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Dmitri Birjukov
Saint Petersburg

**STRATEGIES OF NAMING
IN THE POLEMICS BETWEEN EUNOMIUS
AND BASIL OF CAESAREA
IN THE CONTEXT
OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION
OF ANTIQUITY**

Eunomius, a representative of the Neo-Arian heretical party and its second leader (after his teacher Aetius), expounded his theory in his *Apology*, written in 359. Eunomius' doctrine implies the opposition of God as the highest principle that has no prior cause for existing, and Christ, God's product — the very fact of Christ being derived and preconditioned excludes regarding his existence to be of the same kind as that of his initial cause.¹ Since Christ was born, he had a cause of his existence, therefore, according to Eunomius, Christ cannot be called God according to his essence; his essence is creation.² Similarly, Christ's essence is expressed with the notion "offspring" (γέννημα),³ while God's essence is denoted as "unbegotten" (ἀγέννητος).⁴

In general, Eunomius' words to denote essence differ from the terms that result from abstracting efforts of the human mind to form the image of an object's essence; Eunomius called these latter words κατ' ἐπίνοιαν and thought they might be ignored.⁵ Eunomius' doctrine was opposed by Basil of Caesarea who presented his view in the treatise *Contra Eunomium* (early 360s), where he rejected Eunomius' position expounded in the *Apology*. Basil of Caesarea maintained that words do not denote any essence, but only features of what is denoted, since essence is neither comprehensible, nor denotable by words.

(1) Eunomius' *Apologia*, VII is quoted throughout the article as cited in the critical edition: R. VAGGIONE (ed. and trans.), Eunomius. *The Extant Works* (Oxford, 1987).

(2) *Apol.*, XII.

(3) *Apol.*, XII, 6–7.

(4) *Apol.*, VII, 11.

(5) *Apol.*, VIII.

And the way we understand God and express our understanding is only κατ' ἐπίνοιαν⁶. In his *Apology for the Apology* (the late 380s), written in response to *Contra Eunomium* of Basil of Caesarea, Eunomius advanced more arguments for his theory of ἐπίνοια⁷ and developed a concept of human language as granted by God.⁸

Following the article by J. Daniélou,⁹ the idea that Eunomius' theory of language was in the line of Neoplatonic views on language became prominent in scholarly circles. Moreover, Daniélou regarded Eunomius' doctrine, in general, as an embodiment of Neoplatonic influence on Christianity with its hierarchical type of ontology which implied the descending of unity to multiplicity, and with its "mystical" theory of words, according to which things were named by God. In Daniélou's opinion, the name "Unbegotten," attributed to God by Eunomius, was one of those God-given names. Addressing Proclus' treatment of Plato's *Cratylus*, Daniélou found parallels between Eunomius and Proclus in the way they distinguished names granted by God and names given by human beings. This led Daniélou to suppose a common source for both doctrines and to suggest that this source might have been Nestorius, father of the Neoplatonist Plutarchus of Athens. Finally, Daniélou came to a connection between Eunomius' teaching of language and Iamblichus' tradition of Neoplatonic exegesis of the *Cratylus* (though, such a tradition has not been reliably established for Iamblichus' school). It is evident that Daniélou's opinion was conditioned by Gregory of Nyssa's polemic judgment that Eunomius' position had been inspired by Plato's *Cratylus*.¹⁰

Daniélou's concept, as it were, was subject to criticism. Thus, L. Wickham stated it was wrong to put Eunomius' teaching in terms of a Neoplatonic system. He pointed out that the Neoplatonic principle of emanation was absent in the hierarchical type of ontology of

(6) Basil of Caesaria followed Origen (*In Joannis*, 6, 19, 107 [BLANC]) in the tradition of using ἐπίνοια as referring to God. It seems that the latter was followed by Arius himself (in the *Thalia* apud Athanasius, *De synodis*, 15, 3, 26ff [OPITZ]). Thus, Eunomius and Aetius (*Syntagmation*, 12 [WICKHAM]) changed the traditional attitude toward using this notion as reference to God.

(7) Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, II, (P. SCHAFF (ed.), Gregory of Nyssa, *Dogmatic Treatises, etc.* (New York, 1892) 179.6–180.1).

(8) *Ibid.*, II, 408–409, 417, etc.

(9) J. DANIELOU, Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néoplatonicienne du Cratyle, *Revue des études grecques* 69 (1956) 412–432.

