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Eusebian Theologies of the Son as the Image of God before 341

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This paper explores the nature of ecclesiastical parties in the fourth century by considering how different members of the “Eusebian” alliance understood the Son as the image of God. This study argues that in the years between the Council of Nicaea in 325 and the Dedication Council held at Antioch in 341 the Eusebians developed two fundamentally different and competing accounts. Arius and Asterius advocated a “participative” understanding of the Son as the image of God. As a created essence external to the Father, the Son nonetheless was God through his pre-eminent participation by grace in the divine attributes of the Father. Eusebius of Caesarea and Acacius of Caesarea took a “constitutive” approach to the question. They avoided speaking of the Son as created in any way and understood the Son as “made like” or “constituted in likeness to” the Father without participating in the divine attributes. Such fundamental differences indicate that, rather than by a single monolithic theology, ecclesiastical parties were defined mainly by expectations and the activity of mutual defense and correction, by common opposition to enemies considered as such for reasons not necessarily theological, and by a minimal set of shared doctrinal principles and formulas.

Traditional accounts of the fourth-century theological debates have been indebted to the polemical categories developed in the 330s and largely promoted by Athanasius. Such accounts corral participants into two competing camps: the beleaguered Athanasius and his supporters versus the heretical

An earlier version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society in June 2005. I would like to thank Andy Gallwitz, Lewis Ayres, and Steven K. Strange for comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

Arians or Eusebians.¹ Revisionist scholarship of the last few decades has done much to deconstruct such categories and to uncover the plurality and complexity of fourth-century theology. As a contribution to this project, I argue that Eusebian theologies admitted a variety of understandings of the Son's status as the "image of God" through the first half of the fourth century. Eusebian theology on this point is by no means monolithic, and none of the approaches can be considered "typically" Eusebian.

I will argue that among the Eusebians there were two main approaches. On the one hand, Arius and Asterius the Sophist advocated a "participative" understanding of the Son as the image of God. As a created essence external to the Father, the Son nonetheless was God through his pre-eminent participation by grace in the divine attributes of the Father. Eusebius and Acacius of Caesarea, on the other hand, took a "constitutive" approach to how the Son was the image of God. They avoided speaking of the Son as created in any way and understood the Son as "made like" or "constituted in likeness to" the Father without participating in the divine attributes.² There were thus at least two competing ways of conceiving what it meant for the Son to be the image of God among Eusebians before 341, the year in which the Second Creed of the Dedication Council held at Antioch affirmed that the Son was "the indistinguishable image of the

1. I use "Eusebian" in this paper in line with other recent usage to name the *ad hoc* alliance of eastern bishops and theologians initially formed around the figures of Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea that lasted from ca. 320 to ca. 350. For a definition of the category, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 52. Also see Joseph T. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 34–35.

2. By "made like" and "constituted in likeness" I attempt to capture the vague way in which Eusebius and Acacius conceptualized how the Son was God: without creating him or imparting to him a share of his essence, the Father causes the Son to be made like himself in every respect. This explanation is conspicuous more for what it avoids saying than for its positive content. While Arius and Asterius claim that the Son is like the Father because he participates in divine attributes, Eusebius and Acacius explain the Son's likeness to the Father in terms of his being constituted as such by the Father. Accordingly, the label "constitutive" is intended as a tag for their approach, not a one-word summation of it. I use "constitutive" based on certain statements of Eusebius such as *d. e.* 5.4.12 (κατὰ πάντα τῷ πατρὶ παρομοιωμένην; ed. I. A. Heikel, *Eusebius Werke, Band 6: Die Demonstratio evangelica*, GCS 23 [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913], 225.34–226.1) and *e. th.* 3.21.1 (κατὰ πάντα ἀφομοιωμένον [τῷ πατρὶ]; ed. G. C. Hansen and E. Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band 4: Gegen Marcell. Über die kirchliche Theologie. Die Fragmente Marcellus*, GCS 14, 2nd ed. [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972], 181.27–28). Other similar expressions are cited below.

divinity, essence, will, power, and glory of the Father” (τῆς θεότητος οὐσίας τε καὶ βουλῆς καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς ἀπαράλλακτον εἰκόνα).³ Even though the doctrine of this creed is presented as traditional⁴ and the language about the Son as image appears as central in the creed,⁵ study of the leading Eusebians prior to the council reveals that there was no consensus as to what this meant.⁶

The close study of this paper also enables a number of broader conclusions about the study of the emergence of “orthodoxy” through the fourth-century controversies. First, this study complements other recent studies that have revealed the fluidity and diversity of church “parties.” In some circumstances such parties could encompass people who were willing to defend each other even though they disagreed on the interpretation of what otherwise seem to be central doctrinal identity markers. Second, this study helps us to see more clearly how new positions could emerge and attract the allegiance of former enemies. The diversity within theological parties and similarities between those who belonged to different alliances enabled new patterns of allegiance when tensions within a given party became too acute. Third, a study such as this reveals how important close attention to doctrinal issues is for understanding the complex social and political structure of the fourth-century conflicts, and vice versa. The more nuanced understanding of the nature of ecclesiastical parties in the fourth century explored in this paper is only made possible by the study of the diverse image theologies of the Eusebians, and this indicates the general importance of close doctrinal study for the period’s social and political realities. These three questions and implications will be dealt with more fully in the conclusion, and we turn now to a close doctrinal study of the Eusebians.

3. The text is preserved in Athanasius, *syn.* 23.3 (Hans-Georg Opitz, ed., *Athanasius Werke* II/1, 2: *Die Apologien* [Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1940], 249.17–18). All translations are mine unless otherwise attributed.

4. The Second Creed begins, “We believe, following the evangelical and apostolic tradition . . .” (Athanasius, *syn.* 23.2 [ed. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* II/1, 249.11]).

5. The language about the Son as the indistinguishable image constitutes one of the most significant differences between the Second Creed and the First Creed of Antioch. For a discussion of the four creeds produced at the Council of Antioch in 341, see R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381 AD* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 284–92, and Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 117–22.

6. Compare the comments of Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 88–92, on how acceptance of creedal statements need not imply a shared interpretation of those same statements.

THE “PARTICIPATIVE” APPROACH: ARIUS AND ASTERIUS

Arius and Asterius both use the language of participation (μετέχειν, μετοχή) to describe how the Son as image possesses the divine attributes of the Father. The Son as image manifests knowledge of the Father, not in virtue of being self-subsistently the divine qualities, but because he permanently participates in these through a singular grace. Arius writes:

Having not existed—for he came into existence by the Father’s will—the Son is only-begotten God, and he is different from all others. Wisdom came into existence as Wisdom by the will of the wise God. So, then, he is conceived (ἐπινοεῖται) in so many numberless conceptions (ἐπινοίαις): Spirit, Power, Wisdom, God’s Glory, Truth, Image, and Word. Understand that he is conceived (ἐπινοεῖται) to be Radiance and Light.⁷

Hence Arius sees such titles as *Word*, *Wisdom*, and *Image* as ἐπίνοιαι of the Son which are indicative of his ontological difference from the Father. Elsewhere Arius teaches that there are two Words and two Wisdoms: the first is the attribute that is proper to and coexistent with God (τὴν ἰδίαν καὶ συνυπάρχουσαν τῷ Θεῷ), and the second a distinct being made by God for creation who participates in (μετέχοντα) these divine attributes and is accordingly named (ὀνομάσθαι) Wisdom and Word by grace (κατὰ χάριν).⁸

Another text records a saying of Arius on this very subject:

The Word is not proper to the Father, but there is another Word that is in God. The former Word, which is the Lord, is foreign to (ξένος) and different from (ἀλλότριος) the essence of the Father, and is only called “Word” according to a conception (κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν), and is also not by nature the true Son of God, but it is by adoption that this Word is called Son, as a creature.⁹

Hence the Son is ontologically foreign to (ξένος), different from (ἀλλότριος), and unlike (ἀνόμοιος) the Father.¹⁰ For Arius, then, the various ἐπίνοιαι of the Son are names he bears in view of his participation by grace in certain attributes of God, and as such are not indications of his essence.¹¹

7. Preserved in Athanasius, *syn.* 15.3 (ed. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* II/1, 243.3–8).

8. Preserved in Athanasius, *Ar.* 1.5.17–23 (Martin Tetz, ed., *Athanasius Werke* I/1. *Die Dogmatischen Schriften* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996–2000], 114).

