The Neglected Doctrine of the Monarchy of the Father,
and Its Implications for the Analytic Debate about the Trinity

I. INTRODUCTION

Whether or not Trinitarianism is defensible (logically, metaphysically, biblically, or what have you) depends not only on whether some particular account of the Trinity is defensible in that sense, but also on which particular accounts of the Trinity *count as Trinitarian*. After all, Arianism and Modalism are both accounts of the Trinity, but neither counts as Trinitarian. This is why defenses of Arianism or Modalism would not count as defenses of Trinitarianism, and conversely why one way to criticize accounts of the Trinity is to say that they are forms of Arianism or Modalism. But this raises the question, if not just *any* account of the Trinity (however defensible) would count as Trinitarian, which accounts *do* count as Trinitarian, so that a defense of one of them would count as a defense of Trinitarianism? Much recent analytic theology has been concerned with devising (hopefully defensible) accounts of the Trinity, but comparatively little attention has been given to this question of what it takes for an *account* of the Trinity *to count as Trinitarian*. Indeed, to my knowledge, only Dale Tuggy has given an explicit definition of Trinitarian (versus Unitarian) theology. But Tuggy's definitions are not given as a mere formality. He puts them to quite substantive use in his evaluations of both contemporary and historical sources, and they turn out to be essential to what is probably his most important criticism of Trinitarian theology. In this paper, I will offer my own definitions of Trinitarian and Unitarian theology, contrast them with Tuggy's, and (of course) argue for the superiority of my own definitions to Tuggy's. We will see that if Trinitarianism is what Tuggy says it is, then the outlook for Trinitarianism is bleak indeed, whereas if Unitarianism is what Tuggy says it is, then Unitarianism faces comparatively few difficulties. On the other hand, if Trinitarianism and Unitarianism are what I say they are, Tuggy's central objection to Trinitarianism is without force.

Our competing pairs of definitions might seem at first glance to be roughly equivalent. What will show how they come apart is the doctrine of the Monarchy of the Father. This is a doctrine that was accepted (as far as I can tell) by literally all of the fourth century church fathers who lie at the source of the "official" formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine which later became one of the chief causes of the Great Schism, and a doctrine which continues to be a source of division between Catholic and Orthodox theology to this day. It is also a doctrine which has received *almost* no attention in analytic theology. More precisely, however, I should say that it is a certain (very strong) interpretation of the doctrine of the Monarchy of the Father, an interpretation which suggests in some ways a fresh alternative to the standard approaches of Social Trinitarianism (ST) and Relative Identity Trinitarianism (RI), an approach I will label "Monarchical Trinitarianism" (MT) We might briefly describe MT, by way of contrast to ST and RI (perhaps a bit simplistically, but still usefully) as follows:

ST says that The One God is *all* of the divine persons (taken together).
RI says that The One God is *each* of the divine persons (taken individually).
MT says that The One God is *one of* the divine persons (namely, the Father).

We will see that Monarchical Trinitarianism avoids Tuggy's most important criticism of Trinitarianism, but Tuggy does not consider it in his arguments, because his definitions count it as a form of Unitarianism instead of Trinitarianism. My definitions, on the other hand, count it as a form of Trinitarianism. Thus, whether Trinitarianism can be defended from Tuggy's criticisms depends on which definition of "Trinitarianism" is correct.

I want to stress in no uncertain terms that it is *not* my purpose at the moment to convince anybody that Monarchical Trinitarianism *is true*. Nor even that it's in some sense a good idea (although

I will devote some space to clearing up some possible misconceptions about it). My argument does not require Monarchical Trinitarianism to be: true, promising, useful, traditional, popular, an interesting alternative, or anything else other than simply *a form of Trinitarianism*. For if Monarchical Trinitarianism genuinely counts as a form of Trinitarianism, then Tuggy's definitions incorrectly categorize views as Unitarian that are in fact Trinitarian, and his argument against Trinitarianism can be shown to be unsound.

II. TWO PROBLEMS FOR TRINITARIANISM: THE LOGICAL PROBLEM AND THE "WHO IS GOD?" PROBLEM

So, what is the argument that I take to be Tuggy's central criticism of Trinitarianism? One reads or hears about "the" Logical Problem of the Trinity (perhaps following the title of Cartwright's seminal paper)[1], or of "the" three-ness / one-ness problem[2]. This is the fairly obvious problem that it's difficult to see how God can be "both three and one", or how three things can each in some sense "be God" while there is only one God. We might call this "the Predicative Problem", since it turns on the question of how the predicate "is God" or "is divine" (whether taken as a predication of a quality of divinity, or a predication of the identity relation to The One God) can apply to three distinct individuals, while yet there is, apparently, only a single individual to which it should apply. This is what is typically thought of as "the" Logical Problem of the Trinity (LPT). ST tries to solve LPT by positing an equivocation between "is God" as applied to the three persons and as applied to The One God. RI tries to solve LPT by eschewing classical identity in favor of various relative identity relations. What we can predicate "is God" or "is divine" of are three counting by persons but one counting by gods. But while most of the analytic literature on the Trinity has focused on LPT, this is not the problem that really motivates Tuggy.

The problem that I think is of much more concern to Tuggy is in fact a logically quite distinct problem. It may initially seem like a variation on LPT, and indeed I'm not sure if even Tuggy has recognized that his concern is distinct from LPT[3]. But it is. We could call his concern "the Referential Problem" instead of "the Predicative Problem" or the "Logical Problem". More intuitively, one can think of it as the "Who Is (or Which One Is) God?" problem (WIG). This is the problem of identifying the referent of the term "God" (when used as a name), or as I will put it "The One God", with capitals to remind us that it is supposed to be, either a name, or else a description that must (presumably) apply only to a single individual. Here there are two inter-related problems that form the basis of WIG:

1) (Premise) In the New Testament, the terms "God" and "Father" seem to be used interchangeably, and to name the same individual. Thus, The One God seems to be numerically identical to the Father, and not to the Son or Spirit. A corollary of this is…

2) (Corollary to 1) In the New Testament, the term "God" seems to name *a single* individual (or "person"). The One God of the Bible and the early church is not *tri-personal*, but *unipersonal*. And finally (and here's where the definitions become important) …

3) (*By definition*) All forms of Trinitarianism claim that God is "tri-personal" (contrary to (2)) that in some sense the persons are, each and all, *equally* God, rather than that God is

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[1]R. CARTWRIGHT, On the Logical Problem of the Trinity in R. CARTWRIGHT, Philosophical Essays (1987) Boston, MIT, 187–200.

[2]C. PLANTINGA, JR., The Threeness / Oneness Problem of the Trinity in Calvin Theological Journal 23, no. 1 (1988) 37–53.

[3]It was not clear to me. I used to think that Tuggy was simply working with an inadequate formulation of LPT. See B. BRANSON, The Logical Problem of the Trinity (Dissertation), 2014. Available at beaubranson.com/research p. 50, footnote 24.

unipersonal and is simply the Father (contrary to (1)).

Conclusion: No form of Trinitarianism is consistent with the New Testament.

So, while WIG might initially seem to be just a variant on LPT, since both problems can also be put in terms of problems dealing with the identity of God, it isn't. Of course, it's true we can also put LPT in terms of identity. If "is God" means "is identical to an individual named 'God'", then when we say, "the Father is God" and "the Son is God" and then say the Father and Son are numerically distinct, we have a logical contradiction (at least, given classical identity). If we instead analyze "is God" as predicating a quality (divinity) of the Father and Son, then to get a contradiction we have to add that there is only one God. But the claim there is only one God can also be analyzed in terms of (classical) identity: Something, x, is a god (is divine), and anything, y, that is a god (is divine), is identical to x. But WIG is not just a variation on LPT. LPT, if successful, would indict Trinitarianism as *internally* incoherent. *Merely* to refer to the Father, Son and Spirit as each, in whatever sense, "God", while saying there is only one God, seems to yield a contradiction – regardless of what one thinks about the Bible, the Creeds and Councils and so forth, indeed regardless of whether one believes in any of these at all. It truly is a purely *logical* problem. But WIG points not to any *internal* incoherence, but to an external conflict with *the Bible* (or, if you prefer, a certain interpretation of the Bible). And indeed, while Tuggy does sometimes criticize the dubious metaphysics or other theoretical problems of various models of the Trinity, by far his deeper concern seems to be how these models fit with the Bible.

      Proponents of ST and RI accounts have mostly been concerned with LPT. So, it's unsurprising that their accounts do a much better job of dealing with LPT compared with WIG, a problem their creators may not have even had in view. For example, even if we take ST's equivocation between "is God" as applied to the persons and "is God" as applied to The One God to be an adequate solution to LPT, standard versions of ST fail to provide an adequate response to WIG. This is because standard ST accounts identify The One God with the Trinity, taken all together and thought of as a single whole, rather than identifying The One God with the Father, as the New Testament seems to, and is required by WIG. Likewise, RI takes each of the persons to be god-identical but person-distinct, and so to count as one God (one when counting by gods) and three persons (three when counting by persons). Here again, even if we take this to be an adequate solution to LPT, it at least isn't obvious whether it solves WIG, or in what way. Since RI eschews talk of classical identity, it would seem there simply would be no answer to the question who The One God is (classically) identical to. Indeed, RI even eschews the use of singular terms, which "The One God" is taken to be within WIG (at least as I have formulated it), so it's not immediately obvious how we would even translate WIG into terms a relative identity Trinitarian could understand in the first place. On the other hand, to the extent that we might translate WIG into relative identity logic, it would seem likely that the three persons should all have an equally good claim to being (god-identical to?) The One God. With respect to (2) above, it's not immediately obvious to me whether, on RI, The One God (whatever that might even mean in RI) would turn out to be "tri-personal" or "uni-personal". Indeed, it may be that the answer is simply that God would be something like "Trine when counting by persons, but Une when counting by gods" (or as the RI-ist might happily put it, "tri-personal but mono-theistic"!) In any case, it does seem that RI would have a difficulty saying why the God of the New Testament seems to be unipersonal (if He does so seem), or why The One God of the New Testament seems to just be the Father, but *does not* seem to be equally the Son or Spirit. The point here, however, is not to give a thorough analysis of the success or failure of RI with respect to WIG. The point is just to show that WIG *is a distinct problem from* LPT. One might take LPT to be solved by a particular version of RI or ST, while WIG is either clearly not solved, or at least not clearly solved. Conversely, one can easily solve WIG without solving LPT by simply identifying The One God with the Father but leaving it totally unexplained in what sense the Son and

Spirit can be called "God" or "divine".