(10) Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, II, 404.

Eunomius. Eunomius' view on the nature of language, according to L. Wickham, was not influenced by Neoplatonic exegesis of the *Cratylus* but rather caused by his literal treatment of the Bible.¹¹ L. Wickham argued that the Anomeans widely used Stoic philosophical terms, particularly, in their theory of meaning, though the content of the Anomean teaching showed no influence of the Stoic philosophy.¹² Wickham's idea on the Stoic background of the Neo-Arian doctrine was followed by S. Hebruggen-Walter¹³ who paid attention to the fact that by dividing the notions of the Father and the Son, Eunomius distinguished the respective essence denoted with the notions using the Stoic term τὸ σημαίνόμενον, introducing thereby the principle of the "identity of meaning and essence." S. Hebruggen-Walter followed Wickham in pointing out the influence of the Stoic propositional logic on Aetius' argumentation.¹⁴

Later on, J. Rist¹⁵ rightly referred Eunomius' ἐπίνοια (interpreted as the mind's abstracting from an objectively given content of thought) to the Stoic doctrine, witnessed by Diogenes Laertes and Sextus Empiricus.¹⁶ This shows that Eunomius abundantly drew on the scholastic writings of his time, particularly, on the works of the grammarians. Concerning the "mystical" theory of language that claimed to be peculiar for Eunomius, J. Rist maintained that, on the one hand, it dated as far back as the time of the Chaldean Oracles, while, on the other hand, the "mystical" theory of God-given names in Iamblichus, and before him in Origen, was quite unlike what we see in Eunomius.¹⁷ Though J. Rist did not dwell on it, the fact is that both Origen's and Iamblichus' teachings on theurgical rites were characterized by a magical treat-

(11) L. WICKHAM, *The Syntagmation of Aetius the Anomean*, *JTS* 19 (1968) 558, n. 1.

(12) *Ibid.*, 561, n. 1.

(13) S. HEBBRÜGGEN-WALTER, *Augustine's Critique of Dialectic: Between Ambrose and the Arians*, in: K. POLLMAN, M. VESSEY (eds.), *Augustine and the Disciplines. From Classicium to Confessions* (Oxford, 2005) 184–205.

(14) *Ibid.*, 194–196.

(15) J. RIST, *Basil's "Neoplatonism": Its Background and Nature*, in: P. FEDWICK (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic* (Toronto, 1981) 188.

(16) See Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, II, 179.6–180.1. For passages from Stoics' works referred to as sources for Eunomius, see *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* II, 87; 89 [ARNIM]. A similar passage from Sextus: *Adversus mathematicos*, VIII, 58–60 [MUTSCHMANN, MAU].

(17) RIST, *Basil's "Neoplatonism" ...*, 186–187.

ment of words, and it was stated that words and objects are naturally, and not simply conventionally, connected from which the importance of the formal aspect of wording was inferred, whereas the meaning of a word or a name was neglected.¹⁸ Origen and Iamblichus emphasized the special importance of sacred language whose word meanings were of no practical importance. Therefore, Origen focused on Jewish names of God, denying any magical force for their translated versions.¹⁹ Iamblichus, too, persistently preferred the names of Oriental Gods.²⁰ However, we do not find anything similar in Eunomius' writings; on the contrary, for him significant words are "Unbegotten" (the true name of God) and "Offspring" (the true name of Christ), that is, semantically meaningful words, resulting from his idea of what was named; he verbosely expounded on why God is "Unbegotten" on the basis of his axiomatically established principles.

Danielou's concept was often accepted uncritically. Thus, M. Neamtu in his review of ideas, based on Basil's and Gregory's of Nyssa polemics with Eunomius, considered the meaning of a natural word (which is inferred from the idea of God-established language) characteristic for Eunomius' doctrine that "Unbegotten" was one of the God-given words.²¹ Because of this, M. Neamtu accused Eunomius of inconsistency in his explaining numerous words applied to God as

(18) More about Origen see in J. DILLON, *The Magical Power of Names in Origen and Late Platonism*, in: R. HANSON, H. CROUZEL (eds.), *Origeniana Tertia. The Third International Colloquium for Origen Studies* (Rome, 1985) 203–216. About Iamblichus, see G. SHAW, *Theurgy and the Soul. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995) 111–112.