9. This saying of Arius is found in Athanasius, *Dion.* 23.1.2–5 (ed. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* II/1, 62.29–63.2).

10. Cf. Arius, *Thalia*, in Athanasius, *syn.* 15.3 (ed. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* II/1, 242.16–18, 26), and *Ar.* 1.6 (ed. Tetz, *Athanasius Werke* I/1, 115).

11. Athanasius frequently complained of this feature of Arius’s thought; see *decr.* 16, and *Ar.* 2.19, 2.37–38.

While one can easily see how the Son's ἐπίνοια of Spirit, Power, Glory, and Truth, even Radiance and Light, could be understood in categories similar to those of Wisdom and Word, it is not immediately clear in what way the Father could have a proper Image in which the Son participates by grace. As Rowan Williams has suggested, it may be the case that Arius turns to ἐπίνοια language to stress that, though the Son as a creature cannot know the incomprehensible essence of God, he has been the recipient of the highest degree of grace and shares in the divine qualities in such a pre-eminent way that he is their perfect image.¹² Even though the Son as a creature knows through a conceptual mode of knowing (κατάληψις), and for this reason cannot comprehend exactly the simplicity of the divine essence, the Son does have a certain knowledge of the Father in proportion to his own (ἰδίους μέτροις) created capacities for knowledge.¹³ In fact, by virtue of the grace which the Son has received from the Father, he is (in the words of Rowan Williams) "supremely privileged in the knowledge of the Father and thus the appropriate transmitter of such knowledge, the manifest in multiple form of the glory of God's own simplicity and unity."¹⁴ Thus, the Son is the one who manifests knowledge of the Father, not by virtue of being self-subsistently the divine qualities, but because he permanently participates in these through a singular grace.

A native of Cappadocia formed in a theological tradition independent of Arius, around 320–321 Asterius published a theological handbook entitled the *Syntagmation* which had much in common with what Arius was teaching in Alexandria. It is even claimed by Athanasius that Arius himself used this little book.¹⁵ Asterius supported Arius both before and after Nicaea, and it is from his *Syntagmation* and those writings of his in defense of Arius's cause after Nicaea that our extant fragments of Asterius derive.¹⁶

12. Rowan Williams, "The Logic of Arianism," *JTS* (n.s.) 34 (1983): 56–81, at 77; idem, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 114–15.

13. Arius, *Thalia*, in Athanasius, *syn.* 15.3 (ed. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* II/1, 242.22), and *Ar.* 1.6.9–10 (ed. Tetz, *Athanasius Werke* III/1, 115).

14. Rowan Williams, "The Quest for the Historical *Thalia*," in *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments*, ed. Robert C. Gregg (Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1985), 1–35, at 22.

15. Athanasius says that Arius had the book copied and circulated it among his supporters: καὶ τοῦτο γὰρ Ἀστέριος ὁ θύσας ἔγραψεν, ὁ δὲ Ἄρειος μεταγράψας δέδωκε τοῖς ἰδίους (Athanasius, *decr.* 8.1 [ed. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* II/1, 7.20–21]).

16. Thomas A. Kopecsek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1979), 1:29–34, gives an excellent summary of Asterius's theological differences from Arius. For other treatments of Asterius's theology, see Hanson, *The Search*, 32–38; Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 89–98;

Asterius first of all made a clear distinction between the unbegotten God and the begotten God: “We do not speak of two unbegottens. . . . One is unbegotten and one is begotten.”¹⁷ According to Asterius, the Father and the Son were two distinct ὑποστάσεις,¹⁸ and the Son, as only-begotten and created, was neither proper to (ἴδιος) nor like (ὁμοιος) the unbegotten Father’s essence.¹⁹ Their unity was thought to reside in their concord of will.²⁰ Like Arius, Asterius taught that there were two Wisdoms, two Powers, and two Words: there is an eternal one which is unbegotten (ἀγεννήτως; ἀγεννήτων), uncaused (ἄναρχον), proper (ἴδιον) and innate to (ἔμφυτον), and coexistent (συνυπάρχουσιν) with God, and another one which is begotten (γεννητικὴν) and participates (κατὰ μετουσίαν) in that which is proper to God, and only for that reason is named (ὀνόματι; ὀνόμασεν) Wisdom or Power or Word by grace (χάριτι).²¹ Asterius recognized the begotten God as the image of the invisible God.²² His most extensive statement on the subject of the image of God is as follows:

For another is the Father, who begot from himself the *only-begotten* Word [John 1.18] and *the first-born of all creation* [Col 1.15], Sole <begetting> Sole, Perfect <begetting> Perfect, King <begetting> King, Lord <begetting> Lord, God <begetting> God, <who is> the indistinguishable image (ἀπαράλλακτον εἰκόνα) of his essence (οὐσία) and will and power and glory.²³

and Markus Vinzent, ed., *Asterius von Kappadokien: Die theologischen Fragmente* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 38–71. Hanson and Kopecek appear to assume that in his *Synagmatation* Asterius is specifically developing the teaching of Arius, as if Arius was a source for Asterius. This is by no means certain, and Lienhard and Vinzent do not make the claim. It is more likely that Arius and Asterius were of more or less independent theological traditions whose affinities led Asterius to defend Arius. See the comments of Ayres on the supposed “Lucianist” connection of Arius and Asterius (*Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 56–57).

17. Asterius, *Frag.* 3 and 12 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 82, 88); cf. *Frag.* 4, 8, 34 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 82, 86, 100). The fragments are cited according to the numbering of Vinzent.

18. Asterius, *Frag.* 52–55, 61 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 116–18, 120).

19. Asterius, *Frag.* 41, 63, 72 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 104, 122, 132).

20. Asterius, *Frag.* 38–42 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 102–6).

21. Such is the language of Asterius, *Frag.* 64, 66–77 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 124, 126–40). I have excluded *Frag.* 65 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 126) because Vinzent derives it from Athanasius, *Ar.* 1.5 (ed. Tetz, *Athanasius Werke I/1*, 114.17–23), seeing it as Asterian. While I recognize that some of Athanasius’s presentation of Arius’s *Thalia* in *Ar.* 1.5 derives not from Arius but from Asterius (such as *Frag.* 67), I am not convinced that this particular passage is to be ascribed to Asterius. Here I follow Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, 98–100.

22. Asterius, *Frag.* 11–12 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 88).

23. Asterius, *Frag.* 10 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 86).

The divine attributes and names are bestowed upon the Son, and it is through participation that he possesses them, as Asterius says, “Nor is Christ true God. Even if he is called God, he is still not true God. Rather, due to his participation in grace (μετοχῆ χάριτος), just as is the case for all others, he too is called God but in name alone (ὁμόματι μόνον).”²⁴ And so, while only the Father is properly Sole, Perfect, King, Lord, and God, the Son is all these through participation. As a ὑπόστασις different from the Father, the Son possesses his own essence, will, power, and glory.²⁵ While these are different and distinct from those of the Father (because of their hypostatic difference), they are similar too, in that the Son possesses these through the fullest possible participation in the Father’s essence, will, power, and glory. And so, in this way is the Son the indistinguishable image of the Father’s essence, will, power, and glory. Therefore, regardless of whether Arius was influenced by Asterius or vice versa, the fact is that they both hold to the same image theology, maintaining that the Son is the image of God in virtue of his participation by grace in the divine attributes of the Father.

A NOTE ON “INDISTINGUISHABLE IMAGE”

(ἀπαράλλακτος εἰκόν)

Before proceeding to an examination of the “constitutive” approach of Eusebius and Acacius of Caesarea, it is worth clarifying the meaning of the key Asterian term ἀπαράλλακτος. It is also worth noting that, though Asterius’s notion of how the Son is the image of God is quite different from that of Alexander of Alexandria and Athanasius, all three can speak of that image as being ἀπαράλλακτος.²⁶ Hence the clarification of the meaning of the term is important not only for understanding the image theology of the Eusebians, but also for that of their opponents.