III. The (Biblical) Unitarian Alternative

So, we can see that LPT and WIG are in fact two distinct problems. And as I've said, WIG, rather than LPT, is the larger concern for Tuggy, who favors the approach of what is called Biblical Unitarianism (BU). To just barely sketch the view, Biblical Unitarians (BU's) take the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to be a creature, not a divine being alongside God the Father. Although some may admit to something like an Arian view of Christ's pre-existence, most would say He just came into existence sometime around 4 BC to 1 AD, and is not different from ordinary humans except in His sinlessness and extraordinary obedience to God. Finally, although here again there's some disagreement, talk about the Holy Spirit is typically read by BU's as something like talk about "God in action".

While we put WIG as a case against Trinitarianism above, we can reformulate it as a case *for* BU as follows:

> 1) (Premise) In the New Testament, the terms "God" and "Father" seem to be used interchangeably, and to name the same individual. Thus, The One God seems to be numerically identical to the Father, and not to the Son or Spirit. A corollary of this is…
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> 2) (Corollary to 1) In the New Testament, the term "God" seems to name *a single* individual (or "person"). The One God of the Bible and the early church is not *tri-personal*, but *unipersonal*. And finally (and here's where the definitions become important) …
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> 3) (*By definition*) Any theology that claims that God is "uni-personal" (in keeping with (2)) and says that God just is the Father (in keeping with (1)), is Unitarian. (I.e., any theology that solves WIG is Unitarian.)
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> Conclusion: Any theology that is fully consistent with the New Testament (i.e., any theology that solves WIG) will be Unitarian.

If Tuggy's lines of reasoning are correct, then the prospects for Trinitarianism seem bleak indeed. Besides the well-known criticisms that Trinitarian Theologies solve LPT only by way of revisionary logic, controversial metaphysics, or equivocations on key terms, we have Tuggy's argument that, even if some account is successful in dealing with LPT, it will still fail to be Biblical. The resulting picture, then, is that Trinitarianism has little to recommend it other than the sheer weight of popularity and tradition – considerations that surely can't outweigh problems of potential contradictions or metaphysical implausibility (LPT), coupled with a poor fit with the Bible (WIG). On the other hand, if Tuggy's lines of reasoning are correct, we seem to have just the opposite picture for BU. It may not be very popular or traditional, but it seems to accord better with both reason (LPT) and revelation (WIG). And if Trinitarianism has nothing to recommend it over Unitarianism but the weight of tradition and popularity — well, that's a pretty sad commentary on any doctrine.

I'll argue, however, that Tuggy's picture results from a kind of logical smoke-and-mirrors, a semantic sleight-of-hand that:

> (1) artificially excludes certain legitimate options for Trinitarians, and
> (2) re-categorizes those options as "Unitarian" instead of "Trinitarian", thereby siphoning off a degree of warrant that ought to accrue to Trinitarianism and illicitly applying it to Unitarianism instead.

This is because, whereas standard forms of RI and ST either obviously fail, or at least do not obviously succeed, at addressing WIG, Monarchical Trinitarianism succeeds at addressing it, but simply gets counted as "Unitarian" by Tuggy's definitions.

IV. WHY WE SHOULD BE SUSPICIOUS OF TUGGY'S DEFINITIONS

Before examining our competing pairs of definitions, let me note a few practical results of Tuggy's definitions when applied to the debate, results that should immediately give us pause before simply accepting them as uncontroversial formalities. In at least one (contemporary) case, it will be clear that Monarchical Trinitarianism will not be the only kind of account of the Trinity that seems intuitively Trinitarian, but that Tuggy's definitions rule out as non-Trinitarian. In another (historical) case, it becomes clear that Tuggy's usage of "Trinitarian" must depart pretty radically from ordinary usage.

The first case I have in mind, which seems intuitively Trinitarian, and yet does not count as Trinitarian by Tuggy's definitions, is a contemporary example: Mike Rea's and Jeff Brower's account of the Trinity in terms of Material Constitution, dubbed "Constitution Trinitarianism" (CT) by Tuggy[4]. Tuggy does raise a number of internal criticisms against CT. But crucially, his first criticism is that it "is not Trinitarian"[5], since, according to Tuggy, "a trinitarian theory must affirm the existence of a triune god"[6]. while CT "posits three equally divine persons… but not, it seems, any triune deity which they compose". Now while I disagree with some of the specifics of Rea's and Brower's CT account, it seems like a radical move to claim that their account simply does not count in any good sense as Trinitarian, even in a very broad sense of the term "Trinitarian".

Tuggy points out in a footnote that, "In correspondence Rea suggests that neither the classic creeds nor the Bible require saying that there is such a being as the Trinity"[7]. Now Rea is quite right on that historical point. Tuggy, in a previous footnote, however, states, "In setting out the creedal constrains of trinitarian theorizing, Rea doesn't seem to notice that the 'Athanasian' creed, unlike the creeds of 325 and 381, clearly asserts the existence of a triune, tripersonal deity, as do the body of catholic theologians from the late fourth century on. (Rea 2009, 404-5) In other words, they identify the one God with the Trinity, and not with the Father alone, as in earlier creeds"[8]. Here, however, it is Tuggy who has been less perceptive than Rea. Tuggy does not seem to have noticed (or else has simply ignored the fact) that the so-called "Athanasian" creed in fact is not and never has been an ecumenically accepted creed, was not written by St. Athanasius, but is rather a forgery, and was not only not accepted by the vast majority of Trinitarians (i.e., those who lived in the East), but indeed was unknown in the East before about the eleventh century[9]. Indeed, not only was the Athanasian creed never accepted by, or even known by, Eastern Christians, but when it finally did become known, it was for the most part either rejected outright on account of its affirming the *filioque*, or else the offending text was deleted in translations into Greek[10]. And so, however influential the so-called "Athanasian" creed may have been among Western Christians, it can hardly be appealed to as any sort of sine qua non of Trinitarianism *in general*. As for Tuggy's claim that "the body of catholic theologians from the late fourth century on" also clearly assert "the existence of a triune, tripersonal deity", he omits any

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[4]D. TUGGY, Constitution Trinitarianism: An Appraisal, in Philosophy & Theology 25 (2013) pp. 129-162.
[5]Ibid. pp. 135 ff.
[6]Ibid.
[7]Ibid. p. 136.
[8]Ibid. p. 135.
[9]P. SCHAFF, Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume I. The History of Creeds. Sixth edition. New York, USA, Harper & Brothers, 1919. pp. 35-36.
[10]Ibid.

evidence, but even if the claim could be substantiated, it is not clearly relevant. What is normative is the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, not the ways in which later theologians may or may not have interpreted (or misinterpreted) it. (Furthermore, there is good reason to doubt that there has ever been anything like a consensus on there being a "tri-personal" God among *all* later theologians, especially in the East. We will explore just a smidgeon of those reasons below in section VII, though there is not space for a full treatment of all the data.)

Now I am more optimistic than most (certainly more optimistic than Tuggy himself) about the idea that the 4ᵗʰ century church fathers (the so-called "pro-Nicenes") had at least a rough consensus on a certain core set of views that could be called "the" doctrine of the Trinity. And I would be willing to criticize Rea's and Brower's account as not being "Trinitarian" in a certain narrow sense – not *being* "the" doctrine of the Trinity (or perhaps not being *compatible* with "the" doctrine of the Trinity). But as Tuggy does not believe there is such a thing as "the" doctrine of the Trinity, he cannot sensibly criticize a view as not being Trinitarian in this narrower sense. He can *only* sensibly talk about a view failing to be Trinitarian in a broad sense, as simply not being the sort of thing that standard usage or common sense might call "Trinitarian". Thus, we should pause here and ask, even if we say that CT in conflict with "the" doctrine of the Trinity, or if we say that it is false, that it is not orthodox, or that it is in no sense at all successful as a solution to LPT (since these are not the relevant considerations here), is it really the case that Rea's and Brower's CT account of the Trinity *doesn't even count as Trinitarian* – even in a very broad sense of "Trinitarian"? It is this last claim that is the crucial question here, and what is necessary for Tuggy's overall criticism of Trinitarianism to be fully successful. But to say that CT simply does not count as Trinitarian, even in a broad sense of the term, is a fairly radical claim, one that I think most of us would intuitively reject, and so one that should give us pause before accepting any definition of "Trinitarianism" that leads to such a conclusion.

The second case I have in mind is a historical example. Tuggy relies on his definitions to make the case that the doctrine of the Trinity is not a legitimate articulation of earlier, apostolic, subapostolic, and pre-Nicene Christianity, but only makes its first appearance in the (possibly late) fourth century. In one paper, he argues that Tertullian himself (and let us remember that this was the man who literally coined the term "Trinity") was "a unitarian, and not at all a trinitarian"[11]. But what is truly remarkable about Tuggy's paper on Tertullian is not its sensational conclusion. Rather, it is the fact that it reaches this sensational conclusion after saying essentially nothing novel about the actual substance (pardon the pun) of Tertullian's Trinitarian theology. Rather, Tuggy simply takes a completely ordinary account of Tertullian's theology – something no Tertullian scholar would disagree with, except perhaps in a few details that would in any case not affect Tuggy's central argument – and runs this fairly standard view of Tertullian through *his definitions* to get the result that the man who coined the term "Trinity" was a Unitarian and not a Trinitarian. And this despite the facts that Tertullian (1) distinguishes between Father, Son and Holy Spirit (much of what we know of Tertullian's theology after all is taken from his anti-modalist writings)[12], and (2) thinks of the Son as at least in some sense divine, even if not to the extent or in the ways that later orthodox thinkers would want to claim, indeed thinks of the Son as being sometimes the referent of the titles "God Almighty", "the Most High", "Yahweh Sabaoth", "the King of Israel", and "Yahweh" ("the One Who is")[13]. Tuggy himself notes that Tertullian is normally taken to be, although not fully orthodox, at least Trinitarian *in some sense*: proto-Trinitarian, a Trinitarian with subordinationist leanings, etc[14]. But when we run Tertullian's views through Tuggy's definitions, we get the result that Tertullian is solidly Unitarian, and not at all Trinitarian. And Tuggy may be right that this is how Tertullian's views should be categorized *on his definitions*. The question

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[11]D. Tuggy, Tertullian the Unitarian, in European Journal for Philosophy of Religion 8/3 (2016) 179-199, p. 179.
[12]*Adv. Prax.* 9.
[13]Ibid. 17.
[14]Tuggy, "Tertullian the Unitarian", p. 179.

is, given that Tertullian believes that there are in some sense three distinct divine persons… *shouldn't* he count as *some* sort of Trinitarian, even if not fully orthodox? What we learn from this paper, then, is not anything novel about *Tertullian's theology*. What we learn is just how radically Tuggy's understanding of the word "Trinitarian" must differ from ordinary usage among scholars in the field.