(19) Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, V, 12, 45 [BORRET].

(20) "But, you say, 'the hearer looks to what is meant (τὰ σημανόμενα), so that the thought remaining the same is self-sufficient, whatever the name may be' [this must have been Porphyry's phrase. — D. B.]. But things are not the way you anticipated. For if names were laid down by convention (κατὰ συνθήκην), taking one name in place of another would make no difference. But if names depend on the nature (τῆ φύσει) of things, then the names that better resemble that nature are, for sure, also more pleasing to the gods" (Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, VII, 5, 257). Then Iamblichus says that divine names in the case of translation from sacral into other languages lose their force (τὴν γε δύναμιν).

(21) M. NEAMTU, *The Unfolding of the Truth. Eunomius of Cyzicus and Gregory of Nyssa in the Debate over Orthodoxy (360–381)*, *Archæus* 6 (2002) 93.

having one meaning, namely, "Unbegotten."²² Finally, Neamtu characterized Eunomius' doctrine as "vocalism" and pointed out its kinship with the theurgical jargon, popular among the political elite in Eunomius' time.²³

Another contemporary scholar, S. Douglas, tried to reconsider the debates between Eunomius and the Cappadocian fathers in terms of modern philosophy of language taking Eunomius' teaching of language in an utterly absolute way. Thus, he analyzed it through the opposition of words established naturally (*κατὰ φύσιν*) and words established conventionally (*κατὰ θέσιν*), though mistaking the latter method of word generation for generating them in an arbitrary way (that is, from his point of view, *κατὰ θέσιν* meant "conventionally"). Eunomius' attitude proves to correspond to the principle of *κατὰ φύσιν* as opposed to *κατὰ θέσιν*;²⁴ his theory is referred to by Douglas as the "Cratylian" type of name-giving interpretation. Eunomius' probe into the essence through its lexical identification shows that his system leaves no gap (*διάστημα*) between language, knowledge and speech.²⁵ The notion of *διάστημα* is considered by Douglas to be fundamental for understanding the controversy between the Cappadocian fathers and the Neo-Arians concerning the language of essence: Eunomius did not discern speech, denotation or object,²⁶ which shows that his system was within the "essence horizon;" the Cappadocian

(22) NEAMTU, *The Unfolding of the Truth...*, 94.

(23) *Ibid.*, 97. M. Neamtu seems to agree with P. Gregorius' view presented in the article: P. GREGORIUS, *Theurgic neo-Platonism and the Eunomius-Gregory Debate: An Examination of the Background*, in: L. MATEO-SECO, J. BASTERO (eds.), *"Contra Eunomium I" en la produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa* (Pamplona: Univ. De Navarra, 1988) 217–236. Coming from general considerations and, particularly, taking into account the derivative character of the trinity in Eunomius' as well as in Plotinus', Porphyry's and Iamblicus' interpretations, Gregorius persisted in referring to Eunomius as adherent to theurgical rites and even as obsessed by theurgy (p. 230), but he failed to give any support of this statement.

(24) S. DOUGLASS, *Theology of the Gap: Cappadocian Language Theory and the Trinitarian Controversy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005) 95.

(25) *Ibid.*, 98.

(26) In this point the position of S. Douglas is close to R. Vaggione, see R. VAGGIONE (ed. and trans.), *Eunomius, The Extant Works* (Oxford, 1987) 45, n. 4.

fathers, on the contrary, recognized a gap between the three aspects, which is attributed by Douglas to their deconstructive strategies.²⁷

Another scholar, R. Mortley, relies on a single well-known quotation to conclude that the Neo-Arian teaching descended not only from Neoplatonism, but had a bearing on Gnosticism as well.²⁸ Seeing no gap between linguistic and ontological aspects in wording, Eunomius ontologized language, which, according to R. Mortley, corresponds to the Gnostic trends expressed in the *Gospel of Truth* by the ontologized linguistic formula, “The name of the Father is the Son.”²⁹

We cannot agree with reducing Eunomius’ doctrine to the specific Late Antique teachings and with presenting the Neo-Arian–Cappadocian debate as an argument between the followers of classical teachings and followers of non-classical pagan doctrines, which often is the case. In our opinion, the objective of the Cappadocian fathers was more complicated and not easily solvable, since Eunomius’ discourse, as we believe, belonged to classical Greek learning.