The technical use of the term comes from the debates between the Stoics and Academics regarding whether it was possible for two particular things to exist which were indistinguishable from one another by their intrinsic properties. Such technical use was most prominent in the skeptical

24. Asterius, *Frag.* 63 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 122).

25. See also Asterius, *Frag.* 72 (ed. Vinzent, *Asterius*, 132).

26. See Alexander, *ep. Alex.* 38 and 47 (ed. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke III/1*, 25.25 and 27.15); and Athanasius, *gent.* 41.2–3 and 46.52–61 (Robert W. Thomson, ed. and trans., *Athanasius: Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione*, Oxford Early Christian Texts [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971], 112, 130).

Academy's critique of Stoic epistemology.²⁷ The Stoics denied that there could be two numerically distinct substances (οὐσίαι) with the same inherent differentiating quality (ἴδια ποιότης), and accordingly they held that the occurrence of two qualitatively indistinguishable substances implied that the two were in fact the one and the same substance.²⁸ Each distinct substance had by definition a unique differentiating quality inherent in it: if two substances possessed the same unique inherent differentiating quality, it meant that the two were fact numerically identical. For it was impossible for a single inherent differentiating quality to exist in two substances simultaneously.

The Stoics asserted that it was possible for humans to perceive such inherent differentiating qualities in otherwise exactly similar substances. They claimed that true knowledge of substances could be attained through the conceptual mode of knowing called cognition (κατάληψις), which was defined as assent to a cognitive impression (φαντασία καταληπτικός). A cognitive impression was understood as the kind of impression which comes about from, and which is formed in accordance with, the object of which it is the impression, in such a way that there is no mistake as to the object it represents. In other words, a cognitive impression has a "internal feature" which guarantees the truth of its representation: it is such because of the precise or exact way in which it represents its object, namely, it faithfully represents the object of which it is the impression in all its characteristic and relevant detail, so that there can be no doubt as to its identity. Thus one way of understanding a cognitive impression is that it captures and conveys the inherent differentiating quality (ἴδια ποιότης) of a substance. For example, if there were two perfectly identical twins named Peter and Paul, I would recognize Paul as Paul and not mistake him for Peter if I were to receive a cognitive impression upon seeing him.

In their critique of Stoic epistemology, the skeptical Academics rejected the existence of cognitive impressions and thus the possibility of true knowledge using the argument of indistinguishability (ἀπαραλλαξία): for every true impression, there is a false one indistinguishable from it.²⁹ There was no such thing as a cognitive impression which had the "internal"

27. The best recent overview is Michael Frede, "Stoic Epistemology," in K. Algra et al., ed., *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 295–322.

28. Testimonia of this Stoic teaching are found in Philo, *Aet.* 48 and Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077C–E.

29. The best ancient summary of the argument is found in Cicero, *Acad.* 2.40–42. Also see Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Log.* 1.164, 227–62 and 401–35.

characteristic of being epistemologically different from a false impression that was indistinguishable from it. This denial of cognitive impressions is based on either the position that no impression could effectively convey the inherent differentiating quality of a substance, or the wholesale rejection of the Stoic notion of unique differentiating qualities (and thus the ontological basis for Stoic epistemology). Returning to the twin example, I would have no way of being certain that I saw Paul when I saw him since he was indistinguishable from Peter; the most I could say was that it was probable that I saw Paul. True and certain knowledge of whom I saw was impossible.

The idea of indistinguishability was also crucial in the Stoic doctrine of everlasting recurrence.³⁰ According to this teaching, there is an everlasting cycle of world-ordering followed by world-destruction through conflagration in which both the individuals of the newly-constituted world and their actions are indistinguishable from those of all prior worlds.³¹ One aspect of the critique of this teaching pointed out how problematic it was for the Stoics to claim that an individual substance with an inherent differentiating quality from one world could be destroyed and then replicated indistinguishably in another world and yet not be the same individual. For according to the Stoics two indistinguishable substances implied that they were the numerically same substance—an implication that many critics of the teaching, including Origen, rejected.³²

Hence from this philosophical context we can see that the notion of indistinguishability was connected with arguments over the possibility of acquiring true knowledge of a substance (οὐσία) when there was another indistinguishable from it and whether two indistinguishable substances

30. On this Stoic doctrine, remaining unsurpassed is Jonathan Barnes, “La doctrine du retour éternel” in Jacques Brunschwig, ed., *Les Stoïciens et leur logique* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1978), 3–20.

31. Testimonia of this teaching are found in Eusebius, *p. e.* 15.18–19 and Nemesius 309.5–311.2.

32. For critiques of the teaching based on the indistinguishability argument, see Simplicius, *In Ar. Phys.* 886.12–16, and Alexander, *In Ar. An. pr.* 180.33–6 and 181.25–31. It is reported that some Stoics attempted to salvage the earlier Chrysippean teaching on the eternal recurrence of the world by arguing that substances displayed certain non-essential distinguishing characteristics from one world to the next making them thus not the “same” substance but still indistinguishable in essence from the earlier substances. Yet other second-century BCE Stoics such as Panaetius of Rhodes and Boethus of Sidon rejected the entire notion of the periodic conflagration and regeneration of the world and adopted the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity and indestructibility of the world; see Philo, *Aet.* 78; Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.118; and Diog. Laer. 7.142.

were in fact numerically identical. The logic of Stoic ontology demanded that when two individual substances were indistinguishable from each other it implied that they were in fact the same individual substance, i.e., numerically identical. This is known as the Stoic theory of identity. Hence the Stoics argued that individual substances had inherent differentiating qualities which precluded the possibility of indistinguishability and which could be transmitted to the human perceiver by means of a cognitive impression. The Academics rejected the Stoic epistemology and held that two indistinguishable substances were distinct though very similar but that certain knowledge of neither was possible.³³

A few examples will have to suffice to demonstrate the deployment of the concept of indistinguishability in the early Christian period. Philo and Plutarch adopted the position that when two individual substances were indistinguishable it implied that they were distinct, albeit very similar. Philo, who uses the term ἀπαράλλακτος only twice, says that two indistinguishably similar twins are produced with the same character (χαρακτήρ).³⁴ Plutarch applies the term “indistinguishable” to what we would consider incorporeal realities when he speaks of the moral characters of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus as “indistinguishable” with regard to certain traits.³⁵ Admittedly, these usages are not technical. But when we turn to Origen we find precise philosophical usage of the term ἀπαράλλακτος, and most frequently in his critique of the Stoic doctrine of eternal recurrence.³⁶ His critique shows that he ascribed to the position that an indistinguishability of substances implies their sameness and numerical identity, thereby accepting the Stoic theory of identity. This same understanding is demonstrated elsewhere. In his interpretation of John 4.34, he argued that the Son’s doing of the Father’s will meant that the Son’s will becomes indistinguishable from the Father’s, so that they are no longer two wills but one, i.e., the same and identical.³⁷ The following citation on the significance of names shows that Origen was well-acquainted with Stoic terminology:

33. Particularly helpful in demonstrating the anti-Academic polemical context of the development of Stoic ontology and epistemology and the mutual interdependence of these two branches of Stoic philosophy is David Sedley’s “The Stoic Criterion of Identity,” *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 255–75.

34. Philo, *Ebr.* 90; cf. *Ebr.* 169 where he speaks of “indistinguishable impressions.” Echoing Philo, Plotinus (*enm.* 5.7.3.3) says the identical offspring of the same litter are “indistinguishable” because there is one forming principle (λόγος) (A. H. Armstrong, trans., *Plotinus. Ennead V*, LCL 444 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984], 228).

