seth differ in nature, since the former was not born of flesh (for he was created), but the latter was born of Adam and Eve. There is then One God in Three, and These Three are One, as we have said.¹⁹⁴

Again, we can see the similar procedure pattern of reasoning: the illustrative biological example is projected to the divine. According to Gregory of Nazianzus, to claim that “God” is homonymously predicated of Trinitarian *personae* because Father is ἀγέννητος – is the same as arguing for the homonymy of “human” towards Adam and Seth. If we agree with Eunomius, Adam being ἀγέννητος excludes the possibility of him being human and synonymous with Seth. However, Gregory emphasizes the absurdity of this argument by highlighting the fact that ἀγέννητος is a peculiar feature (ιδιότης) and not an expression signifying of substance. This

¹⁹³ That would make Adam homonymously “human” with the rest of the mankind.

¹⁹⁴ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 39. 12, 21-28 (SC 358, 174-176).

claim can be reformulated in the following way: the fact that only Father is ἀγέννητος does not mean that He cannot be synonymous with the other divine persons. The example of Adam and Seth might have been unsatisfactory for Eunomius since even though Adam was not brought to life by means of begetting (γεννᾶν), he still had a temporal beginning; and one of the main attributes of ἀγέννητος is the beginninglessness: it has to be ἄναρχος. Gregory of Nyssa had a ready-made response to this type of objection. He hypothetically allows the temporal beginning of Son in order to refute Eunomius and reveal the inconsistencies of his logic:

[G. Ny. 3]

Why should the being (τὸ εἶναι) which is prior in time to the one generated later have more of what it is to “be” (I use the term “be”, because he does), so that the one is called “highest and authentic” (κυρίως), while the other is not?

What less did David have than Abraham in terms of **formula of being (κατὰ τὸν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον)**, because he was signified as fourteen generations later? Was there some change in humanity in his case, and was he less a man, because born later in time? Who would be so stupid as to say that?

The **formula of being (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας)** is identical in both cases, and is in no way changed with the passing of time. Nor would anyone say that the one is more a man because he preceded in time, while the other participates less in that nature because he lived his life after others, as if human nature were spent by those predecessors, or time had used up power in those who went before.¹⁹⁵

It seems that Eunomius argued for the priority of Father’s substance based on His temporal pre-existence. In this theoretical framework, Father is said “to be” more properly (κυρίως), than Son or any other creature, based on His seniority (he is older than everything). Here, Gregory does not attack the temporal creation of Son; he is eager to further refute Eunomius by temporally accepting the premises of his opponent in order to reveal his logical inconsistencies. The argument is the following: Even though David was born generations after Abraham, he is not a less or a more of a human. The temporal seniority is also outside the formula of being (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας). Accordingly, based on the example of biological entities, Gregory

¹⁹⁵ Greg. Nys. *Contr. Eun.* I. 172-174 (GNO I 78,5-22).

concludes that Son is not a less of a being even if we allow His temporal creation. Again, the synonymy between the corporeal items is projected to the divine. But how do we proceed from the corporeal realm to the sphere of the divine? How is it justified to make conclusions about incorporeal entities on the basis of biological organisms? It seems that Eunomius was defending himself by rejecting any analogy between the sensible and transcendent realms. Gregory of Nyssa, cites Eunomius in the following way:

[G. Ny. 4]

“To put forward the **homonymy based on analogy** (ἐξ ἀναλογίας ὁμωνυμίας),” he says, “as the basis of human conceptualization (εἰς ἀνθρωπίνην ἐπίνοιαν), is the work of a mind which has discarded the valid, correct meaning, and considers the words of the Lord to have an invalid meaning and a sort of debased usage.”¹⁹⁶