Thus, as I said, Tuggy's definitions are not mere formalities. His conclusions about particular cases of what appear to be Trinitarian theologies rely heavily on these definitions and depart sharply from the ordinary intuitions of most of us, whether philosopher, theologian, or historian. But the arguments he presents against Trinitarianism in general rely heavily on these definitions as well, definitions which I think we should take a closer look at, given that they rule out accounts ranging from Tertullian to Rea and Brower, not on the grounds of being internally defective in some way, but simply on the grounds that, despite appearances, they don't *really* count as Trinitarian. What other accounts of the Trinity might turn out to be defensible, but simply be getting ruled out by his definitions? And how *should* we define Trinitarianism?

V. The Definitions

First, then, let me lay out my own definitions of "Trinitarian" and "Unitarian", definitions which I will admit have certain defects, but which might be remedied or at least not cause many problems, and which I think should sit fairly well with common sense. (Tuggy's definitions, I will argue, exhibit defects that do cause problems and that are simply irremediable.)

Trinitarian Theology according to Branson (TB):
A (Broadly) Trinitarian Theology is any theology that says:
    (TB1) there are exactly three divine "persons" (or individuals, etc.). Nevertheless,
    (TB2) there is exactly one God.

Unitarian Theology according to Branson (UB):
A Unitarian Theology is any theology that says:
    (UB1) there is exactly one divine "person" or individual. And,
    (UB2) there is exactly one God.

Note first that my definitions are, as they should be, logical contraries. There could not be (not in the same sense and at the same time) both exactly one and exactly three divine persons[15]. Note second, that these definitions would apply to any religion whatsoever. If it turns out that certain forms of Hinduism, say, acknowledged three divine persons, but only one God, then that form of Hinduism might turn out to be Trinitarian in this broad sense. (Imagine some form of Hinduism that, say, acknowledged the divinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, but not that of Indra, Agni, Veruna, etc. Suppose that form of Hinduism also acknowledged Brahman as in some sense "The One God". Brahman as The One God and Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as three divine persons might seem like a close parallel to forms of Christian Trinitarianism that make the Divine Nature, or the Divine Society to be The One God, and Father, Son and Spirit as three divine persons.) If one wants a definition specifically of *Christian* Trinitarian Theology, I would simply take whatever the definition of a (broadly) "Christian Theology" turns out to be, and make a conjunction of the two definitions. Surely the set of Christian Trinitarian Theologies is just the intersection of the set of Christian Theologies and the set of Trinitarian Theologies.

Now for the defect in TB. Presumably, each of the divine persons in a Trinitarian Theology

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[15]Surely the Unitarian will grant this, since the claim that there cannot be both exactly one and exactly three of something, in the same sense, and at the same time, forms one of their core complaints against Trinitarianism!

should bear some important relation to The One God or have some claim to being called "God" in some sense. And for all my definition says, you could have three divine persons over here, and The One God over there, and no interesting relation between them at all. I certainly admit that should be corrected. But I don't want, just in the definition, to rule on precisely *what* the relation should be between The One God and the three persons. And it's difficult to spell out when a relation is "important", "interesting" and the like. So, for the time being, I leave out the relation and simply flag my definitions with the caveat that we should, of course, expect some interesting relation to hold here, and we should be on our guard to reject any claim that a theology that posits no such interesting relation counts as Trinitarian.

Similarly for UB, presumably a Unitarian Theology should say not simply that there *is* one divine person and that there *is* one God, but that these are identical, or at least "numerically one", or something to that effect. But again, I won't rule on that point just in the definition. If a Unitarian, perhaps for independent reasons, wanted to reject the existence of classical identity, or simply thought there was a more complicated relation between the one divine person and The One God, I wouldn't want to rule out their theology as not Unitarian. So again, I'll admit this is a shortcoming in the definition. But I think it should be one that we can work around, so long as we are on our guard.

Compare my definitions now to Tuggy's, which I will label "TT" and "UT", respectively. In "Tertullian the Unitarian", Tuggy States:

> A 'trinitarian' Christian theology says that
> [(TT1)] there is one God
> [(TT2)] which or who in some sense contains or consists of three 'persons', namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
> [(TT3)] who are equally divine, and
> [(TT4)] [(TT1)-(TT3)] are eternally the case.

> In contrast, a 'unitarian' Christian theology asserts that the [sic]
> [(UT1)] there is one God,
> [(UT2)] who is numerically identical with the one Jesus called 'Father',
> [(UT3)] and is not numerically identical with anyone else,
> [(UT4)] and [(UT1)-(UT3)] are eternally the case.

Tuggy then claims, "… As they are logical contraries, a theologian can't consistently hold both views, although one may have a theology which is neither". I'll return to this below, but Tuggy's definitions are *not* in fact logical contraries, and that will be the root of the problem. For now, let's consider how the competing pairs of definitions come apart.

At first glance, one might think the two are, if not exactly equivalent, close enough. First, we could couple my definitions with a definition of "Christian theology" to get definitions of "Trinitarian Christian Theology" and "Unitarian Christian Theology", bringing the definienda together. Second, all the definitions agree in claiming that there is only one God, so they all already line up in that regard. Third, while I don't mention each divine person by name, surely in this context they would indeed be the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Fourth, although I *don't* build any particular relation into my definitions, I noted that there ought to be some important relation there. And while Tuggy *does* build a relation between The One God and the Three Persons into TT, his description "in some sense contains or consists of" seems deliberately designed to be vague enough that it could include just about any relation a Trinitarian might propose. Fifth, Tuggy builds the relationship of identity into his talk about God and the Father into UT, while I don't do that anywhere in UB. But one might reason that, in this context, if one were to identify The One God with any of the Three Persons, surely that would be the

Father. And as I myself note, presumably the relation we want here is identity or something like it. Sixth and finally, it's likely not obvious why Tuggy and I would have reason to clash over his *proviso* that the propositions in his definitions are "eternally the case". Thus, the definitions may initially seem to be roughly equivalent for practical purposes. Nevertheless, I'll argue they are absolutely not. Mine could be improved. But I think Tuggy's are flawed in ways that can't be fixed. And that is because it is precisely the flaws in his definitions that make his overall argumentative strategy work. To see why, let's move on to the doctrine of the Monarchy of the Father.

VI. THE MONARCHY OF THE FATHER

In some contexts, patristic talk about the "monarchy" can mean roughly what it sounds like in English — a single rule or authority. But in the use we will be concerned with, "monarchy" is just a conventional translation (almost a transliteration) of the Greek word "*monarchia*" (μοναρχία), from the roots "monos" (μόνος) meaning "one" or "single" or "alone", and "arche" (ἀρχή) meaning "source" or "principle". So in this sense, *monarchia* means literally "a single first principle", or "a single source or beginning". (Think John 1,1 "In the ἀρχή was the Logos…") The idea of the *Father's* mono-archia, then, is that the Father — and the Father alone — has the status of being the "Source" or "First Principle" of all things.

That might seem obvious, uncontroversial, or unimportant at first glance — of course the Father is the source of all things. But when the church fathers discuss the *monarchia* of the Father — and particularly when they discuss it as a way to respond to the charge of tritheism, the context in which they are asserting that the Father is the "one source" is not creation, but *the Trinity itself*. Thus, despite there being a plurality of persons with the same divine nature, there is a single God because there is a single source – the Father.

With that very brief sketch in mind, we might further disambiguate the doctrine in a number of ways. The fathers tend to associate the Monarchy of the Father with the one-ness of God in many places. Indeed, Gregory Nazianzen (Oration 42.15) says: <<Ἕνωσις δὲ, ὁ Πατὴρ, ἐξ οὗ, καὶ πρὸς ὃν ἀνάγεται τὰ ἑξῆς·>>, "The One-ness is the Father, from whom, and to whom, those next in order [=the Son and Spirit] are lead". So, considering the following propositions might help us come to a more precise understanding of the monarchy of the Father and of the one-ness of God.

(M1) the Father is the sole source / cause of the Son and Spirit.

This is probably the weakest and least controversial thing we can say about the monarchy. It seems to be implied by the very names of "Father" and "Son", and the claim that the Spirit "proceeds out of" the Father (John 15,26). And nearly every (non-Modalist) model of the Trinity is compatible with putting some kind of asymmetrical relation between some of the three persons. So I'll call this this proposition the "Weak Monarchy View".

(M2) The Father is also in some sense the source of the divine nature itself.

This is a stronger and slightly more interesting idea. Discussing the views of the Greek fathers, Fr. John Meyendorff says, "The Father is the 'cause' (*aitia*) and the 'principle' (*archē*) of the divine nature, which is in the Son and in the Spirit"[16]. Metropolitan of Pergamum, John Zizioulas, seems to endorse this idea as well, based on his reading of the Cappadocians, in his landmark book *Being As Communion*[17].

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[16]J. MEYENDORFF, Byzantine Theology, 2nd ed, New York USA, Fordham University Press, 1983, p. 183.
[17]J. ZIZIOULAS, Being as Communion, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983, pp. 40-41 and 88-89.

(M3) The Father is "the union" or "the one-ness" or "the principle of unity" within the Trinity.

This would seem to be, at a minimum, what the Greek Fathers want to claim, and some do use exactly this language (as we saw with St. Gregory Nazianzen). This would be as opposed to saying that the principle of God's one-ness is, say, the divine nature or the "divine community" of persons, or the like. Presumably this means, at least, something like, the Father is "the end of explanation for" God's one-ness. It is somehow the Father that explains the one-ness of The One God, or less poetically, the Father is the explanation for the fact that there is one God, rather than three gods. If a typical Social Trinitarian says that "The One God" is the divine community or society formed by the three persons, there's a clear sense in which it's the "divine society" that ultimately explains the one-ness of God, and so a clear sense in which the divine society is the principle of the unity of God for Social Trinitarians. For example, there is a clear sense in which the divine nature is the principle of unity in much Western Trinitarian theology, since it will be what explains the fact that there is one God.

It would be nice to spell this interpretation out more fully. However, the final and strongest view we will consider would seem to entail both (M3) and (M1) at least (or at least would entail them within the scope of some reasonable assumptions) and will be the interpretation which I think suggests a fresh approach (well, a vey ancient approach, but fresh for analytic theologians) to the Trinity, and which causes difficulties for Tuggy's definitions. So I'll be focusing on this last one.

(M4) Strictly speaking, The One God just is the Father.

Clearly if The One God just is the Father, then it is the Father that explains the one-ness of The One God. For obvious reasons, I'll call the proposition that The One God just is the Father, "the Strong Monarchy View" (SMV). The idea here is that, because the Father is the one, ultimate source of everything, including the other two persons of the Trinity — because He is the *arche anarchos* ("source without source" or "principle without principle") — He is the "One, True God". He is even the "God of" the Son and the Spirit (Psalm 45,7; Hebrews 1,9; John 20,17), the "God Over All" as St. Gregory of Nyssa's favorite expression for the Father has it.