The linguistic argumentation of Eunomius in his *Apology* is not the same as in the *Apology for the Apology*. Eunomius’ view in the *Apology* is based on the true classical language model (in Kopecek’s opinion, this model is derived from the Middle Platonist concept, while we will consider it below in terms of Stoic teaching). But it is in the *Apology for the Apology* that Eunomius first develops his argument from the “established words.” This gave rise to judgments that his language theory is magical when it is applied by extrapolation to the first *Apology*. But even accepting this logic does not enable us to identify a dominating magical or sufficient Neoplatonic effect on Eunomius’ theory of language,³⁰ because it is quite in accord with how language was interpreted by the representatives of various Greek schools (see below). The

(27) DOUGLASS, *Theology of the Gap...*, 106.

(28) R. MORTLEY, “The Name of the Father is the Son” (*Gospel of Truth* 38), in: R. T. WALLIS, J. BREGMAN (eds.), *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism. Papers presented at the International Conference on Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, March 18–21, 1984* (Albany, 1992) 241–242, 246–249.

(29) *Euangelium Veritatis*, 38 [MALININE].

(30) However, the *Apology for the Apology*, unlike the first *Apology*, shows the influence of the Neoplatonic doctrine (that of Iamblicus, to be precise) on Eunomius’ arguments against Basil of Caesarea’s statements. This influence is related to ontology (see D. БИРЮКОВ, *Neoplatonic Elements in Neo-Arian Doctrine* (Eunomius and Iamblichus), *Вестник молодых ученых* 4 (2006) 37–43).

only point where Eunomius' theory converges with that of Iamblichus, as a sort of identity between lexical and ontological aspects, is a passage mentioned in passing in the *Apology* and expanded in the *Apology for the Apology*, maintaining that all predicates applied to God's essence have the same meaning ("Unbegotten"), because otherwise God's essence would be compound.³¹ This implies that all predicates applied to the essence of God are essential. We find the same in Iamblichus' reasoning that no discourse of gods can contain essential properties accompanied with particularizing ones, for whatever is thought about gods must be thought of essence.³²

Let us first consider Eunomius' argumentation given in his *Apology*. As it was said concerning Eunomius' interpretation of the notion of ἐπίνοια, he rejected any abstracting efforts of the human mind to think about God appealing to any real intuitively given axiomatic fact. Generally, Eunomius' theological method was based on mental intuition concerning God and the Son, justified by reference to the Scripture. Calling God's essence "Unbegotten" was not achieved in any mystical way, which would not be significant, but by naming through intuitive insight into what the essence of God must be, that is, according to Eunomius, having no beginning being caused by itself. So, the essence of God is "Unbegotten,"³³ the same way as the name of the Son's essence is "produced."

Eunomius' reasoning "from names" is of interest to us:

As for showing that the Son too is one, being only-begotten, we could rid ourselves of all care and trouble in that regard simply by quoting the words of saints³⁴ in which they proclaim the Son to be both "offspring" and "thing made," since by distinguishing the names (τῶν ὀνομάτων) they show the difference in essence as well. ... Therefore, in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures we call the Son "offspring" (γέννημα). We do not understand his essence to be one thing and the meaning (τὸ σημαϊνόμενον) of the word which designates it to be something else. Rather, we take it that

(31) *Apol.*, XVII; Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, II, 523–531.

(32) Iamblicus, *De mysteriis*, 1, 4, 12–13.

(33) *Apol.*, VII, 1–3, 10–11. The fact that "Unbegotten" was treated by Eunomius as the essential quality of God rather than a "mystically" perceived name, is seen from the following quote: "God, whether these sounds are silent, sounding, or have even come into existence, and before anything was created, both was and is unbegotten" (*Apol.*, VIII, 5).