This is a curious passage, where Eunomius seems to deny any validity or appropriateness of ‘bottom-up’ analogical homonymy. The fact that Anomoeans do not have a problem with the homonymy *per se* was clear in the cited passages of the previous chapter about Gregory of Nazianzus: they were willing to employ the chance-homonymy since it emphasized the complete unlikeness and randomness. However, this is not the case with analogical homonymy since it implies a relative likeness (ὁμοίωμα) between the corporeal and transcendent realms. The underlying philosophical implication of ‘bottom-up’ analogical homonymy is that theological discourse is the product of analogical extension of sensible language. Accordingly, since the Eunomian framework promotes the complete transcendence of Father and relative transcendence of Son, the attribution of earthly language to these divine entities is unacceptable for him. Also, in his *Apology*, he famously warns his audience about the homonymy of γέννημα and its embryological implications.¹⁹⁷ In response, Basil makes it clear, that he is well aware of the distinction between divine and earthly ‘begettings’: the corporeal meaning of ‘begetting’

¹⁹⁶ Greg. Nys. *Contr. Eun.* II. 306 (GNO I 316, 6-9).

¹⁹⁷ Eun. *Apol.* 12, 4-7 (Vagg. 48); Also 16, 1-6 (Vagg. 52).

implies that the begotten entity is the offspring of male and female, or that it involves the division of matter (ὕλη).¹⁹⁸ Even though the Cappadocian Fathers postulate the synonymy of divine persons, they also, at the same time, emphasize the ‘bottom-up’ [analogical] homonymy between the sensible and divine realms. Let us see how Gregory of Nyssa describes the relation of these two separate spheres:

[G. Ny. 5]

Names, Eunomius, have meaning among us, and yield another meaning when applied to the transcendent Power (ὕπερκειμένης δυνάμεως). Certainly in all other respects the divine nature is separated from the human by a wide margin, and experience (πεῖρα) reveals nothing here (ἐνταῦθα) resembling the greatness which is attributed to the transcendent (ἐν ἐκείνῃ) by the guesses of speculation and conjecture. In the same way where the meanings of words are concerned, even if **there is a homonymy (ὁμωνυμία) between the human (ἄνθρωπινον) and the eternal (αἰδίων)**, yet proportionately to the separation of natures the meanings of terms are also distinct.¹⁹⁹

[G. Ny. 6]

Similarly in almost everything else **the homonymy (ὁμωνυμία)** of our things (ἡμετέρων πραγμάτων) is used towards the divine (πρὸς τὰ θεῖα), but indicating along with the identity of terms that the difference of meaning is great.²⁰⁰

Here, Gregory describes how the sensible discourse is applied to the incorporeal entities. The procedure is very reminiscent of Iamblichus’ νοερά θεωρία, as we have seen it in the chapter about Neoplatonists. The names primarily signify the corporeal items of the sublunary world, and by analogical extension and change in meaning, they penetrate the divine. However, Gregory also emphasizes his pessimistic epistemology and the great distance between these worlds. Ultimately, we can only comprehend the activities of God that He reveals to us. The main conclusions that can be drawn from the chapter are the following: 1. The Cappadocian Fathers were postulating the synonymous relationship of divine persons based on its

¹⁹⁸ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* II. 5,18-32 (SC 305, 24); here, Basil mockingly remarks that nobody would project corporeal (σωματική) attributes to the divine begetting (θεῖα γέννησις), and claim that Father begets in accordance with the embryological process (διάπλασις and μόρφωσις); for him, it is clear that the word “begetting” is used via homonymy (ὁμωνυμία).

¹⁹⁹ Greg. Nys. *Contr. Eun.* I 620 (GNO I 205, 1-10).

²⁰⁰ Greg. Nys. *Contr. Eun.* I.622 (GNO I 205, 20-22).

corresponding biological equivalents. 2. Furthermore, they emphasized that the relationship between the divine and sensible realms is homonymous and produced by the ‘bottom-up’ analogical extension. 3. The distinction between the substance and non-substantial entities was crucial for their argument against Eunomius and his theory of ἀγέννητος.