Since (M4) is the view I will be focusing on, let me give a few quick definitions:

"Monarchical model" (of the Trinity): Any model (of the Trinity) that incorporates SMV, i.e., any model in which The One God just is the Father.

I'll group these all Monarchical models under the heading of "Monarchical Trinitarianism" (MT).

"Egalitarian model" (of the Trinity) or "symmetrical model" (of the Trinity): Any model (of the Trinity) in which all three persons have an "equal claim" to being called "God", in any and every sense. Any model in which any quality or relation that would be relevant to whether that person can be called "God" (in any sense) is shared by the other two persons equally.

I'll group these under the heading of "Egalitarian Trinitarianism" (ET). E.g., standard forms of Social Trinitarianism (ST) and Relative Identity Trinitarianism (RI) are normally *intended* to be symmetrical (though perhaps surprisingly several would actually be compatible with SMV).

"Non-symmetrical model" or "Non-egalitarian model" (of the Trinity): A model (of the Trinity) in which the above symmetry doesn't hold. Any model that in some sense privileges one (or

two) person(s) over the other(s) in terms of a claim to being referred to as "God".

So, Monarchical models are all non-symmetrical, but in principal there could be non-symmetrical models that aren't Monarchical. Indeed, part of the *filioque* controversy essentially revolved around whether the *filioque* results in a model of the Trinity which is neither Monarchical nor fully symmetrical, having exactly *two* "first principles" — the Father and the Son.

For reasons of space, I will only note in passing that a number of the world's leading contemporary Eastern Orthodox theologians explicitly affirm the Strong Monarchy View, but for considerations of space I'll have to omit a complete discussion of them. They include, at least: Metropolitan John Zizioulas[18,19], Boris Bobrinskoy[20], and three deans or former deans of St. Vladimir's seminary — Fr. John Meyendorff[21], Fr. Thomas Hopko[22,23,24], and Fr. John Behr[25,26,27]. I mention this just to point out that what I am calling Monarchical Trinitarianism is not merely some *ad hoc* invention of an analytic philosopher, but something that is in fact represented both in the contemporary and historical sources on the doctrine of the Trinity.

One might wonder, of course, if Monarchical Trinitarianism is affirmed by all these Orthodox theologians, where are they all getting this idea? Is it some kind of theological fad? Doesn't it go against historical orthodoxy? The answer to both those questions is no. To see why, we will take a look at some of the patristic sources on the doctrine of the Trinity that seem both to affirm SMV and to affirm that there are three fully and equally divine persons. This will also serve to cast further doubt on the adequacy of Tuggy's definitions, since it will show us that those definitions count not only Tertullian as Unitarian, but the likes of Alexander of Alexandria (the bishop who first excommunicated Arius for his Arianism), St. Athanasius, all three of the Cappadocian fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzen), and probably even John of Damascus – in others words, most all of the church fathers whose views we would normally think of as being *definitive* of the Trinitarian tradition.

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[18]Ibid. pp. 40-41.

[19]J. ZIZIOULAS, On Being Persons: Towards an Ontology of Personhood, in Persons Divine and Human, C. SCHWÖBEL and C. GUNTON (eds.), London, T & T Clark, 1989, p. 40.

[20]B. BOBRINSKOY, The Mystery of the Trinity, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999, pp. 264-266, esp. p. 266.

[21]MEYENDORFF, Byzantine Theology, p. 183.

[22]T. HOPKO, The Orthodox Faith Volume I: Doctrine and Scripture, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1972, p. 53.

[23]Fr. Hopko goes into further details in a couple of podcasts on Ancient Faith Radio. "Now in the Bible, in the creeds, and in the liturgy, it's very important, really critically important, to note, and to affirm, and to remember, that the one God, in Whom we believe, strictly speaking, is not the Holy Trinity. The One God is God the Father. That in the Bible, the One God is the Father of Jesus Christ. He is God Who sends His only-begotten Son into the world. And Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And then, of course, in a parallel manner, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of God." As of December 2018, the podcast can be found at URL = http://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/the_holy_trinity and the quote occurs between 12:37 and 13:25.

[24]Another quote from the same podcast: "On the other hand, there is another terrible error, and the other terrible error, usually called 'Modalism' in technical theological terminology, is where people say there is one God Who is the Holy Trinity. There is 'He Who Is the Trinity'. And we Orthodox Christians, following scripture, and the creedal statements, and the liturgical prayers, can never say there is one God who is the Trinity. There is one God who is the Father. And this one God – Who is the Father – has with Him eternally, Whom He begets timelessly before all ages, His Only-Begotten Son – who is also His Logos, His Word, and also His Chokhmah, His Sophia, His Wisdom, also His Eikona, His Ikon, His Image – but this Wisdom and Word and Image and Ikon, is divine with the same divinity as God, the One True and Living God…" This quote can be found between 15:41 and 16:37.

[25]J. BEHR, Calling upon God as Father: Augustine and the Legacy of Nicaea, in Orthodox Readings of Augustine, G.E. DEMACOPOULOS and A. PAPANIKOLAOU (eds.), New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008, p. 162.

[26]J. BEHR, The Living Pulpit (April-June, 1999), New York, The Living Pulpit, Inc., 1999, pp. 22-23.

[27]J. BEHR, The Nicene Faith II, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004, pp. 307-308.

The first passage I'd like to examine is from Gregory of Nyssa's *Ad Petrum*. This of course is the *locus classicus* for the distinction between "person" and "substance" or "*hypostasis*" and "*ousia*". Here Gregory is describing the various *gnorismata* of the divine persons – the individuating qualities by which we can recognize one as distinguished from the others. Ordinarily, one would go this text for the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis*, or for the *gnorismata* (essentially the epistemological equivalent of *idiomata*) themselves. But I will point out something else that is quite striking about the text, and that is frequently overlooked[28]:

Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, ἀφ' οὗ πᾶσα ἐπὶ τὴν κτίσιν ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν χορηγία πηγάζει, τοῦ Υἱοῦ μὲν ἤρτηται ᾧ ἀδιαστάτως συγκαταλαμβάνεται, τῆς δὲ τοῦ Πατρὸς αἰτίας ἐξημμένον ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, ὅθεν καὶ ἐκπορεύεται, τοῦτο γνωριστικὸν τῆς κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἰδιότητος σημεῖον ἔχει, τὸ μετὰ τὸν Υἱὸν καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ γνωρίζεσθαι καὶ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὑφεστάναι.	Since, then, the Holy Spirit, from Whom all the supply of good things for creation has its source, is attached to the Son, and is inseparably apprehended with Him, and has His being attached to the Father as cause, from Whom also He proceeds, He has this *gnoristikon* of peculiarity according to hypostasis: being known after the Son and together with the Son, and subsisting from the Father.
Ὁ δὲ Υἱὸς ὁ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον Πνεῦμα δι' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ γνωρίζων, μόνος μονογενῶς ἐκ τοῦ ἀγεννήτου φωτὸς ἐκλάμψας, οὐδεμίαν κατὰ τὸ ἰδιάζον τῶν γνωρισμάτων τὴν κοινωνίαν ἔχει πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ἢ πρὸς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, ἀλλὰ τοῖς εἰρημένοις σημείοις μόνος γνωρίζεται.	The Son, who through Himself and with Himself reveals the Spirit proceeding from the Father, who alone shines forth only-begottenly from the unbegotten light, has no commonality according to the individuating *gnorismata*, either to the Father or to the Holy Spirit, but alone is known by these mentioned signs.
Ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς ἐξαίρετόν τι γνώρισμα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ὑποστάσεως τὸ Πατὴρ εἶναι καὶ ἐκ μηδεμᾶς αἰτίας ὑποστῆναι μόνος ἔχει, καὶ διὰ τούτου πάλιν τοῦ σημείου καὶ αὐτὸς ἰδιαζόντως ἐπιγινώσκεται.	And God over all alone has a certain special *gnorisma* of His own hypostasis: being the Father, and subsisting from no cause, and by this sign again He is also individually recognized.

What is frequently overlooked in the above passage is who the persons of the Trinity are for Gregory. It appears that Gregory's Trinity consists of the Holy Spirit, the Son – and *God*.

Now, one might think that this phrase "the God over all" is just a colorful title for the Father. In a certain sense that's right: it's one of Gregory's favorite phrases for the Father throughout his *Contra Eunomius* for example. But consider what individuates this "God over all" — it's the property of *being the Father*. If we read "God over all" as just *meaning* the Father, then the individuation would be circular.

One might argue that people sometimes do give circular criteria of individuation, and even if we don't think that's a satisfying view, maybe Gregory did. But here he is using the term *gnorisma*. For Gregory, the *gnorismata* seem to be essentially the same properties as the *idiomata*, but of course the term "*idioma*" connotes the metaphysical issue of *individuation*, while the term *gnorismata* carries epistemological connotations. The *gnorismata* are the qualities by which one would *recognize* a given individual as the individual it is. One might hold a metaphysics on which Socrates is individuated by the property of Socrateity. But it would be bizarre to say that the property by which you *can recognize* Socrates, what would allow you to pick him out of a crowd so to speak, is that he will be the one who has *the property of being Socrates*.

Notice also that he doesn't give circular criteria in the other two cases. The qualities by which

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[28]Indeed, I myself overlooked the fact in my dissertation, where I included this very passage, and simply glossed it with an explanation in brackets that essentially explained away the most striking feature of the text. See BRANSON, The Logical Problem of the Trinity, pp. 163.

the Holy Spirit is known are "being known after the Son and together with the Son, and subsisting from the Father". The qualities by which the Son is known are that he is the one "who through Himself and with Himself reveals the Spirit proceeding from the Father, who alone shines forth only-begottenly from the unbegotten light". Elsewhere, Gregory gives examples involving the individuating properties of Job, Paul, etc., and here again he does not appeal to properties like "Jobicity" or "Paulinity" in listing their *gnorismata* or *idiomata*. So it seems out of place to take it as circular when we read that the quality by which God is known is the quality of "being the Father, and subsisting from no cause".

Note also that this property, the property of being the Father, is the *gnorisma* "of His own hypostasis". In other words, God is not tri-hypostatic or tri-personal here. God has "his own hypostasis" (person), while the Son and the Spirit each have *their* own hypostases. Thus, God is not tri-personal, or the Trinity Itself in this passage. Rather, God is uni-personal, He is *the first person* of the Trinity. In other words, Gregory endorses SMV (and really, the whole of Monarchical Trinitarianism, since he sees the Son and Spirit as equally divine).