(34) Prov 8:22, cf. 1 Cor 1:24.

his substance is the very same as that which is signified by his name, granted that the designating applies properly to the essence.³⁵

Eunomius said the name of the Son's essence could not diverge from "meaning" (τὸ σημαϊνόμενον). On the one hand, somewhat similar phrasing was used in the text of the Second Creed of Antioch (341): "...the names [of Father, Son and Holy Spirit] not being given without meaning or effect, but denoting accurately (σημαϊνόντων) the peculiar subsistence (ὑπόστασιν), rank and glory of each that is named...".³⁶ But the discourse itself had, perhaps, been suggested to Eunomius by his teacher Aetius whose *Syntagmation* also contained similar passages:

If being unbegotten is revelatory of essence, it is reasonable for it to be contrasted with the offspring's essence. If "being unbegotten" has no meaning (σημαϊνει) *a fortiori* "offspring" reveals nothing. How could nonentities be contrasted? If, again, the word "being unbegotten" is contrasted with the word (προσφορὰ) "generate," silence following the utterance of the words, the Christian hope turns out to begin and stop; it is based on magnificent language but not on what the natures really are (ἐν φύσεσιν οὕτως), which is the intended meaning (σημασία) of the names.³⁷

Both the text of the Second Creed of Antioch and Aetius suggested that under certain conditions naming may signify (σημαϊνει) the object denoted and may correspond to the object's nature. But Eunomius' dealing with linguistic questions was deeper, his discourse was more sophisticated and formalized than that drafted by the text of the formula of Antioch and by Aetius, in particular; Eunomius started to use the notion of "meaning" (τὸ σημαϊνόμενον). How important the theory of "meaning" was for Eunomius can be seen in the passage from Gregory of Nyssa where St. Gregory described the method of Eunomius' reasoning from the *Apology for the Apology*: "I do not like to insert in my own work the nauseous stuff our rhetorician utters,

(35) ἀλλ' αὐτὴν εἶναι τὴν ὑπόστασιν, ἣν σημαϊνει τοῦνομα ἐπαληθευούσης τῆ οὐσίας τῆς προσηγορίας (*Apol.*, XII, 1–4, 6–9; trans. R. VAGGIONE).

(36) HAHN, no. 154, (G. L. HAHN, *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche* (Breslau: Morgenstern, 1897) 185–186); trans. J. N. D. KELLY, *Early Christian Creeds* (London, 1950) 269.

(37) *Synt.*, XVI [WICKHAM]; trans. WICKHAM, *The Syntagmation of Aetius the Anomean...*, 546–547.

or to display his ignorance and folly to contempt in the midst of my own arguments. He goes on with a sort of eulogy upon the class of significant words which express the subject (λόγων τῶν σημαντικῶν τὸ ὑποκείμενον φανερούντων).³⁸ Eunomius' attention to language issues and "meaning" discourse moves us to inquire into the linguistic aspect of his doctrine in terms of philosophical approaches to the nature of language in Antiquity.

Th. Kopecek saw the influence of Middle Platonist ideas on Eunomius' idea of the relation between an object's nature and an object's name.³⁹ He referred to Albinus, who regarded the knowledge of correct name usage as part of dialectics and noted that skillful name use relied upon learning the object's nature and naming objects in accordance with it.⁴⁰ In Th. Kopecek's opinion, both Albinus and Eunomius had the same view on language as having a conventionally natural character, that is, names were established and, at the same time, they expressed the object's nature, because it was considered to be the true way of naming objects, although Eunomius⁴¹ and, as far as we can judge, Albinus admitted that by no means all names are true names as most of them are arbitrarily given by people with no regard to the object's nature.⁴²

We must say that similar views on the nature of language were spread in Antiquity and can be found among the Stoics. It was Stoic terms that Eunomius used in his doctrine about the correspondence of subject and name, which, as we believe, reveals the influence of Stoics, rather than that of Albinus. In other words, we agree with the opinion of L. Wickham and S. Hebbrogen-Walter about the wide usage of Stoic terms by the Neo-Arians, but we do not share L. Wickham's opinion that Stoic influence can be seen only in the terms used but had nothing to do with the doctrinal content.⁴³

(38) Gregorius Nyssenus. *Contra Eunomium*, III. 5. 23.4–24.4.

(39) Th. KOPECEK, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979) 321, 328–332.

(40) *Epitome* VI, 10–11 [LOUIS].

(41) *Apol.*, XVII, 1–5; Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, III, 5, 21, 10–12.

(42) To note in passing, J. Rist who is not likely to know T. Kopecek's arguments, asserts that, as for the nature of language correlation, Albinus' position was not the same as that of Eunomius (RIST, Basil's "Neoplatonism" ..., 186).