35. Plutarch, *Tib. et Gai. Gr.* 3.1.4.

36. Origen, *Cels.* 4.12, 4.67–68, 5.20.

37. Origen, *Jo.* 13.228.

A name (ὄνομα) is a designation (προσηγορία) that encapsulates and indicates the inherent differentiating quality (ἰδίᾳ ποιότητος) of the one named.³⁸ For example, Paul the Apostle has a certain inherent differentiating quality of his soul by which he is such as he is, of his mind by which he contemplates certain things, and of his body by which he exists in a certain way. Thus, the differentiating mark of these qualities and their incompatibility with anyone else—for there is no one indistinguishable from Paul in these respects—is indicated by the name “Paul.”³⁹

According to Origen, then, if another man were indistinguishable from Paul, he would have had the same inherent differentiating qualities as Paul and thus be the same man as Paul. Finally, in one of the few passages of *De principiis* preserved in Greek, Origen says that the Son “is the *image of goodness* [Wis 7.27] but not as the Father is incomparably (ἀπαράλλάκτως) good.”⁴⁰ The point that Origen wants to make is that while the Father is good incomparably and without qualification (ἀπαράλλάκτως), the Son is good in a qualified sense because he is the image of the Father’s goodness. Thus there is something unique about the Father’s goodness which distinguishes it from the Son’s: the Father is goodness itself while the Son’s goodness derives from the Father.⁴¹ Therefore in Origen we can clearly see

38. Regarding proper names, Origen here reveals his indebtedness to Stoic grammar; cf. Diogenes Laertius’s summary of the Stoic parts of speech at 7.58: “A designation (προσηγορία) is the part of speech signifying a common quality (σημαῖνον κοινὴν ποιότητα) . . . ; a name (ὄνομα) is a part of speech indicating an inherent differentiating quality (δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα)” (R. D. Hicks, ed., *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers, II.*, LCL 185 [Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1931], 166). According to the Stoics, then, a προσηγορία is what we would call a common noun, and ὄνομα a proper noun. See Jacques Brunschwig, “Remarks on the Stoic Theory of the Proper Noun,” in *Papers in Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39–56, esp. 53–56 where the author comments on the correspondence between Stoic ontology and grammar as it relates to the Stoic theory of identity.

39. Origen, *or.* 24.2 (Paul Koetschau, ed., *Origenes Werke, Bd. 2*, GCS [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899], 297–403, at 353–54).

40. Gr. εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγατότητος ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὡς ὁ πατήρ ἀπαράλλάκτως ἀγαθός. Origen, *princ.* 1.2.13: *Frag.* 6 from Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Paul Koetschau, ed., *Origenes Werke, Bd. 5. De principiis*, GCS [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899–1959], 210). My interpretation of this sentence is governed by the parallel constructions that come just before it: εἰκὼν ἀγαθότητος θεοῦ ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ οὐκ αὐτοαγαθόν. καὶ τάχα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἀγαθός, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὡς ἀπλῶς ἀγαθός.

41. Despite Origen’s insistence here on the distinction between the Father’s and the Son’s goodness, in the Latin version of Rufinus it is said that the Son’s goodness is not dissimilar or different from the Father’s: *Neque aliqua dissimilitudo aut distantia bonitatis in Filio est* (PG 11:144). This is a clear example Rufinus’s “correction” of Origen. Nonetheless, the rest of this section (*princ.* 1.2.13) makes clear that the Son

the enunciation of the position that indistinguishability implies some sort of identity, a position similar to that of the Stoics.

In this philosophical context,⁴² then, what does it mean for an image to be called “indistinguishable”? I argue that it connotes the kind of image that is so similar to its archetype as to be “epistemically” indistinguishable from it. In other words, the indistinguishability of the Son as image implies not any sort of ontological or numerical identity of Father and Son, but rather a kind of “epistemic” identity of the Son with the Father, in that the Son’s representation of the Father is indistinguishable from the Father himself from the perspective of the human knower.⁴³ To use Stoic terminology, it is *as if* the Son is able to convey the inherent differentiating quality of the Father. The Stoic claim that indistinguishability between two realities would preclude true knowledge of them is obviated since the knowledge of the Son as indistinguishable image is the same as knowledge of the Father. Since the deployment of the scriptural notion of the “image of God” is a way of affirming the real distinction between the Father and the Son, the application of indistinguishability to this notion constitutes a way of insisting on some sort of “epistemic” unity between them that allows the Son to convey true knowledge of the Father.⁴⁴ Accordingly, when

is able to convey knowledge of the Father’s goodness precisely because the Son is the image of the *Father’s* goodness.

42. It should be noted here that Clement of Alexandria does not use ἀπαράλλακτος, and the term occurs once in Methodius (*symp.* 3.2.22) but in a non-technical sense.

43. In *ep. Alex.* 38 and 47 Alexander is clear that the Father and Son are two φύσεις distinct in ὑπόστασις and that as image the Son perfectly represents the Father. In *gent.* 41.2–3 and 46.52–61 when Athanasius calls the Son the indistinguishable image of the Father he seems to mean that no one other than Son represents the Father perfectly as the Son does. Thus the indistinguishability of the Son as image separates him from all other possible representations of the Father. In both Alexander and Athanasius, then, epistemological concerns appear to motivate their use of the phrase “indistinguishable image.” But whereas Alexander and Athanasius speak of the Son being the indistinguishable image of the *Father*, Asterius says that the Son is the indistinguishable image of the Father’s essence (σὺσίᾳ) and will and power and glory. I have already outlined above what I think Asterius means by this: that the Son as indistinguishable image perfectly represents the Father and is thus the perfect transmitter of knowledge of the Father’s essence and will and power and glory. It should be noted that in *gent.* 46 Athanasius explicitly rejects the notion that the Son is image by participation. See also n. 26 above.

44. One might compare this with Plotinus’s oft-repeated notion that some things “only differ by difference,” a way of saying that two distinct things are as alike as possible, e.g., *enn.* 5.1.3.22, where it is said that there is nothing between Intellect and Soul save the fact that they are different: οὐδὲν γὰρ μεταξὺ ἢ τὸ ἐτέροις εἶναι (LCL 444:20).

Asterius, Alexander, and Athanasius say that the Son is the indistinguishable image of God, they mean that, because of who the Son is, knowledge of the Son transmits real and accurate knowledge of the Father. According to Asterius, knowledge of the Son's essence, will, power, and glory is knowledge of the same realities of the Father, though they are distinct realities. It is only because the Son is the *indistinguishable* image of God that he can accurately and truthfully represent him in every way and thus transmit knowledge of him.

THE "CONSTITUTIVE" APPROACH: EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA AND ACACIUS OF CAESAREA

Eusebius of Caesarea and Acacius of Caesarea are witnesses to another Eusebian understanding of the Son as image of God, which I call the "constitutive" approach. They both assert that the nature of the Son as image consists in being like the Father. Yet while Eusebius uses the scriptural notion of "the form of God" (Phil 2.6) to speak of the Son being constituted in likeness to the Father, Acacius employs the philosophical notion of the "impress" (ἐκμολγῆτον) to elucidate a similar approach to the question of the Son's status as image. Despite being supporters of Asterius, neither employs the concept of participation to develop their image theology.

According to Eusebius,⁴⁵ the Son's various titles are indicative of his divinity, such as "image of the invisible God" (Col 1.15), "the form of God" (Phil 2.6), and "radiance of the glory and the character of the subsistence of God" (Heb 1.3).⁴⁶ More specifically, these titles reveal his "relationship to the Father's divinity, a relationship which is proper to him alone, as if to an only-begotten Son."⁴⁷ Because of this relationship, the one God (Deut 4.35) is "made known through the Son as through an image. For that reason the Son is also God, because, in him as in an image, there is an

45. The image theology of Eusebius as found in his early apologetic works, *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica*, from ca. 312–318, is largely consistent with that of his later anti-Marcellan works, *Contra Marcellum* and *De ecclesiastica theologia*, from ca. 337–338. All four works will therefore be used in the exposition of his constitutive approach to the Son's status as image of God without discussion of any development of his ideas.

46. Eusebius, *e. th.* 1.20.67–71 and 1.20.94 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 92.7–93.6 and 97.25–29).