If you still aren't convinced that he takes God to be the Father, rather than the Trinity, here's a passage from his *Contra Eunomius*, where he uses SMV *as a premise* to argue against Eunomius' extreme Arianism.

> But let us examine the words that follow [in the creed composed by Eunomius]:
> He is always and absolutely one, remaining uniformly and unchangeably the only God[29].

Now if Gregory was an Egalitarian, I think we would expect his response to be something like "No, God isn't one — God is tri-personal!" But that isn't what he says. Instead, he says:

> If he is speaking about the Father, we agree with him…

I don't know how to read that as an Egalitarian statement. He goes on:

> …for the Father is most truly one, alone and always absolutely uniform and unchangeable, never at any time present or future ceasing to be what He is. If then such an assertion as this has regard to the Father, let him not contend with the doctrine of godliness, inasmuch as on this point he is in harmony with the Church.

Note also that this isn't just Gregory saying, "OK, say it's the Father and I'll stop posting nasty stuff on your Facebook page". Gregory ended up having the authority, by Roman law, to decide whether a person counted as Trinitarian or not. And in at least one case he was actually called on to interrogate another bishop and make that decision. What has come down to us as "Book II" of *Contra Eunomium* was probably written after the council of 381 and after the passage of Theodosius' law of 381 proclaiming Gregory one of the legal arbiters of orthodoxy. It seems pretty clear he wasn't fond of Eunomius, so it's very telling that he makes this "offer" to Eunomius. Clearly, he doesn't think Eunomius will call his bluff here. Gregory commits to giving the game away to Eunomius, if Eunomius will only call God "Father". But Gregory knows he won't do that:

> For he who confesses that the Father *is always and unchangeably the same*, being *the one and only God*, holds fast the word of godliness, *if in the Father he sees the Son*, without Whom the Father neither exists nor is named ["Father"]. [Emphasis mine.]

Gregory's point (as I'll elaborate on just below) is that one cannot *define* God as "Father" without attributing to Him a Son as a necessary concomitant – something an extreme Arian like Eunomius clearly can't do.

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[29]*Contra Eunomium* II,5.

Next comes an interesting mention by Gregory of the difference between Jews and Christians. Egalitarian Trinitarians would probably say that Jews (and Arians) worship God the Father, whereas Trinitarians worship the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Or they may say that Trinitarians worship some being called "the Trinity". But that's almost the opposite of Gregory's way of distinguishing his views from those of Jews or Arians. Gregory continues:

> But if he is inventing some other God, *besides* the Father, let him argue alongside the Jews, or alongside those who are called 'Hypsistians,' ['Most-High-ists'] between whom and the Christians there is this difference: That they [Jews and Hypsistians] acknowledge that there is a God (Whom they term 'the Most High' or 'the Almighty.') But they do not admit that He is *the Father*. While a Christian — if he believe not in the Father — is no Christian at all.

Gregory's point of view, then, is just the opposite of the common-sense view of our own day, which says Jews worship *the Father alone*, whereas Christians worship the Trinity, or worship the Father together with the Son and Spirit. Rather, in his point of view, Christians and Jews both worship *God*, but Christians worship a God who is (essentially, *by definition*) a Father, whereas Jews worship a God who is something else.

So, what's the logic here? If we can't read this passage as Gregory asserting an Egalitarian view of the Trinity, then how does this argument work from a Monarchical perspective? Simply put, it's analytic that a Father must have a Son. God is a necessary being, and so exists at all times in all possible worlds. So, if The One God is essentially a Father, if Fatherhood is what Gregory would call God's *idioma* (roughly what we in analytic philosophy would call God's *individual essence*), then the Son of God exists and has always existed – indeed, *necessarily* exists. But if the Son of God is Himself a necessary being, then He *is not a creature*. And if the Son of God is not a creature, then He is divine. I think all of that would have been about as uncontroversial then for Gregory and Eunomius as it is for us today.

So it turns out that the central point of disagreement between Gregory and Eunomius is not whether "The One God" is numerically identical to the Father or not. Rather, what they disagree about is the sense or manner in which The One God is the Father. Is Fatherhood *essential* to God (as Gregory maintains), so that God is eternally, indeed essentially, a Father? Or, is Fatherhood *accidental* to God (as Eunomius maintains), so that God is merely accidentally, indeed non-eternally, a Father (as Eunomius maintains)?

Let us call the view that God has the property of Fatherhood *essentially*, the "Essential (Eternal) Strong Monarchy View" (ESMV), and the view that God has the property of Fatherhood only accidentally, the "Contingent Strong Monarchy View" (CSMV). It turns out, then, that the real disagreement between Gregory and Eunomius is not about the Monarchy of the Father, nor even about the Strong Monarchy View (SMV). Both agreed about that. Rather, the disagreement is actually about, so to speak, *how strong* of a Strong Monarchy view to take. And ironically, we find it is actually Gregory, the orthodox Trinitarian, who takes the harder line here, ESMV, and Eunomius the extreme Arian who takes the weaker view, CSMV. That is, Gregory affirms, whereas Eunomius (like Arius) denies, that God is eternally, indeed essentially, the Father. Of course, "essential" here in the sense that it is a quality that individuates God. Thus, it is part of what we today would call God's "individual essence", rather than His "kind-essence", or what Gregory would call the *ousia*. Thus, Gregory's position is not open to the objection that the Father and Son cannot be *homoousios* because the Father and Son have different essential qualities, any more than one would be open to the objection that I and my father cannot be of the same species because, as individuals, we have different identity conditions.

In fact, if we rewind back to the very beginning of the 4ᵗʰ-century Trinitarian controversy, we find that this dynamic (the orthodox affirming ESMV, and the Arians affirming only CSMV) traces all the way back to the beginning of the dispute. Today, we tend to think of Arianism primarily as a

Christological heresy. After all, Arius is famous for his slogan, "There was a time when the Son was not". And certainly he was condemned for this. But it's telling to read the actual deposition of Arius. Surely the claim that the Son didn't always exist was indeed what was most important to Arius himself. But was that what seemed most important to Alexander of Alexandria and the council of presbyters that condemned Arius? Notice what heresy the council lists first:

> [T]he novelties they have invented and put forth contrary to the Scriptures are these following:
> [1] That God was not always a Father, but there was a time when God was not a Father…

Now obviously the negation of the claim that God *was not always* a Father is not that God is *never* strictly speaking the Father, but is really tri-personal, that God is the Trinity Itself, or that God "contains" the Father along with the Son and Spirit equally (indeed, these would *entail* that God was not, and is not, the Father!) The negation of the claim that God *was not always* a Father is that God *is and has always been* a Father. So this again is not a picture on which God is the Trinity, but one on which (both sides agree) God is *the first person of* the Trinity. The debate is about ESMV vs CSMV.

Fast-forwarding now to the conventional end of the patristic era, I'll only briefly look at a passage from John of Damascus, who's a little difficult to grasp on this issue. I'll admit there are some other passages that are difficult to deal with and that make him look like an Egalitarian instead. But just as it's easy to read through Gregory's *Ad Petrum* without noticing its Monarchical presuppositions, it's easy to read past this excerpt from the Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith without noticing a similar detail.

> We believe, then, in One God, one beginning, having no beginning, uncreated, unbegotten, imperishable and immortal, everlasting, infinite, uncircumscribed, boundless, of infinite power, simple, uncompound, incorporeal, without flux, passionless, unchangeable, unalterable, unseen, the fountain of goodness and justice, the light of the mind, inaccessible; a power known by no measure, measurable only by His own will alone (for all things that He wills He can), creator of all created things, seen or unseen, of all the maintainer and preserver, for all the provider, master and lord and king over all, with an endless and immortal kingdom: having no contrary, filling all, by nothing encompassed, but rather Himself the encompasser and maintainer and original possessor of the universe, occupying all essences intact and extending beyond all things, and being separate from all essence as being super-essential and above all things and absolute God, absolute goodness, and absolute fullness: determining all sovereignties and ranks, being placed above all sovereignty and rank, above essence and life and word and thought: being Himself very light and goodness and life and essence, inasmuch as He does not derive His being from another, that is to say, of those things that exist: but being Himself the fountain of being to all that is, of life to the living, of reason to those that have reason; to all the cause of all good: perceiving all things even before they have become: one essence, one divinity, one power, one will, one energy, one beginning, one authority, one dominion, one sovereignty, made known in three perfect subsistences and adored with one adoration, believed in and ministered to by all rational creation, united without confusion and divided without separation (which indeed transcends thought). (We believe) in Father and Son and Holy Spirit whereinto also we have been baptized. For so our Lord commanded the Apostles to baptize, saying, Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 18,19)[30]

It's easy, if we read this through Egalitarian eyes, to focus on the Egalitarian-sounding aspects of this statement. For example, he begins by saying "We believe, then, in One God…" and after this one phenomenally long sentence he seems to restate the idea, "We believe in Father and Son and Holy Spirit…" This might suggest that John equates "God" with the whole collection of "Father and Son and Holy Spirit". The language toward the end of the long first sentence, read a certain way, might also suggest a view on which the one God is perhaps the one essence, "one essence, one divinity, one power, one will, one energy, one beginning, one authority, one dominion, one sovereignty", and

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[30] *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Book I, Chapter 8.

especially the immediately following claim that The One God is "made known in three perfect subsistences". This Egalitarian sounding language makes it easy to miss the fact that the very first thing Damascene says about God is that He is <<ἕνα θεόν, <u>μίαν ἀρχὴν ἄναρχον</u>, ἄκτιστον, <u>ἀγέννητον</u>>>, i.e., "One God, a single *arche anarchos…*" i.e., "*a single source without source*", a phrase that only applies to the Father, followed not only by "uncreated" (a term that would describe any of the three persons), but immediately after "uncreated" as "*unbegotten*". Again, this is a term that can only apply to the Father. What's more, it cannot be that John used <<ἀγέννητον>> or "unbegotten" carelessly to mean <<ἀγένητον>> or "uncreated", because he himself devotes some space to explaining the important difference between the two terms just a few paragraphs later in the same chapter, where he says:

> For one must recognise that the word ἀγένητον with only one 'ν' signifies uncreate or not having been made, while ἀγέννητον written with double 'ν' means unbegotten. According to the first significance [*ousia*] differs from [*ousia*]: for one [*ousia*] is uncreate, or ἀγένητον with one 'ν,' and another is create or γενητή . But in the second significance there is no difference between [*ousia*] and [*ousia*]. For the first [*hypostasis*] of all kinds of living creatures [i.e., Adam] is ἀγέννητος [unbegotten] but not ἀγένητος [uncreated] . For they were created by the Creator, being brought into being by His Word, but they were not begotten, for there was no pre-existing form like themselves from which they might have been born[31].