3.5. Basil on Polyonymy

The Church Fathers of the fourth century were trying to formulate the mysteries of the Trinity by navigating between the Scylla and Charybdis of the Trinitarian heresies: i.e., Sabellianism and Arianism. The representatives of “orthodoxy” sought to avoid these two equally dangerous extremes. The Modalism of Sabellians was often depicted by their opponents in the following way: There is a complete identity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They differ only in name and manifestations but not in reality. Accordingly, the difference between divine *personae* are reduced to being merely nominal or appellative since each term refers to an identical particular entity.²⁰¹ There is a curious passage in Basil’s Letter CCXXVI where he employs a notion of polyonymy to articulate Sabellian doctrine:

[B 1]

“For we avoid and anathematize alike as impious both those who are tainted with the ideas of Sabellius and those who defend the teachings of Arius. If anyone says that the Father and Son and Holy Spirit are the same, and assumes **one polyonymous thing** (ἐν πρᾶγμα πολώνυμον), and **one reality** (μίαν ὑπόστασιν) **expressed by three terms** (ὑπὸ τριῶν προσηγοριῶν), such a one we class in the party of the Jews. Likewise also if anyone speaks of the Son as unlike (ἀνόμοιον) in substance (κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν) to the Father, or brings the Holy Spirit down to the level of a creature (κτίσμα), we anathematize him and consider him to be near the errors of the Greeks.”^{202 203}

In this passage, Basil presents two Trinitarian teachings that he considers to be impious opposite extremes: the Sabellian and Arian doctrines. He also identifies the possible sources of these

²⁰¹ About the way Sabellians were represented by their opponents, see G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: S.P.C.K., 1952), 112-115; 157- 162; 183.

²⁰² Basil, Letter CCXXVI (Loeb 340-341).

²⁰³ Translation is by Roy J. Deferrari (taken from Loeb 243), with my adaptations.

heretical theologies: Sabellianism is associated with the Jewish monistic framework, and Arianism with the Greek pluralism. As we have already mentioned in the previous chapters, polyonymy was closely associated with the strictest and strongest sense of identity – the numerical oneness (ἀριθμῶ) as opposed to the specific (εἶδει) and generic (γένει) unities. Accordingly, the notion of polyonymy was the aptest tool to express the Trinitarian doctrine that was famously associated with the complete annihilation of ontological differences between the divine persons. Hence, Basil identifies the theological position of Sabellians with the polyonymy of God where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are “single polyonymous thing” (ἐν πρᾶγμα πολώνυμον), and the difference between the divine persons is not ontological but merely nominal and appellative.²⁰⁴

Even though Basil portrays Sabellianism and Anomoeanism as the polar opposite Trinitarian doctrines, he uses the concept of polyonymy to describe them both; in his *Adversus Eunomium*, he reformulates Eunomian doctrine and labels it as polyonymous. However, in the case of Sabellianism, as we have already seen, polyonymy was between the names of the divine persons of the Trinity, while in the case of Eunomian doctrine, it will be between the various predicates imposed on Father. Before the presentation of the passage, the following context is needed to be stated: Basil opposes the Eunomian claim of the privileged and venerated status of a single name ἀγέννητος that allegedly signifies the divine substance of Father. Furthermore, Eunomius asserted that since Father is simple and without any composition, it cannot be designated by more than one name. Accordingly, he dismissed any names produced by the epinoetic process (κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν). As we have already remarked, Basil promoted the notion of ἐπίνοια and

²⁰⁴ There is a baffling passage in Boethius’ *De Trinitate*, where he attempts to avoid tritheism by employing the stock examples of polyonymy to describe the signification of names of divine persons (*gladius unus, mucro unus, ensis unus*). See Boeth. OSI.3.23-24.

ἐνεργεῖται that harmonized the simplicity of God and the multiplicity of his names. To illustrate his point, he first analyzes the various Scriptural designations of Christ:

[B2]

“He called himself ‘door,’ ‘way,’ ‘bread,’ ‘vine,’ ‘shepherd,’ and ‘light,’ even though **he is not a polyonym (πολυώνυμος)**. All these names do not carry the same meaning (σημαινόμενον) as one another. For ‘light’ signifies one thing, ‘vine’ another, ‘way’ another, and ‘shepherd’ yet another. Though our Lord is one in substrate (ἐν ὧν κατὰ τὸ ὑποκείμενον), and one substance (μία οὐσία), simple (ἀπλῆ) and not composite (ἄσύνθετος), he calls himself by different names at different times, using designations that differ from one another for the different conceptualizations (ταῖς ἐπινοίαις διαφερούσας). On the basis of his different activities (ἐνεργειῶν) and his relation (σχέσιν) to the objects of his divine benefaction, he employs different names for himself.”^{205 206}