47. Eusebius, *e. th.* 1.9.3 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 67.23–25). Examples of this are found elsewhere when Eusebius states that, because the Son is the image of God, he possesses immortality (*e. th.* 1.20.33) and the first-person passages in the Old Testament, such as Ex 3.14, "I am who am," are valid of him as well as the Father (*e. th.* 2.20.15).

expression (μόρφωσιν) of the Father.”⁴⁸ Hence the Son is God only because he is the image of God, being called by this title only “because of his likeness to the first principle” (τῆς πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἕξομοιώσεως χάριν).⁴⁹

The Son is God “as an image of God, and an image not as in lifeless matter but as in a living son, who has also, with the greatest degree of exactness possible (ἀκριβέστατα), been made like the archetypal divinity of the Father.”⁵⁰ Therefore, the Son is ontologically constituted so as to be “with the greatest degree of exactness possible” like the divinity of the Father, and, as the image of God, his being consists in likeness to the archetype, the Father. Using an analogy, Eusebius says that, as radiance is perfectly light because it “preserves in all respects its likeness to its prototype,” so too the Son, “the radiance of the eternal light” (Wis 7.26), is in every way like the Father,⁵¹ making him thus “the proper representation” (οἰκείον παράδειγμα) of the Father.⁵² In the Word “the likeness to the Father even in all respects [is] preserved, in virtue, in power, in essence (οὐσία), in the number of the Monad and the Henad.”⁵³ In a fine summarizing passage, Eusebius says that the Son

completely preserves the living and vivid spiritual image of the one God, being made in all things like the Father, and bearing the likeness of his actual divinity. Thus he is the only Son and the only image of God, ended

48. Eusebius, *e. th.* 1.20.73–74 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 93.16–18). Cf. Eusebius, *d. e.* 5.4: the Son is the image of God, “not being God in himself, nor existing apart from the Father who gives him divinity, not called God apart from the Father, but altogether being, living and existing as God, through the presence of the Father in him, and existing alongside the Father (συνὼν τε τῷ πατρὶ), and constituted God from him and through him, and holding his being as well as his divinity not from himself but from the Father” (trans. [modified] W. J. Ferrar, *Eusebius: The Proof of the Gospel* [London: S.P.C.K., 1920; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001], 245).

49. Eusebius, *d. e.* 4.2. Eusebius says that the Father is the only true God, but the Son is also true God, in the sense that he “possesses this as in an image” (*e. th.* 2.23.2). While the Father is properly the *only* true God because he is the archetype of the image, the Son is true God because he is the image of God.

50. Eusebius, *e. th.* 2.17.3 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 120.30–33).

51. Eusebius, *d. e.* 4.3 (trans. Ferrar, *Proof of the Gospel*, 167).

52. Eusebius, *d. e.* 4.3. Eusebius clarifies and nuances how he understands the Son’s likeness to the Father through the use of three analogies: the Father is related to the Son as light is to its radiance (*d. e.* 4.3), as a fragrance is to the substance emitting it (*d. e.* 4.3), and as the official image of king is to the king (*d. e.* 5.4).

53. Eusebius, *d. e.* 4.6 (trans. [modified] Ferrar, *Proof of the Gospel*, 173). What Eusebius means by likeness “in the number of Monad and the Henad” is that, in order for the Son to be truly like the Father, he has to be one like the Father is one. Therefore, there can only be one image of God. Cf. *d. e.* 4.3.

with the powers of the Father's unbegotten and eternal essence according to the example of likeness, and fashioned to the utmost accuracy of likeness (εἰς τὸ ἔτι ἀκριβὲς ὁμοιώσεως ἀπειργασμένον) by the Father himself.⁵⁴

According to Eusebius, then, it is because the Son's essence is established as the manifestation of the Father's qualities, activity, essence, form, and divinity that he is the image of God and thus bears the utmost accuracy of likeness to the Father in his own essence, not because he participates in these attributes of the Father through grace.

So, then, the Son of God is not Son and God in mere name, but "he is truly Son and God . . . because he alone who was begotten from the Father himself was in the *form of God* [Phil 2.6] and was *the image of the invisible God and firstborn of all creation* [Col 1.15]."⁵⁵ This scriptural notion of the "form of God" (μορφή θεοῦ) is at the core of the image theology of Eusebius.⁵⁶ Through this notion he specifies how the Son can be an image in contradistinction to all other images. Eusebius says that the Son is

a kind of living image of the living God, in a mode once more that is beyond our words and reasoning, and existing in itself immaterially and unembodied, and unmixed with anything opposite to itself, but not such an image as we connote by the term, whose essential substrate (τὸ κατ' οὐσίαν ὑποκειμένον) is different from its form (τὸ εἶδος), but one which is itself, as a whole, form (ὅλον αὐτὸ εἶδος ὄν) and is made like the self-subsistent Father (αὐτοουσίᾳ τῷ πατρὶ ἁφομοιούμενος).⁵⁷

Thus, the existence of the Son as the living image of the living God is constituted by his being wholly the "form" of God, which guarantees likeness in his own essence to the Father. Whether or not Eusebius is influenced by Plotinus here,⁵⁸ he is saying that the Son as the image of God is the same

54. Eusebius, *d. e.* 5.4 (trans. [modified] Ferrar, *Proof of the Gospel*, 246). Cf. Eusebius, *Marcell.* 1.4.35 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 25.15–17): "And Marcellus has said these things completely overlooking and not giving a thought to the fact that the Son was also able at some point to have been called the living image of his own Father, after which he is as similar to the Father as possible (ὁμοιότατος)."

55. Eusebius, *e. th.* 1.10.5 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 69.11–17).

56. While Eusebius gave precedence to the scriptural term μορφή, he saw εἶδος and σχῆμα as its equivalents; see *d. e.* 4.5.12, 5.9.7; *l.C.* 12.16; and *e. th.* 1.12.4; the same holds true for Plotinus, e.g., *enn.* 6.9.1.22.

57. Eusebius, *d. e.* 5.1 (trans. [modified] Ferrar, *Proof of the Gospel*, 234).

58. The phrase ὅλον αὐτὸ εἶδος ὄν bears a striking resemblance to Plotinus, *enn.* 5.9.6.17–18: αὐτὸς δὲ εἶδος ἐστὶ τὸ ὅλον καὶ λόγος ὁ αὐτὸς ὄν ψυχῆς εἶδει τῷ γεννῶντι, ἢ ἐστὶν ἴνδαλμα ψυχῆς ἄλλης κρείττονος, "it is itself, as a whole, form and a formative principle which is the same as the form of the soul which produced it, which is the

form as God and wholly the form of God, without there being any additional “matter,” or in Eusebius’s terminology, “substrate,” which differs from the form of God (as if the essential substrate of the Son received or participated in the form of God), making it thus foreign to the Father. Hence the Son’s essence is not different from his form; rather, they are identical. It is the essence of the Son to be the form of God. Therefore, because he is wholly the form of God, the Son is the image of the divine archetype, the Father, and thus it is his nature to be like the Father.

The likeness of the Son to the Father is such that it enables the Son to be the mediator of the Father to humanity.⁵⁹ Hence Eusebius locates the image’s revelatory capacity in the claim that the nature of the Son has been constituted by God as wholly the form of God so as to exhibit “the utmost accuracy of likeness” to the Father. Constituted as the image of God, therefore, the Son mediates knowledge of the Father.⁶⁰ Concerning how the Son as the invisible image of God mediates an interior knowledge of God the Father, Eusebius writes:

So then *he who has seen him has seen the Father* [John 14.9], because he and no one else is *the image of the invisible God* [Col 1.15] and *the radiance of the glory of God and the character of his subsistence* [Heb 1.3], and exists *in the form of God* [Phil 2.6] according to the apostolic teachings. For just as the one who has seen the king’s image which is made exactly like him, receiving impressions from the lines of the form through the drawing, imagines the king, in the same way, or rather in a way surpassing all reason and beyond any example, the one who with a

likeness of another better soul” (trans. [slightly modified] Armstrong, LCL 444:303). Plotinus is here using the analogy of the powers in seeds to describe how the Intellect (νοῦς) is the real beings (τὰ ὄντα) in such a way that the Intellect possesses itself and is one with the real beings (ὡς αὐτὸν ἔχων καὶ ἐν ὧν αὐτοῖς). Since the power in a seed contains as a unified whole the various principles of the diverse parts into which the seed develops, Plotinus says that the seed’s power is wholly its form, which is the same form as the nature which produced it. In other words, the seed’s power is wholly form as opposed to it being form plus matter. So, just as Intellect is one with and the same as the real beings, the Son as image of God is one with and the same as the form of God, and for this reason he is “made like” the Father, whose form he is.