Thus, it's difficult to think that the tension between apparently Egalitarian elements and obviously Monarchical elements in this (and other) passages in John is just the result, say, of his copying and pasting from other authors and not noticing the discrepancies. Rather, it's probably indicative of some subtlety going on in his thought (for one thing, I think some of what he says gets disambiguated in a more Monarchical way elsewhere in his works). But even if it is just a poor job of copying and pasting, John seems to be *cognizant* of the Monarchical elements he is repeating, and not so much of the Egalitarian ones. Certainly this calls for further study. But that is beyond the scope of the current paper. The point is not to prove that Damascene is thoroughly Monarchical, but to problematize the easy reading of him as Egalitarian. Thus, I will leave off my discussion of him with another passage which looks Egalitarian at first glance…

> And again we speak of the three hypostases as being in each other, that we may not introduce a crowd and multitude of Gods. Owing to the three hypostases, there is no compoundness or confusion: while, owing to their having the same essence and dwelling in one another, and being the same in will, and energy, and power, and authority, and movement, so to speak, we recognise the indivisibility and the unity of God.

… but then takes a Monarchical twist at the end…

> For verily there is one God, and His word and Spirit[32].

Though there won't be time to explore it, one finds a similar kind of language in other authors who wrote just after the rise of Islam, when it again became critical to respond to the charge of tri-theism. Theodore Abu Qurrah frequently repeats the phrase, "God, and His Word, and His Spirit, are one God". So does the anonymous author of the (unfortunately and inaptly titled) work, "On the Nature of the Triune God" (which in fact never once mentions anything about a triune God, but is clearly Monarchical). Similar language can be found in the dialogue between Timothy I, Patriarch of the East Syrian (Nestorian) Church and Caliph al-Mahdi. Consider also that in the Quran and other early Muslim writings, Christian belief in the Trinity is depicted not as a belief that God "is composed of three" or "contains three" (as we might expect an Egalitarian view to be described), but as a belief that

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[31]Ibid.
[32]Ibid.

God "is one of three" (as we would expect a Monarchical view to be described). E.g., famously, Al-Maa'idah 5,72 describes Christians (Trinitarians) as those who "associate others with God", and 5,73 describes Christians (Trinitarians) as "Those who say that Allah is one third of a Trinity". Most (Western) scholars dismiss this kind of talk as a misunderstanding of the Trinity. But was it? Or was it simply that the *kind* of Trinitarianism Muhammed and his companions were familiar with (living around the Eastern edge of the empire during the late 6th / early 7th century) was Monarchical?

Now it's true that the author of the Quran, as well as many later Muslims, seems to have misunderstood the Trinity to consist of God, Jesus, and Mary (although it's not entirely clear whether or not there could have still been a small group of heretical Christians – the Collyridians – in that area who did indeed worship Mary).[33] But even if the early Islamic view of the Trinity mistakenly substitutes Mary for the Holy Spirit, we need not conclude that its identification of Allah (God) with the first person of the Trinity (instead of the Trinity as a whole) is a mistake, any more than we should conclude that its identification of the Son as the second person of the Trinity is a mistake! Rather, we simply have two interpretive options. The first option is that the kind of Trinitarianism known by the earliest Muslims was Monarchical, and the early Muslims got at least that part right, making only a *single* mistake about Mary (if it was a mistake). The second option is that the kind of Trinitarianism known by the earliest Muslims was actually Egalitarian, but the early Muslims made *two separate mistake*s, and one of those mistakes just happens to have ended up – by a fortunate coincidence – being the understanding of the Trinity that (as even Tuggy would agree!) actually was the older view of the Trinity among Christians, and was more faithful to the Ecumenical Creeds. Now, both the principle of charity, and simple probability theory, should lead us to prefer the former view over the latter.

Finally, fast-forwarding out of the early encounter with Islam and its eventually Arabic-speaking milieu, if we return to the Greek-speaking milieu of Byzantium at the time of the Great Schism, we see that much of Photios' reasons for rejecting the infamous *filioque* revolved around the Monarchy of the Father. Though the debate over the *filioque* is often presented as an abstruse question of metaphysics, and though Photios does indeed criticize his opponents for not understanding the Cappadocians' metaphysics, much of his argument simply boils down to a perceived incompatibility between the *filioque* and SMV. For example, in the *Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, after criticizing the metaphysics of the *filioque*, Photios argues:

ια΄. Χωρὶς δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων, εἰ δύο αἴτια ἐν τῇ θεαρχικῇ καὶ ὑπερουσίῳ τριάδι καθορᾶται, ποῦ τὸ τῆς μοναρχίας πολυύμνητον καὶ θεοπρεπὲς κράτος; Πῶς οὐχὶ τὸ τῆς πολυθείας ἄθεοννῦν ἐπικωμάσει; Πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐν προσχήματι Χριστιανισμοῦ ἡδεισιδαιμονία τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς πλάνης τοῖς ταῦτα λέγειν τολμῶσιν οὐ συνεισελάσει;

11. Leaving aside the aforementioned, if one admits of two causes within the thearchic and superessential triad, where then is the much hymned and God-befitting majesty of the monarchy? Will not the godlessness of polytheism be riotously introduced? Under the guise of Christianity, will not the superstition of Greek error reassert itself among those who dare to say such things?

ιβ΄. Πάλιν εἰ δύο αἴτια τῆς μοναρχικῆς τριάδος ἐπαναβέβηκε, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς αὐτῆς συνανακύψει γνώμης προερχόμενον; Ἅπαξ γὰρ τῆς ἀνάρχου καὶ ὑπεραρχίου ἀρχῆς τῆς οἰκείας ἕδρας τοῖς δυσσεβέσι περιτραπείσης καὶ εἰς δυάδα διατμηθείσης, νεανικώτερον καὶ πρὸςτὴν Τριάδα ἡ κατανομὴ τῆς ἀρχῆς προελεύσεται, ἐπεὶ κἂν τῇ ὑπερφυεῖ καὶ ἀμερεῖκαὶ ἑνιαίᾳ τῆς Θεότητος φύσει τὸ τριαδικὸν μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ δυαδικὸν ἀναφαίνεται, οἷα δὴ καὶ τοῖς ἰδιώμασιν ἁρμοζόμενον.

12. Again, if two causes are imposed upon the monarchic triad, then according to the same reasoning, why should not a third one emerge? For once the principle without principle and above principle [= the Father], is cast down from its throne by these impious ones and is cleaved into a duality, the division of the principle [arche] will proceed more vehemently into a triad, since in the supersubstantial, inseparable, and simple nature of the divinity, the triad is more manifest than the dyad,

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[33]See Epiphanius of Salamis' *Panarion*, Sect #59 / #79.

In other words, Photios sees a few different options in interpreting the *filioque*. On a straight-forward, perhaps flat-footed reading, there are now two beings that are coordinately *a se* and that serve as sources for further beings. If, as Photios and the Eastern tradition more generally does, we take monotheism to be a matter of how many *a se* sources there are, then we now have straight-forward ditheism, which is what Photios accuses the Westerners of.

On the other hand, a filioquist can try to mitigate this by pointing out that the Son is (still) not *a se*. Thus, we have a picture on which we begin with the Father as the sole *a se* source, Who generates the Son, then the Father and Son together generate the Spirit. But Photios will argue this isn't a genuine case of the Holy Spirit "depending on" the Son for His existence. For if, *per impossibile*, the Son did not exist, the Holy Spirit surely could be generated by the Father alone. On the other hand, if the Spirit could not be generated by the Father alone, if we say that there is something the Son can add to the Spirit's "ingredients" that the Father cannot, then we have to ask, "Where did the Son get this ability to add something to the Spirit – something that even the Father Himself wouldn't be able to give to the Spirit?" Clearly He didn't get it from the Father. So there really are *two sources* after all.

There is much more to be said about Photios' argument here. But the point is that, whether or not it is successful, Photios clearly opposes *monarchia* and *polytheism*. And in that case, in Photios' mind, *monarchia* is just the equivalent of what would call *monotheism*. If in Photios' mind, a denial of the Monarchy of the Father is a denial of monotheism, then Photios is still operating within the framework of Monarchical Trinitarianism, as late as the late 9th century.

Thus, while there isn't time to explore these texts fully, to make good on my promise from section IV, we can see that Tuggy has a lot of work to do if he wants to substantiate his point against Rea that "the body of catholic theologians from the late fourth century on" clearly assert "the existence of a triune, tripersonal deity," rather than that they are Monarchical Trinitarians. On the other hand, if Tuggy simply means the body of *Western* theologians from the late fourth century on make this claim, then he should give up the claim that he is defining, and then refuting, Trinitarianism *in general*, and make only the more modest claim that he is defining, and refuting (at best) a certain *kind* of Trinitarianism that, over a long period of time, came eventually to be dominant in the West. That is, at best, Tuggy's argument would become a reason to return to some form of Monarchical Trinitarianism, rather than a refutation of Trinitarianism in general.

To conclude this section, there are of course many other passages from various church fathers one could point to as examples of what looks like Monarchical, rather than Egalitarian, Trinitarianism. But now that we have a clearer picture of the patristic witness to Monarchical Trinitarianism and thus the motivation for so many contemporary Eastern Orthodox theologians for holding it, the reader may also have several questions and objections regarding MT. This is the time to address such concerns, and while it won't be possible to do full justice to them all, addressing them (albeit briefly) will at least help us get a clearer picture of Monarchical Trinitarianism.

VIII. Some Worries about SMV and Monarchical Trinitarianism

The first concern I'll address is this. How can the claim that the Father *alone* is "the One, True God" be reconciled with the claim that the Son and Spirit are *homoousios* with the Father, that they share the same divine nature with Him, and are thus equally "divine"? After all, if Monarchical Trinitarianism is in obvious conflict with the *homoousion*, then perhaps it *should* be ruled out of court

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[34]PHOTIOS, On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 74 (English); p. 156 (Greek).

as in no sense Trinitarian after all.