Here, Basil cites various Scriptural epithets of Christ to prove the following point: one simple entity can be referred to by multiple names. Even though Christ is one (ἐν) and without composition (ἄσύνθετος), by epinoetic process (κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν), we can name his various ‘identifying features’ (ιδιώματα). What are these ιδιώματα? They are his activities and relations and not his substance. Afterwards, Basil provides a rationale for every epithet mentioned above, but this is not relevant to our current objective. The important issue is his mention of polyonymy: what is its significance in this context? One possible answer to this is that it is connected with Eunomius’ claim of ἀγέννητος. If only one name and its corresponding meaning (σημασία) denote the divine substance, then there are only two remaining alternatives: either all other names imposed on Father are empty, or they have the identical meaning as ἀγέννητος. Eunomius has to provide an explanation about the authoritative Scriptural epithets. He cannot claim that they are all empty (μάταιος) except ἀγέννητος. Accordingly, the only option for him is to assert their polyonymy: that they are different only linguistically but the same in meaning and reality. For Basil, both options are problematic since he firmly believes that every epithet

²⁰⁵ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 7, 8-17 (SC 188-190).

²⁰⁶ Translations of B2-3 are by Delcogliano with my adaptations.

denotes a different aspect and thus, has a proper meaning (ἴδια σημασία). Let us now proceed to another passage:

[B3]

“Then he will confess this: that all things attributed to God similarly refer to his substance. But how is it not ridiculous to say that his creative power (δημιουργικόν) is his substance? Or that his providence (προνοητικόν) is his substance? Or the same for his foreknowledge (προγνωστικόν)? In other words, how is it not ridiculous to regard every activity (ἐνέργειαν) of his as his substance? And if all these names converge upon a single meaning (ἐν σημαίνόμενον), each one has to signify the same thing as the others, **such as is the case with polyonyms (πολυωνύμων)**, as when we call the same man ‘Simon,’ ‘Peter,’ and ‘Cephas.’”²⁰⁷

Again, Basil imports the notion of polyonymy to describe the theological position of Eunomius:

In this case, he tackles with the predicates of Father. As we have already stated above, if Eunomius is correct, then every Scriptural epithet of God becomes identical in meaning to the name ἀγέννητος, and as a result, the designations “demiurgic” (δημιουργικόν), “provident” (προνοητικόν) and “the one with foreknowledge” (προγνωστικόν) will acquire one definitory formula and all of them will signify the substance of Father as ἀγέννητος. For Basil, this is an absurd outcome of Eunomian premises since it is evident that δημιουργικόν denotes Father’s demiurgic activity, while ἀγέννητος refers to His beginningless existence. All in all, it can be concluded that a general strategy of using the concept of polyonymy is the following: to emphasize the strict definitory identity of various linguistic items and to reduce the apparent ontological diversity to mere nominal differences.

²⁰⁷ Bas. *Adv. Eun.* I. 8, 21-28 (SC 194).

Conclusion

The present thesis explores how the late antique thinkers of different philosophical backgrounds employed three concepts from the Peripatetic toolbox: homonymy, synonymy and polyonymy. After thoroughly analyzing various texts and philosophical contexts in which these terms are scattered, I concluded that several generalizations were possible about the common patterns and strategies these concepts were utilized for. In the preceding three chapters, by means of carefully selected samples, my aim was to illustrate that the common patterns and strategies in which these concepts were appropriated transcend the differences of the philosophical schools or the particularities of the doctrinal frameworks. The general results of my findings are the following: 1. Homonymy is a conceptual tool that was repeatedly employed to emphasize the ontological disconnection and detachment between given items. It always stresses the essential difference and transcendence. 2. In contrast, synonymy was utilized for highlighting ontological affinity and unity; it was conceived as an apt tool for connecting the given multiplicity by ordering and arranging it under the same essence. 3. The notion of polyonymy was employed to draw our attention to the numerical identity of a seeming multiplicity; it served the purpose of reducing the apparent ontological diversity to the nominal or appellative differences. In addition, I emphasized the influence and significant role played by Porphyry's fourfold division of homonymy; the subsequent thinkers were meticulously selecting the most suitable type of homonymy for their doctrinal inquiries from the Porphyrian toolbox.