(43) Eunomius' Orthodox contemporaries often accused him of using "technology" in his theologizing, which appeared as following the principles

It is true that the notion of “meaning,” identical with the term “lekton,” is fundamental for the Stoics. The invention of this term enabled them to achieve much better understanding of language and language processes as compared to Aristotle. Aristotle’s three-component scheme: object–thought–sound⁴⁴ — was transformed by the Stoics into a four-component scheme: signifier (sound)–signified (meaning denoted by a word or a name)–signification (thought)–referent (object).⁴⁵ This changed the Stoic interpretation of dialectics to include knowledge about the signifier and the signified among other elements.⁴⁶ This discourse differed from another one widely used by the Stoics to clarify the “correctness of name.” We are speaking here of the etymological approach that deduced the object nature from its name and was a technique widespread in popular Stoicism. This practice that was introduced to Stoa by Zeno, was based on either the Stoics’ belief that sounds in a natural way imitate an object’s properties,⁴⁷ or on their belief that some wise men once established true names corresponding to objects’ natures so we could understand them from the objects’ names.

In Chrysippus’ time, alongside with the vision of language based on etymological studies,⁴⁸ a doctrine of meaning as “lekton” emerged to become later a classical Stoic teaching. According to A. Lloyd,⁴⁹ the two theories within the same philosophical school were in conflict with each other as it was perceived by the Stoics themselves. Examin-

taken from the philosophical schools of Antiquity. One of the most frequent accusations was that he followed Chrysippus (Basilus, *Contra Eunomium*, PG 29, col. 516; Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oration 32*, 201C; Hieronymus, *In Nahum II*, 215). E. Vandebussche (E. VANDENBUSSCHE, La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d’Eunomius le technologue, *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 40 (1944–1945) 53–55) explained the accusation of Eunomius of using “technology” in his philosophy of language, under the influence of Stoic teaching.

(44) Aristoteles, *De interpretatione*, 16a3–7.

(45) In general see *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* II, 166; *Adversus mathematicos*, VIII, 11–12). Sextus mentioned but did not emphasize the third element of the succession, namely, “thought.” “Meaning” differs from “thought” in belonging to the language system, while the latter is an extra-linguistic phenomenon.

(46) *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* II, 122.

(47) *Ibid.*, 146; Augustine, *De dialectica* VI [MUNTEANU].

(48) *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* II 896; 1063; 1069.

(49) A. LLOYD, Grammar and Metaphysics in the Stoa, in: A. LONG (ed.), *Problems in Stoicism* (London: The Athlone Press, 1971) 65–66.

ing this question, A. Long came to the conclusion that both theories were likely to have been developed by the Stoics under the influence of Plato's *Cratylus* that may have been involved in the reading curriculum of the Stoics under Chrysippus. A. Lloyd recognized five attitudes toward the nature of language in the *Cratylus*; three of them are present in Stoic writings: the so-called "formal naturalism" (*Cratylus*, 388b–390a; 393d), "etymological naturalism" (*Cratylus*, 397a ff), and "phonetic naturalism" (*Cratylus*, 421b–426d). The latter two correspond to different aspects of stoic etymological doctrine. But according to A. Long, it was "formal naturalism" from the *Cratylus* which denied the importance of word phonetic structure, that encouraged Stoic philosophers to develop their theory of the "lekton." Indeed, this position suggests an independence of word meaning from its phonetic properties and, therefore a possibility of rendering one and the same meaning with different words in different languages.⁵⁰ The Stoic theory of "meaning", that is, of something that was regarded by the Stoics as an intermediate link between the word and the object⁵¹ (while Aristotle upheld a gap between the word and the thought)⁵² may serve as a good basis for further developing a theory of giving adequate names for objects whose nature is known. There was such a theory in the Hellenistic era, and it was known for the Stoics, and later for Eunomius in connection with the notion τὸ σημαίνόμενον. The following passage from Diogenes Laertes (VII, 83) is relevant here concerning the Stoics:

In regard to "correctness of names" (περὶ τ' ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος),⁵³ the topic of how customs (οἱ νόμοι) have assigned names to things,⁵⁴ the wise man would have nothing to say. Of the two linguistic practices (συνήθειαν) which do come within the province of his virtue,

(50) See A. LONG, *Stoic Linguistics, Plato's Cratylus, and Augustine's De dialectica*, in: D. FREDE, B. INWOOD (eds.), *Language and Learning. Philosophy of Language in the Hellenistic Age* (Toronto, 2005) 44.

(51) SVF II, 168.