My answer to this is that only thing that would make such a reconciliation even seem difficult in the first place, would be presupposing the *semantic* (not metaphysical or theological) claim that the predicate "is God" means "is a thing with the divine nature". This semantic view is so dominant in the West that it normally goes unquestioned. But it's explicitly denied by about half or so of the early church fathers, and almost all of the rest, while not denying it, deliberately refrain from affirming it. As I note in my dissertation, although Gregory of Nyssa gives a defense of Trinitarianism as monotheistic based on this semantic assumption, both in *Ad Graecos* and *Ad Ablabium*, he explicitly and vehemently rejects its actual veracity. He only offers, in response to certain objections to the Trinity, defeater-defeaters that can operate even *granting* this assumption, since he thinks it's a commonly accepted view (especially among pagans). But he makes clear that it is not *his own* view[35]. And in this, he stands in a long line of earlier fathers who also reject it[36]. As far as I can tell, among the church fathers, Augustine seems to have been the first to actually affirm this claim (unless one counts Marius Victorinus), from whom it seems to have spread to Boethius and so on, until this originally highly idiosyncratic idea eventually became dominant in the West, so that most of the strategies for defending Trinitarianism from the charge of tritheism that were prevalent in the early church became unusable for later Western theology.

By my count, there are a minimum of at least five fairly distinct strategies by which various church fathers reconcile Trinitarian theology with monotheism (to rattle them off: single source, single essence, single activity, Christ as Ikon (discussed below), and perichoresis, though there may be others I'm missing). Western theology in general, and analytic theology in particular, tends to accept the semantic presupposition that "god" means "a thing with the divine nature", without much question, and then understandably focuses on just one of those strategies — arguing to the one-ness of God from the Unity of the Divine Essence – a strategy which, not surprisingly, few to no church fathers accepted, until St. Augustine (who accepted this semantic presupposition and makes use of it in an anti-Arian argument in the *De Trinitate*), and as mentioned Marius Victorinus just before him (who may be the source of Augustine's idea here) and Boethius just afterwards.

But the idea that a god is a thing with a divine nature seems untenable, at least from a scriptural point of view, as Gregory points out[37]. God gave Moses to be "a god to Pharaoh" (Ex. 7,1). And "the gods of the gentiles are demons" (Psalm 96,5 / 95,5 LXX, cf. 1 Cor 1:10) (so clearly gods needn't have the divine nature!) When the witch of Endor brought up Samuel from Sheol, along with him, she "saw gods" (1 Sam. 28:13). Did she only mistakenly believe she saw gods? Well, "Yahweh executed judgment on all the gods of Egypt" (Ex. 12,12; Num. 33,4 and cf. 2 Sam. 7:23). Did Yahweh only *mistakenly believe* He was executing judgment on the gods of Egypt? How could He *actually* execute judgment on them, if they didn't exist? "God stands in the midst of the gods" (Psalm 82,1). "Let the gods who have *not* created the heavens and the earth perish" (Jer. 10,11). "Though I have said ye are gods, all of you sons of the Most High, yet shall ye die like men" (Psalm 82,6; John 10,34). "Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord"? (Ex. 15,11) "There are many gods and many lords, yet *for us* there is One God and One Lord" (1 Cor. 8,5). Despite the popularity of an extreme form of *literal* monotheism among Jews and Christians today, it's difficult to reconcile the Bible with the idea. Rather, the picture that emerges from scripture is that, as St. Paul puts it, there are indeed many gods and many lords. It is only that there is *for us* but One God and One Lord. And in any case, whether one admits their literal existence or not is beside the point. The point is that it's clear that *the vast majority* of the things (whether real or imagined) that the Bible applies the term "god" to cannot have the same nature as The One God – *not even in theory*. So at least the Bible doesn't seem to use the term "god" to *mean*

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[35]BRANSON, The Logical Problem of the Trinity, pp. 129-151.
[36]Ibid., pp. 146-148.
[37]Ibid., pp. 134-139.

"a thing with the divine nature".

To make the view a bit more clear, let's consider two alternatives. It may be that the Greek <<ὁ Θεὸς>> functions as a name, just as in Greek we refer to Socrates and Plato as <<ὁ Σωκράτης>> and <<ὁ Πλάτων>>, literally "the" Socrates and "the" Plato. If <<ὁ Θεὸς>> functions as a name, then, at least given a certain view of names, it refers to some individual not by way of any semantic content. It may be that the reference of that name *was fixed* at some point via some semantic content, but now that it is fixed, it simply refers to that entity. In that case, things are fairly simple. The Greek <<θεὸς>>, without any article, is a predicate that predicates, well, whatever quality it predicates, just as "*adam*", in Hebrew, can simply predicate humanity of a thing. Now as I've argued, <<θεὸς>> won't predicate the divine nature. But what exactly the Bible does mean by <<θεὸς>> needn't be settled just to get the logic down. Suppose that, whatever quality <<θεὸς>> predicates, all three persons have whatever quality it is that licenses predicating <<θεὸς>> of them (just as, after all, presumably a great many things can have <<θεὸς>> predicated of them – the gods of the gentiles, all the gods of Egypt, and so forth, have whatever quality it is that licenses referring to any of them as <<θεὸς>>). Thus, even though it may look like a description, "God" (capital-G, <<ὁ Θεὸς>> with the article) may just be the name of an individual, in the same way that the Hebrew (capital-"A") "*Adam*" (sometimes) functions as a name for the first human, despite the fact that (little-"a") "*adam*" literally means "a human", so that, in that sense, there are many adams, or many individuals that are adam, but only one Adam – the unbegotten adam – and many gods, but only one God – the unbegotten god.

On the other hand, suppose <<ὁ Θεὸς>> functions *not* as a name, but as a definite description – "the single individual that is θεὸς". If <<ὁ Θεὸς>> functions as a definite description, then it refers to a single individual by way of some descriptive content – descriptive content that only it fully satisfies. But in that case, even the Unitarian will have to admit that there is an equivocation going on here. Given that, as St. Paul tells us, "there are many gods and many lords", yet in some sense there is only "one God" and "one Lord" *for us* (1 Cor. 8,5), there must obviously be some distinction going on here. Likewise, it's much more plausible to claim that the New Testament never refers to Jesus as <<ὁ Θεὸς>>, but it's difficult indeed to maintain that He is never referred to as <<θεὸς>>. So, whatever exactly the distinction amounts to (for our present purposes, the content doesn't matter), when we read about <<ὁ Θεὸς>> with a definite article, it must be a meaning of <<Θεὸς>> such that there is only one of them, and when we read <<θεὸς>> without an article, and in a context in which there is more than one, it must carry *some* other meaning such that there could be other gods. Perhaps the sense of <<Θεὸς>> in which there is only one is something like "source without source", and perhaps the sense of <<θεὸς>> in which the divine Logos is also a <<θεὸς>> is something else. For the reasons given two paragraphs above, I agree with Gregory of Nyssa that it wouldn't do to say that this other meaning is "thing with the divine nature". Gregory thinks it means something like "a thing that can behold what is hidden" (think, for example, of Hagar's name for God). But for our purposes, the important thing is simply that it isn't such that only God the Father can have this predicate applied to Him.

Finally, one might object that, in some cases, it may be that Christ is referred to in the New Testament not simply as <<θεὸς>> without the article, but as <<ὁ Θεὸς>> with the article, or with titles that seem most apt for the Father, like "King of Kings and Lord of Lords", or that His standard title, "Lord" (<<Κύριος>>) is just a conventional Greek translation of the Hebrew "Yahweh". I can't go into detail here on the fact that the Old Testament "Yahweh", in Orthodox thought, is typically taken to be the Son, rather than the Father (see, e.g., Deuteronomy 32,8-9; Psalm 89,6; or the ikon of "the Mother of God, the Unburnt Bush" in reference to Exodus 3). But in any case, we can certainly still make sense of calling Christ "God" with a capital G, even if, in fact, God is the first person of the Trinity, and Christ is the second person, and so numerically distinct from God.

A fairly common strategy for showing this, in the early days of the Arian controversy, involves a sort of representational view of Christ, on which Christ is, as St. Paul had put it, "the ikon of the

invisible God". (Col. 1,15) We can see this strategy at work in various passages from another Monarchical Trinitarian, St. Basil the Great, passages that seem to reveal (1) that he thinks of The One God as the "source without source", and that (2) he thinks we are licensed in referring to Christ as "God" because of Christ's function as the *Image* (or *Representation*) of God, and that (3) this phenomenon of reference-transfer does not increase the "count" of gods. For (1), consider this passage:

> Still you say: 'He preaches two gods! He proclaims polytheism!' There are not two gods because there are not two fathers. Whoever introduces *two first principles* preaches two gods. — Adv. Sab. 4 [emphasis mine.]

Here Basil seems to equate mono*theism* with the mon*archia* of the Father. So, how is it that (2) the term "God" applies to Christ, even though Christ is not a "source without source"? Consider this passage:

> The Father is God; the Son is God. The Father is perfect God; the Son is also perfect God. The Father is incorporeal; the Son is incorporeal, the *representation of* the incorporeal and the *incorporeal image*. —Not Three Gods 3

Thus, Christ is the Image or the Representation of The Invisible God. That is what licenses the application of the term "God" to Him (more on that just below). But how is it that (3) this avoids tritheism? Consider these passages:

> [W]hoever looks at the imperial image in the forum and calls the one on the panel "emperor" does not confess two emperors, namely, the image and the one whose image it is. Nor when he points to the depiction on the panel and says, "This is the emperor", does he deprive the exemplar of the designation "emperor". – Adv. Sab. 4.

> We have never to this present day heard of a second God. We worship God from God, confessing the uniqueness of the persons, while maintaining the unity of the Monarchy… How does one and one not equal two Gods? Because we speak of the emperor, and the emperor's image—but not two emperors. The power is not divided, nor the glory separated. One is the dominion and authority over us; we do not send up glories to God, but glory; the honor given the image passes to the prototype. The image of the emperor is an image by imitation, but the Son is a natural image… (*De Spiritu Sancto* 45)

     Consider that, if I show you a picture of my wife, I can point to the picture and say (quite truly), "This is my wife". If my actual wife then walks into the room, and I point to her and say, "This is my wife", I don't say anything false, I don't contradict myself, and yet I'm not guilty of bigamy, having both a human wife and a merely photographic one. Rather, I have only my One True Wife (the human one), even though there is more than one thing to which I can point and say, "This is my wife". Indeed, I could even point to the photograph and say, "this is my One True Wife". And what I asserted would be true. This is not because I am equivocating on "wife", nor on the copula "is". Rather, it is because representations *transfer reference* (and other kinds of intensionality – like worship or glorification, as St. Basil mentions) to their prototypes.