One of my objectives was to demonstrate that the above-mentioned generalizations work in various philosophical and doctrinal settings: In the first chapter, I explored the way Greek commentators of Aristotle conceptualized these terms on the horizontal ontological level of the sublunary world. It served as a foundation for the second and third chapters, where I presented exactly how these notions were adapted and imported into the vertical hierarchical systems of

Neoplatonists and Christians. The main argument of my thesis concerning the common patterns and strategies of ‘onymy’ language emerges in the first chapter, where I carefully analyze the precise meanings of these concepts, various commonly accepted taxonomies and the stock examples that were repeatedly used. Afterwards, I proceed toward a case-by-case examination of two vertical metaphysical frameworks: Christian Trinitarian theology, represented by the Cappadocian Fathers and Eunomius; And Neoplatonic ontology, represented by Plotinus, Iamblichus, Syrianus and Proclus. The conclusions drawn from my examination of various specific doctrinal frameworks can be characterized as follows: a) The Cappadocian Fathers expressed the unity of Trinitarian *personae* and their Homousian theology in the language of synonymy; at the same time, they found the notion of “bottom-up” analogical homonymy profitable for the application of names to the divine realm; b) In contrast, Anomoeans employed the chance-homonymy since it highlighted the complete transcendence and unlikeness of Father to Son; c) Syrianus and Proclus assimilated the similarity and *ab uno* homonymies into one type and as a result, depicted the complex relationship between the transcendent Forms and their particular imperfect copies. Their decision was based on their image-model ontology, ‘top-bottom’ theory of naming, and the doctrine of Forms as efficient, final and paradigmatic causes; d) Iamblichus, by means of analogical homonymy, applied the names of the first imposition to the transcendent intelligible entities.

One of the key findings of my thesis involves research surrounding Iamblichus, where I relate his νοερά θεωρία with the language of homonymy. By identifying Iamblichus as an author of several passages in Dexippus,²⁰⁸ and Simplicius’ commentaries on *Categories*, I argued that in his lost commentaries, Iamblichus was utilizing the Porphyrian analogical homonymy that served as the basis for his νοερά θεωρία, which extended the Aristotelian *Categories* beyond

²⁰⁸ The passage of Dexippus that I analyze, its authorship was previously attributed to Porphyry by Pierre Hadot; my conclusions are directly contradicting his article.

the sensible realm of being. Additionally, my research has drawn attention to and proven the immense influence the Porphyrian classification of homonymy had on the subsequent generations of philosophers - Their level of precise and deep understanding of his work in general and his taxonomy of homonymy specifically.

All in all, I extracted the general patterns and strategies that go beyond the particular philosophical settings by scrutinizing extremely distinct individual doctrinal occasions in which the notions of homonymy, synonymy, and polyonymy were employed. My aim was to offer a coherent panoramic view of late antique applications of the ‘onymy’ language.

There are many directions in which further studies can go: the potential influence of Iamblichus and his *voepà θεωρία* on Cappadocians and their analogical application of names to the divine entities is yet to be explored.²⁰⁹ Iamblichus might have paved the way for the subsequent Christian and Platonic thinkers to appropriate Aristotelian categories in their theological inquiries. It opened the doors of possibilities to further extend and stretch the limits of categories and other logical tools to the intelligible realms of being.

Also, due to my thesis’s limited scope and objective, I could not examine the language of ‘onymies’ in the subsequent Christological debates concerning the hypostatic unity and diversity of Christ. There is untapped potential for subsequent studies to uncover the way Greek and Latin Patristic authors appropriated these concepts in their inquiries, and as the core aims of my thesis have been sufficiently explored, these topics still leave room for additional research concerning the language of ‘onymies’.

²⁰⁹ I owe this idea to professor István Perczel, who, in our private conversations, drew my attention to the possible connections between Iamblichus’ *voepà θεωρία* and the subsequent Patristic authors.

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