59. Eusebius, *p. e.* 7.15; cf. *d. e.* 4.6.

60. Eusebius rejected Marcellus’s claim that no one is able to know God or his Word except through the incarnate Word since the Old Testament prophets clearly had knowledge of God and the Word prior to the incarnation (Eusebius, *e. th.* 2.25.4–5 [ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 136.17–29]). Thus, while Eusebius certainly does not exclude the incarnate Word’s mediatorial role, his notion of the mediation of the knowledge of God made possible by Son’s existence as the image of God is not so temporally bound as that of Marcellus.

clear mind and the eyes of the soul purified and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and having gazed intently upon the greatness of the power of the only-begotten Son and Lord, and having reflected on how *in him dwells the whole fullness of the Father's divinity* [Col 2.9] and how *all things were made through him* [John 1.3] and how *in him all things were created, those in heaven and those on earth, those visible and invisible* [Col 1.16], and having considered how the Father begot him alone as only-begotten Son, who is made like him in all respects, by that power he shall also see the Father himself through the Son, seen as he is by those purified in their mind, concerning whom it was said, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* [Matt 5.8].⁶¹

Though the Son is of a different essence than the Father, the Son's essence is derived from the Father to be like the Father in all respects and thus to manifest all the divine qualities and attributes. Because the Son bears the utmost accuracy of likeness to the Father in his own essence, knowledge of the Son transmits knowledge of the Father for those purified in the eye of their mind.

Though Eusebius implicitly defended Asterius against Marcellus,⁶² he advocates a "constitutive" approach to the question of how the Son is the image of God, unlike the "participative" approach of Asterius. Only once does Eusebius speak of the Son's status as image of God in terms of participation:

[The Son] has a claim upon a divinity that he does not possess all by himself and that is not distinct from that of the Father; nor it is one without source and unbegotten, nor some foreign one that comes from some other place, nor one different from that of the Father, but it is filled from that very participation (μετουσία) in the Father, just as from a fountain poured upon him. For the great apostle teaches that *in him alone all the fullness of the Father's divinity* indwells [Col 1.19; 2.9]. For this reason, it is proclaimed in the church of God that God is one, *and there is no other except him* [Deut 4.35]. So, then, there is one only-begotten Son of God, the image of the Father's divinity, and on account this, God.⁶³

61. Eusebius, *e. th.* 3.21.1 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 181.13–30).

62. Around 327, Asterius wrote a letter in defense of the theological language used in Eusebius of Nicomedia's letter to Paulinus of Tyre (written ca. 323). In 336, Marcellus of Ancyra wrote a book against several Eusebians, but principally Asterius and his defense of Eusebius of Nicomedia. Our extant fragments of Marcellus are derived from this work. In 337–38, Eusebius of Caesarea wrote two works against Marcellus, *Marcell.* and *e. th.*, which were thus implicitly in defense of Asterius.

63. Eusebius, *e. th.* 1.2.1 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 63.17–30). Eusebius elsewhere uses the terms μετουσία (*e. th.*

Hence while both Asterius and Eusebius see the Son as the image of God, Asterius holds that it is the nature of the Son to participate in the Father's attributes and activities, and Eusebius that it is the nature of the Son to be exactly like the Father in his attributes and activities. Furthermore, Eusebius nowhere defends the key Asterian term ἀπαράλλακτος.⁶⁴ Eusebius thus uses the scriptural notion of "the form of God" (Phil 2.6) to develop a notion of the Son as the image of God. He speaks of the Son's unique "relationship (σχέσις) to the Father's divinity,"⁶⁵ such that he has an ontological constitution that makes him "with the greatest degree of exactness possible" like the archetypal divinity of the Father, and thus the image of God.⁶⁶ He also stresses that the Son is the living image of the living God.⁶⁷ Therefore, even though he is implicitly defending Asterius through his refutation of Marcellus, Eusebius appears not to have thought it necessary to defend Asterius's "participative" understanding of the Son as image of God. Eusebius's defense of Asterius does not imply agreement with all points of his teaching, as he interpreted the image language which Asterius affirmed in a different way and altogether avoided defending the key Asterian phrase "indistinguishable image."

When Eusebius of Caesarea died in May of 339, he was succeeded as bishop by his disciple Acacius. Some fragments of his are extant, refuting Marcellus's notion of the image of God.⁶⁸ Based on their content, Joseph Lienhard has suggested that they come from a speech by Acacius shortly before, or even perhaps at, the Dedication Council held in Antioch

2.17.6 and 3.18.4; ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 121.15 and 179.36), μετοχή (*e. th.* 1.20.34, 1.20.84, 3.18.4; ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 86.31, 96.21, 179.35), and μετέχω (*Marcell.* 1.1.13, 2.2.20 and *e. th.* 1.13.1, 3.12.5; ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 4.1–2, 38.29 and 73.5, 168.34) in speaking of human realities, or when citing or explaining Marcellus.

64. In *e. th.* 2.9.3, Eusebius says that the divine essence "always exists indistinguishably in the same manner" (εἶναι ἀπαράλλακτος αἰεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ; ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 108.32–33). This is his only use of ἀπαράλλακτος in both *Marcell.* and *e. th.*

65. Eusebius, *e. th.* 1.9.3 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 67.23–25).

66. Eusebius, *e. th.* 2.17.3 (ed. Hansen and Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke, Band IV: Gegen Marcell.*, 120.30–33).

67. Eusebius, *d. e.* 5.1 and 5.4; *e. th.* 2.17.3 (all cited above). The emphasis on the Son as the living image of the living God is also found in Acacius.

68. These are preserved in Epiphanius, *pan.* 72.6–10 (K. Holl and J. Dümmer, ed., *Epiphanius III. Panarion haer.* 65–80. *De fide*, GCS, 2nd ed. [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985], 260–64).

in 341.⁶⁹ Athanasius himself testifies to Acacius's prominent role at the Dedication Council and his promotion there of a particular teaching on how the Son is the image of God.⁷⁰ And so, the texts of Acacius *contra Marcellum* constitute an important witness to the evolving theology of the Eusebians as their leadership passed to a new generation. Like Eusebius, he promotes a "constitutive" approach to the image of God, developing his image theology not on the basis of the scriptural notion of "the form of God" as Eusebius did, but on the philosophical notion of the "impress" (ἐκμωγεῖον).

Acacius's fragments *contra Marcellum* could just as easily be called *pro Asterio*, for his overriding concern is to defend the formula of Asterius, that the Son is "the indistinguishable image of the essence and will and power and glory" of God the Father.⁷¹ Acacius argues that Marcellus's understanding of images is valid for lifeless, material images, but that the Son is not to be understood as such an image.⁷² The Son is not a lifeless (ἄζωον),⁷³ inert (ἄψυχον),⁷⁴ motionless (ἀκίνητον),⁷⁵ or dead (νεκράν)⁷⁶ image of God, but rather the living image of the living God.⁷⁷ If the image of God were lifeless, it would be external to God. The image of God must therefore be a living image of a living God.⁷⁸

According to Acacius, Asterius means that the Son is the "the distinct and clear impress (τὸ ἐκτυπον καὶ τρᾶνές ἐκμωγεῖον) of God's essence, and

69. Joseph T. Lienhard, "Acacius of Caesarea: *Contra Marcellum*. Historical and Theological Considerations." *Cristianesimo nella storia* 10 (1989): 1–22, at 8; idem, "Acacius of Caesarea's *Contra Marcellum*: Its Place in Theology and Controversy," in *SP* 19 (ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 185–88, at 188; idem, *Contra Marcellum. Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology*, 185–86.

70. Athanasius, *syn.* 36–37.

71. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 6.2 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 260); cf. Asterius, *Frag.* 10.

72. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 7.2–3, 7.8, 7.10, 9.7 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 261.10–21, 262.9–12, 262.18–24, 264.4–7).

73. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 7.2–3, cf. 9.4 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 261.11 and 17, cf. 263.19–22).

74. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 7.3, 7.8, 10.3 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 261.17, 262.11, 264.30).

75. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 7.3, 10.3 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 261.16, 264.30).

76. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 7.8 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 262.11).

77. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 7.3, 9.3, 9.8 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 261.18–19, 263.15–16, 263.10).

78. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 7.3 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 261.14–21).

so forth.”⁷⁹ The term “impress” (ἐκμαγεῖον) denotes the kind of image that is an exact representation of its archetype.⁸⁰ The Son is “the impress of the living image of the begetter,”⁸¹ and therefore “the divinity and all activity of the image is expressly and exactly like the divinity and all the activity of the Father.”⁸² In other words, there is a likeness in divine activity and divine qualities: “the Father’s attributes inhere in the Son, and that which is conceived of the Father is impressed in or given to the Son, and is not different from him.”⁸³ It is as if it were the essence of the Son to be the attributes of the Father, which is Acacius’s way of maintaining difference in essence between the Father and the Son, while likeness in qualities and operation: the living Word

is informed with the Father’s attributes, and not as though he were different, with attributes different from the form, but his attributes inhere in his being, and his being in his attributes. But because the image . . . bears in itself the attributes of the archetype, it displays difference, but difference as though it were likeness. For as the image of the invisible God, which it is, this image is not an image of itself, but an image of another.⁸⁴

79. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 6.3 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 260.10–12; trans. Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Books II and II* [Leiden: Brill, 1994], 427).

80. The term ἐκμαγεῖον has a long philosophical pedigree. It appears in Eusebius’s *p. e.* only in citations from Hellenistic philosophers. Generally, an ἐκμαγεῖον is something which receives an impression, such as wax (Plato, *Tht.* 191c), or a mould or impress (Plato, *Tht.* 194de); the term was used philosophically for matter conceived of as that which is available for receiving impressions (Plato, *Tim.* 50c; Aristotle, *Met.* 988a1; Plutarch, *De E* 392D6). In his use of this term, Acacius seems to have been most influenced by Philo, who uses the term to denote the kind of image that is an exact, perfectly accurate, and very faithful representation of the archetype (*Opif.* 71.10; *Her.* 58.1; *Mut.* 224.1; *Aet.* 16.1). Philo most typically uses this term for the human mind or soul, which he conceives as the most faithful reproduction of the divine image of God spoken about by Moses in Genesis (*Her.* 231.2; *Opif.* 146.3; *Deus* 43.3; *Mut.* 224.1; *Spec.* 3.84.1; *Aet.* 16.1).

81. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 9.3: ζῶντος εἰκόνας ἐκμαγεῖον οὖσαν τοῦ γεγεννηκότος (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 263.16; trans. [modified] Williams, *Panarion*, 429).

82. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 7.4: ὅτι ἐκτυπῶς καὶ ἀκριβῶς ὁμοιωμένην πρὸς πατρικὴν ἔχει καὶ θεότητα καὶ πᾶσαν ἐνέργειαν (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 261.22–23; trans. Williams, *Panarion*, 428).

83. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 9.6: τοὺς πατρικοὺς χαρακτήρας ἐνεῖναι λέγει τῷ υἱῷ καὶ τὰ ἐπινοούμενα τοῦ πατρὸς τετυπῶσθαι ἢ δεδόσθαι τῷ υἱῷ, οὐκ ἄλλα παρ’ αὐτὸν ὄντα (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 264.2–4; trans. Williams, *Panarion*, 430).

84. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 10.1–2: ἀλλὰ πατρικοῖς χαρακτήρσι μεμόρφωται, οὐχ ὡς ἕτερος αὐτὸς ὢν, ἐτέρους δὲ τοὺς χαρακτήρας τῆς μορφῆς ἔχων, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτοῦ οἱ χαρακτήρες εἰσι καὶ ἐν τοῖς χαρακτήρσι τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῦ. ἢ δὲ εἰκόν, . . . τοῦ πρωτο-

Acacius clearly lacks a precise way of affirming both plurality and unity in God, but he gets the point across: it is the nature of the Son to be like the Father, though he is different in essence. As “an image’s imitation and likeness consists in being an exact impress,”⁸⁵ Acacius sees such an understanding of the Son as image of God behind Asterius’s notion of the indistinguishable image:

In motion, activity, power, will and glory, then, the Son is the image of the Father, a living image of a living God—not an inert or motionless image, which has its existence in something else and is drawn on something else, but is not in motion in and through itself. And it is an indistinguishable image, though the indistinguishability makes it, not the Father, but a Son in the exact likeness of the Father.⁸⁶

Hence if the Son is “the living image of an essence, he can be, and is, essence itself. And thus we call the image of an essence the essence, because of its most faithful reproduction of its life and activity.”⁸⁷ And so, the Son is truly “the indistinguishable image of the essence and will and power and glory” of God the Father.⁸⁸

In his defense of Asterius against Marcellus, Acacius places the stress on the Son being a living image of the living God, echoing Eusebius. But Acacius does not say that the Son is all these divine qualities through participation; rather, it is the essence of the Son to be the Father’s divine characteristics. With statements such as that the Son as the Father’s image “bears in itself the attributes of the archetype, it displays difference, but

τύπου ἐν ἑαυτῇ τοὺς χαρακτηῖρας φέρουσα, τὴν ἑτερότητα παρίστησιν, ἑτερότητα δὲ ὡς ὁμοιότητα. οὐχ ἑαυτῆς γάρ, ἑτέρου δὲ τινος εἰκὼν ἐστὶν οὗτος, ὢν, ὃ ἔστιν, εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 264.21–28; trans. [modified] Williams, *Panarion*, 430).

85. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 9.9: εἰκονικῆς ἐστὶ μίμησεως καὶ ὁμοιώσεως ἀκριβὲς ἐκμαγεῖον (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 264.17–18; trans. mine).

86. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 10.3: εἰκὼν οὖν τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ υἱός, ζῶσα ζώντος, ἐν κινήσει καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ, δυνάμει τε καὶ βουλήνῃ καὶ δόξῃ, οὐκ ἄψυχος, οὐδὲ ἀκίνητος, ἐν ἑτέρῳ μὲν τὸ εἶναι ἔχουσα καὶ γραφομένη, αὐτὴ δὲ ἐν ἑαυτῇ καὶ δι’ ἑαυτῆς ἐν κινήσει μὴ οὐσα. καὶ εἰκὼν ἐστὶν ἀπαράλλακτος, οὐ τῆς ἀπαράλλαξις πατέρα ποιούσης, ἀλλ’ υἱὸν ἀπηκριβωμένον (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 264.28–33; trans. [modified] Williams, *Panarion*, 430).

87. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 9.8: καθ’ ἡμᾶς γὰρ εἰ οὐσίας ἐστὶν εἰκὼν ζῶσα, αὐτοουσία δύναται εἶναι καὶ ἔστι. καὶ οὕτως οὐσίας οὐσίαν εἰκόνα λέγομεν διὰ μίμησιν ὁμοιοτάτην ζωῆς τε καὶ ἐνεργείας (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 264.10–12; trans. [modified] Williams, *Panarion*, 430).

88. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 6.2 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 260); cf. Asterius, *Frag.* 10.

difference as though it were likeness,”⁸⁹ Acacius seems to mean that the Son’s status as the image of God means that likeness to the Father is constitutive of his being.⁹⁰ Though both Eusebius and Acacius held to the notion that it is the essence of the Son to be constituted in likeness to the Father, Acacius shows himself a staunch defender of the Asterian term ἀπαράλλακτος, which Eusebius did not support. Acacius, however, divorces ἀπαράλλακτος from Asterius’s “participative” model for the Son as image of God and re-interprets it in the context of a “constitutive” approach to image theology. Furthermore, even though Acacius shares this “constitutive” approach with Eusebius, his basis for it differs: Eusebius employs on the scriptural notion of the “form of God” (Phil 2:6), while Acacius on the philosophical notion of the impress (ἐκμαγεῖον). The fact that Acacius does not cite Phil 2.6 and mentions the μορφή of the Father only once (10.1, cited above) indicates that the notion of the “form of God” was not central to the explication of his image theology as was ἐκμαγεῖον. Nonetheless, as *fr. Marcell.* 10.1 shows, Acacius was in agreement with Eusebius’s “form of God” basis for his constitutive approach. Acacius preferred a different basis for the same approach. Hence there was significant doctrinal plurality between Eusebius and Acacius with regard to the basis of their shared “constitutive” approach to how the Son was the image of God.