     To see that this phenomenon is not simply an equivocation on "wife" or "my wife", consider that I could just as easily replace "my wife" with "Svetlana" (or indeed any name or any description that picks her out)[38]. I can point to the photograph and say (truly), "This is Svetlana". And, although there may be more than one Svetlana, that is because there are other women with that name. If there *were* only one woman in the world named "Svetlana", there would not come to be two simply because she had been photographed, so that the name "Svetlana" could then become ambiguous and a source of equivocation. But does it really seem likely that literally all names, indeed all descriptions (or at least the names and descriptions of any things that can be photographed or otherwise represented), are

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[38]I'm indebted to Jean-Baptiste Guillon for pressing me to clarify this and related points.

ambiguous? It seems rather that the application of the sentence, "This is my wife", to a photograph is not licensed by an equivocal use of the term "wife" or "my wife" (likewise for an equivocal use of "Svetlana"). Intuitively, I am not actually speaking *about* the photograph and saying there is some strange, mysterious (and hopefully merely Platonic) sense of "wife" in which *it* is my wife, or in which I am married to *it*. Nor that there is some quality of Svetlana-tude, perhaps similar to my wife's actual quality of Svetlana-tude, that is had by the photograph. Rather, intuitively, I am simply *using the photograph as a means* of speaking *about my wife*, and simply affirming that *she* is (quite literally) my wife, Svetlana.

Similarly, the application of the sentence, "This is my wife", to a photograph is not licensed by an equivocal use of the copula "is". Again, intuitively, I am not actually speaking *about* the photograph and saying that, although it does not literally *instantiate* the property of being my wife, there is some mysterious relation that *the photograph* bears to the property of being my wife, which is perhaps similar to instantiation. Rather, intuitively, I am simply using the photograph as a means of speaking about *my wife*, and simply affirming that *she* (literally) instantiates the property of being my wife. Nor again, if I say, "This is Svetlana" am I saying that *the photograph* bears some relation to Svetlana that is not exactly numerical identity, but something perhaps similar to identity. Rather, intuitively, I am simply using the photograph as a means of speaking about *my wife*, and affirming that she (literally) is identical to Svetlana.

However, one might here imagine that there is a good candidate for a relation that the photograph does bear to Svetlana, a relation which isn't identity, but which we may be expressing with "is". Namely, one might argue that in this case "is" really just means "represents". One problem with this suggestion is that the same phenomenon of reference transfer occurs with verbs *other than* the copula as well. For example, I may ask someone, "Where are *you* parked?" And they may reply, "*I'm* parked right outside, in spot 2A". And this could happen even when we are not *outside* in the parking lot at all, but *inside* and planning a trip. (And needless to say, a person can't be "parked" even if they *were* outside and, say, *standing* in spot 2A.) Does it seem plausible not only that there is an equivocal use of the word "is" which can just mean "represents", but also an equivocal use of the verb "to park", so that "to park" can mean *to park*, but can also mean "to be represented by something that parks"? In the same way that analyzing my "wife" example as an equivocation on a predicate leads, when generalized, to an innumerable horde of ambiguous predicates, analyzing it as an equivocation on the copula leads, when generalized, to an innumerable horde of ambiguous verbs.

There is much more to be said about this phenomenon of reference transfer (really, transfer of intensionality generally), but we will have to move on. Suffice it to say, even though my actual, human wife is my "One, True Wife", if I were to point to her picture and say, "That's not my wife", or even "That's not my One, True Wife", I would be saying something false. By using the picture, I would be asserting that *my wife* is not my wife. In fact, even if I said, "Well, this isn't *literally* my wife", I would be saying something false. And that has nothing to do with sharing tropes, or any other fancy metaphysics, nor to relative identity (or other revisionary) logic. It's just the point of using representations. When the real McCoy isn't in the room, we can in many ways treat a representation as though it were the prototype. As a final argument that what we have here is a transfer of reference affecting the subject term, rather than an equivocation on the copula or the predicate, consider that, instead of saying "*That*'s my wife" or "*That*'s not my wife" (as I point to the picture), I could just as easily point to the picture and say, "*She*'s my wife" or "*She*'s not my wife". But if the copula or the predicate were equivocal while the *subject* I was referring to was the photograph, I would have to say, "*It*'s my wife" or "*It*'s not my wife".

Here let me return to the worry about the *homoousion*. Namely, if the Father is The One God, because only He is the "single source without source", and if Christ is referred to as God, not because He is also in some sense the single source without source, but because of an equivocal use of the term

"god" or because He simply is a representation of God, does this mean that the Father and Son are not in fact "homoousios" or "of the same nature / essence"?

The confusion here is to think that because the picture I have sketched out does not *require* that the Father and Son be of the same essence in order to make the logic and semantics work out, that it is therefore *incompatible with* their being of the same essence. But first, one can still hold the Father and Son to be *homoousios*, and indeed can argue (on other grounds) that they *must* be. Second, it is still critical, within what we can call the "Representationalist Strategy" we are considering, that the Father and Son actually have the divine nature in common, at least the version typically seen in figures like St. Athanasius or St. Basil. Things can function as representations either *by nature* or *by convention*. But conventional representations don't *reveal* anything about their prototypes. If you've never seen my wife, and I simply *stipulate* that we will use a stick or a squiggle in a diagram to represent her, I can't legitimately hold up the stick or point to the squiggle and ask you whether you think my wife is pretty. "You tell me", you might say. I would have to *also stipulate* that my wife is pretty, or you'd have no way to know. Her image in a photograph, however, represents her *by nature*, that is, by actually *having something in common* with her (in this case, her visible form). So you can simply read off of the photograph the fact (as I take it to be) that my wife is pretty. Because the photograph is pretty, and *is pretty with the very prettiness of my wife* (i.e., in virtue of having the same visible form in virtue of which she herself is pretty).

Part of the debate between the Arians and the Orthodox was over whether Christ represented the Father *by nature* or merely *by convention*. If Christ is a creature, and does not share some element in common with God (i.e., the divine nature), then Christ can represent God only by convention. And so, in Himself, Christ *reveals* nothing about the Father. But if Christ has the divine nature in common with the Father, then we can, so to speak, "read off of" Him the attributes of the Father. Or as Christ Himself put it to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father". (John 14,9) Similarly, anyone who has seen a photograph of my wife, has seen my wife, who is "in" the photograph. (cf. John 14,10) If I ask you whether you think my wife is pretty, after you've seen her (i.e., her image) in a photograph, you couldn't legitimately say, "I don't know; I've never seen her". You could say, "I've never seen her *in person*. I've only seen her *'in' a photograph*". But in that case, the correct response would be, "So what? You've seen her in the only sense in which you need to see her in order to answer the question whether she's pretty".

If Christ represented the Father merely by convention, it would be hard to see how an encounter with Christ would count as a revelation of the Father, who cannot be seen (Ex. 33,20). It would be hard to reconcile Isaiah's claim "I saw Yahweh sitting on a throne" (Is. 6,1) with St. Paul's claim that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (i.e., God the Father) is one "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6,16) or St. John's repeated claim that "No man has ever yet seen God" (1 John 4,12) and "No man has ever yet seen God; the only begotten Son… he hath declared him." (John 1,18) However, if Christ is, *by nature*, "the ikon of the invisible God," (Col 1,15), then it is obvious how He can reveal the Father, and how "he that hath seen me [Christ] hath seen the Father." (Joh n 14,9)

Unfortunately, there is not space to go into further detail on the mechanics of Monarchical Trinitarianism here, nor the important issue of the visible Yahweh vs. the invisible Yahweh that appears both in late second Temple Judaism and again in the Arian controversy. But hopefully one will now have a rough idea how it works, how it might avoid some of the most obvious criticisms, and where to look for it in patristic sources. In any case, the point for present purposes is not to show that MT is true, that it's defensible, or even that it's necessarily a very good or interesting idea. The point is simply that it *does count* as a form of Trinitarianism.

IX. CONCLUSION

The point of this discussion of MT is to show us just how different TT and UT (Tuggy's definitions) are from TB and UB (my definitions). All Monarchical models count as Trinitarian on TB (my definition), because the number of divine persons is exactly three and the number of gods exactly one. And no Monarchical models would count as Unitarian on UB (my definition), because the number of divine persons is not exactly one. But all Monarchical models count as *Unitarian* on UT (Tuggy's definition), because the relation between The One God and the Father is the relation of identity, rather than the relation of "containment" or "consisting of".

What's more, Tuggy's definitions also have the bizarre result that although *all* Monarchical models count as Unitarian, some will *also* count as Trinitarian (while some others won't). This will happen in any model in which a thing is allowed to "contain", "consist of", or "constitute" itself. Such an allowance might in some cases results in odd models. It might seem strange to say that the Father "contains" Himself as an improper part, in addition to the Son and Spirit as proper parts. (Though it's perhaps less strange that Rea and Brower's model would have the Father "constitute" Himself, in addition to the Son and Spirit, since they simply set their metaphysics up so that things automatically constitute themselves, just for reasons of simplifying their system). But being strange, or even useless for that matter, isn't the same thing being *contradictory*. Regardless of whether they are useful, successful, or anything else, such models show that, despite his claims to the contrary, Tuggy's definitions are *not* in fact logical contraries. So we have to ask, "Should it be even *logically* possible that a view could count as both Unitarian and Trinitarian at the same time?" I think even Tuggy would find this to be a flaw in his definitions.

My definitions, on the other hand, are indeed mutually exclusive, as we would expect them to be. And this is no minor issue. Here again, a great deal of Tuggy's criticism relies on the premise that a theology *cannot be* both Unitarian and Trinitarian. For example, his argument that Tertullian was a Unitarian and "not at all a Trinitarian" really just shows that Tertullian was a Monarchical Trinitarian (which he was). But Tertullian is a real-life example of someone who holds that The One God both just *is* God the Father, and also *contains* the Son and Spirit as literal proper parts. So, if we simply add to Tertullian's stated views the point that the Father contains Himself as an improper part (which certainly seems reasonable), we would have the result that Tertullian's view should count as *both* Unitarian and Trinitarian on Tuggy's definitions. But Tuggy claims Tertullian is "not at all a Trinitarian", because he is a "Unitarian" (which in this context, really means a Monarchical Trinitarian). Since Tuggy's definitions of "Unitarian" and "Trinitarian" are not mutually exclusive, his argument here turns out to be invalid.

In conclusion, without keeping "one eye" on history, Tuggy's definitions may initially seem perfectly reasonable. But his substantive arguments really just amount to the Biblical case for the Strong Monarchy View. Coupled with definitions that rule out Monarchical models of the Trinity from even counting as Trinitarian, and reclassifying them as Unitarian, this obviously results in a bleak picture for "Trinitarianism" so defined. But when we take a closer look at the actual history of the doctrine of the Trinity, the neglected doctrine of the Monarchy comes back into focus. Whether we conclude that Monarchical Trinitarianism just is "the" doctrine of the Trinity, or whether we merely acknowledge that it is at least one legitimate *form* of Trinitarian Theology, in either case, Tuggy's central objection to Trinitarianism loses its force entirely. In sum, if we look at this debate in philosophical theology from a more historically informed perspective, the landscape of the debate changes drastically. To sum it up in two words: History matters.

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