CONCLUSION

Consideration of the ways in which the Son was understood as the image of God among Eusebians in the years leading up to the Dedication Council in 341 shows that these theologians should not be understood as a monolithic school of thought. While Arius and Asterius advocated a “participative” understanding of the Son as image of God, Eusebius and Acacius championed a “constitutive” model. Even here we find further diversity: even though Eusebius and Acacius share the “constitutive” approach, their basis for it differs. Eusebius bases his image theology on the scriptural notion of the “form of God” (Phil 2.6), while Acacius bases his on the philosophical notion of the impress (ἐκμαγεῖον).⁹¹ While Asterius and

89. Acacius, *fr. Marcell.* 10.2 (ed. Holl and Dümmer, *Panarion haer.*, 264.26–27; trans. [modified] Williams, *Panarion*, 430).

90. See Lienhard, “Acacius of Caesarea’s *Contra Marcellum*: Its Place in Theology and Controversy,” 187.

91. The term ἐκμαγεῖον appears in Eusebius three times but only in citations of Plutarch; see *p. e.* 11.11.7, 11.23.4, and 15.44.4. Acacius does not cite Phil 2.6, and his single mention the μορφή of the Father (10.1, cited above) demonstrates that the

Acacius advocated the term “indistinguishable” for describing the image, Eusebius avoided the term. Eusebius and Acacius emphasized that the Son was a living image, whereas this was not a concern for Arius and Asterius. This last affirmation seems to have been made in response to Marcellus who accused Asterius of applying a material understanding of image to the Son. The stress on the Son as a living image therefore shows that Eusebian theology continued to develop in response to the challenge of Marcellus. Even though Arius, Asterius, Eusebius, and Acacius did not hold to one image theology, they were allied as Eusebians because of other theological, social, and political sympathies.

This last sentence brings us to the broader implications of this doctrinal study. The diverse accounts of image theology among Eusebians indicates that ecclesiastical parties during the fourth century were not constituted by a common set of theological beliefs understood in the same way. Rather, members of a party seem to have shared sufficient basic doctrinal principles and reverence for particular terminologies to enable an ongoing conversation.⁹² As the Second Creed of Antioch shows, members of a party could agree on particular doctrinal language while disagreeing on the theological understanding of that language. At least in the early stage of these controversies, one of the main cohesive factors among members of a theological alliance was the existence of common enemies: Arius and Asterius wrote against the theology of the Alexandrian bishops Alexander and Athanasius, and Eusebius and Acacius against Marcellus, who in the late 330s was becoming Athanasius’s chief ally. In fact most extant Eusebian writing was generated in defense of fellow Eusebians against these shared enemies. Members of this party or tradition were able to defend one another even while disagreeing over the interpretation of some fundamental shared terminologies. This is particularly clear in the case of Acacius: he defended the key Asterian term ἀπαράλλακτος while rejecting Asterius’s participative account of the term. Indeed, we can probably argue that a central feature of any defense of another member of the alliance was the *correction* of the insufficient views of those being defended. Recall that ca. 327 Asterius defended the theological language used in Eusebius of Nicomedia’s letter to Paulinus of Tyre, and he did so by making

notion of the “form of God” did not play a major role in his image theology as was the case for Eusebius.

92. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 52–61, considers the theological principle which Eusebians held in common to be that there was one unbegotten and hence that the Son was in some way created.

his archaic formulations acceptable to contemporary audiences; one can interpret the anti-Marcellan works of Eusebius of Caesarea and Acacius in the same way.⁹³

In these features ecclesiastical parties of the early fourth century bear striking resemblance to the philosophical schools of antiquity in which the sharing of authorities and basic principles fostered the defense of one school against the critiques of another and yet was not thought to preclude lively debates over doctrine within the school and the sustained critique and refutation of fellow school members by offering alternative interpretations of the same shared authorities and principles.⁹⁴ Hence we can say that ecclesiastical parties were defined mainly by expectations and the activity of mutual defense and correction, by common opposition to enemies considered as such for reasons not necessarily theological,⁹⁵ and by a minimal set of shared doctrinal principles and formulas. The Eusebians were far more concerned to defend each other against their common enemies than to formulate a standard interpretation of doctrine to which all members of the party would agree.

The foregoing study also helps us to understand a little more about the nature of doctrinal development in the fourth century. I have already noted how the “constitutive” image theologies of Eusebius and Acacius developed in an anti-Marcellan context. But it also needs to be noted that their rejection of “participation” language displays a marked similarity to arguments found in Athanasius, supposedly one of their key opponents.

93. See n. 62 above.

94. For example, much Stoic thought developed in response to Academic critiques, as described earlier in this paper. This model of a philosophical school was operative most clearly among the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Platonists of all periods, particularly the Neoplatonists. Such is the notion of philosophical school underlying John Dillon’s *The Middle Platonists*, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); see his comments on the “coherence” of the Middle Platonist tradition at xiv–xv and 10–11. Also see idem, “Self-Definition in Later Platonism,” in Ben E. Meyer and E. P. Sanders, ed., *Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 60–75 and 197–99, and Garth Fowden, “The Platonist Philosopher and his Circle in Late Antiquity,” *ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ* 7 (1977): 359–82. For a description of philosophical schools as institutions in the Hellenistic period, see Tiziano Dorandi, “Organization and Structure of the Philosophical Schools,” in K. Algra et al., ed., *Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, 55–62. Ecclesiastical parties of the fourth century have little in common with this institutional model of a philosophical school described in Dorandi’s essay.

95. For example, many bishops were opposed to Athanasius in the 330s and 340s because of his alleged criminal misconduct and abuse of powers, not because of his theological views. Marcellus was opposed more specifically for his aberrant theology.

Athanasius explicitly condemned the validity of the participative notion of the Son as the image of God favored by Arius and Asterius.⁹⁶ There are other similarities between Athanasius in *Ar.* and Eusebius that warrant further study,⁹⁷ but even from this one example we can see that these two bishops, members of different ecclesiastical parties, more or less shared a basic approach to understanding the Son as image of God. Noting the presence of such similarities—and perhaps borrowings—helps us to see how new doctrinal solutions were able to attract those who had previously seemed implacable enemies. Most importantly, some theological heirs of the Eusebians were able to come to agreement with some Athanasians after the dissemination of the *Tome to the People of Antioch* in the early 360s precisely because earlier shared theologies had paved the way. This same investigation also helps us to understand the emergence of different movements from within the Eusebian tradition: the emergence of the Heteroousians and their eventual split from the Homoians and Homoiousians is a consequence of the Eusebian party being no longer able to tolerate divergent theologies regarding the Son's *ousia*. It may be the case that the Heteroousians were more influenced by the non-Nicene theology of Arius and Asterius and the theological tradition that developed from them than by that of Eusebius and Acacius.⁹⁸ One may even understand Eusebius and Acacius as critiquing the non-Nicene theology of Arius and Asterius; the Heteroousians then chose to defend the earlier theology of Arius and Asterius not by correcting it in the manner of Eusebius and Acacius, but by correcting it again—emphasizing certain aspects and bringing what remained to its logical conclusions.

Finally, this study shows how important close attention to doctrinal issues is for understanding the complex social and political structure of the fourth-century conflicts, and vice versa. Exploration of the doctrinal

96. Athanasius, *gent.* 46 (ed. Thomson, *Athanasius*, 130). In a somewhat less than logically satisfying treatment of the subject of participation (*Ar.* 1.16; ed. Tetz, *Athanasius Werke I/1*, 125–26; trans. [modified] NPNF II, 4.315), Athanasius begins by repeating his mantra that the Son is “what is from the essence of the Father and proper to him.” He continues that for the Father to be participated in (μετέχεσθαι) means nothing other than he begets. “The Son himself participates in (μετέχει) nothing, but what is participated from (τὸ μετεχόμενον) the Father is the Son.” The rest of creation partakes of the Son and thus of God.

97. For example, their use of Prov 8.30 to demonstrate the distinct existence of the Son (*Ar.* 1.20; 2.82; *e. th.* 3.3.57). Furthermore, Athanasius's image theology has much in common with the “constitutive” approach.

98. Of the four figures studied, Acacius of Caesarea alone lived long enough to emerge as explicitly anti-Heteroousian.

plurality among Eusebians both sheds new light on the nature of ecclesiastical parties in the fourth century, and highlights the essential role of social and political factors in the formation of theological parties. Hence attention to doctrinal issues illuminates our understanding of the nature of social and political structures of the fourth-century debate, and attention to the latter informs our understanding of the former.

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