(52) See A. LLOYD, *Grammar and Metaphysics in the Stoa*, in: *Problems in Stoicism...*, 65. Aristotle suggested isomorphism between an object and thought.

(53) See *Cratylus*, 383ab.

(54) "Assigning names to things" here is interpreted as an etymological technique. This is inferred from the discourse about the "correctness of names" presented in the *Cratylus* where correctness is identified as οἱ νόμοι.

one studies what each existing thing is (τί ἐστὶ), and the other what it is called (τί καλεῖται).⁵⁵

As the passage shows, two doctrines — “correctness of name” (that is, the etymological doctrine) and “correctness of meaning” — were not easily compatible in the Stoic School.⁵⁶ Two language practices mentioned here as opposed to etymology and acceptable for Stoic wise men corresponded, according to Long and Sedley,⁵⁷ to two sections of Stoic dialectics that are described by Diogenes Laertes (VII, 43) as exploration of “what each existing thing is” corresponding to the science of the signified (τὸ σημαίνόμενον), while exploration of “what it is called” is the science of sounds; etymological studies are not mentioned as a section of the Stoic dialectics (because it was regarded as unworthy of a wise man’s attention).

Following one of the Stoic practices (name-giving by means of the signified τὸ σημαίνόμενον to objects whose nature is known) as well as Stoic acceptance of “formal naturalism,” Eunomius rejected something that was also neglected by Stoic wise men: etymological practice of judging about the nature of what is named coming from how the word sounds. Describing his method Eunomius wrote:

...we need not try to conform meanings (τὰς σημασίας) to names (τοῖς ὀνόμασι) exactly or try to distinguish those of differing expressions, but must rather direct our attention to the concepts (ἐνοίαις) inherent in the underlying objects and accommodate the name (τὰς προσηγορίας) accordingly (for the natures of objects are not naturally consequent on the verbal expressions: rather, the force of the names (ἢ τῶν ὀνομάτων δύναμις)⁵⁸ is accommodated

(55) Diogenes Laertes, VII, 83 = *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* II 130; trans. LONG–SEDLY. We follow Long and Sedly in explaining this fragment (LS 31C). As for using συνήθεια as a linguistic practice, see the reference of Long and Sedly to the fragment (SVF III, 137).

(56) See: A. LONG, D. SEDLEY, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, vol. 2: *Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 187–188.

(57) Ibid.

(58) Eunomius used ἡ δύναμις here but, unlike Iamblichus and Origen who imparted a magical meaning to it (see notes 19, 20 above), he used it as a scholastic term. For Iamblichus “the force of the names” is the antithesis of “meanings” (τὰ σημαίνόμενα) (he opposed his magical interpretation of names to Porphyry’s scholastically looking discourse) Eunomius, in contrast, treated ἡ δύναμις as “meaning” following its frequent use in scholastic texts

to the objects in accordance with their proper status (κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν).⁵⁹

As it is demonstrated, Eunomius suggests that objects should be named on the basis of their nature and following the principle of formal naturalism. He admits that names may lexically and phonetically differ,⁶⁰ thus denying that one can make any judgment about the nature of objects on the basis of how their names sound, since the nature of the object does not correspond to how the object's name sounds.⁶¹ However, his practice was aimed at assigning definite meaning to particular words referring to concrete objects. It is noteworthy that Eunomius distinguished and used for his argument all four components, characteristic for the Stoic discourse: sound–signified (or “meaning”)–thought (or “notion”)–object.

Basil of Caesarea's views on language structure as shown by his polemics with Eunomius, corresponds to Aristotle's threefold scheme: sound–thought–subject, where “the meaning” is identical to the thought, with no application of “the meaning” to describing language processes. Although Basil might sometimes show a Stoic linguistic discourse in his works,⁶² besides using the language of Stoic physics and epistemology in his polemics with Eunomius, his linguistic argumentation was mainly based on Aristotle's discourse lacking the notion “meaning” as a phenomenon of language. This was partly due to the fact that Aristotle's discourse emphasized the communicative function of language,⁶³ to be more exact, its compliance with the

of Antiquity. Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos*, VII, 38–42; Stoicorum veterum fragmenta II, 132; Alexander Aphrodisiensis *apud. Simplicius In Aristotelis physicorum libros commentaria*, 12, 17 [DIELS].

(59) *Apol.*, XVIII, 4–9; trans. R. VAGGIONE, emended.

(60) It is obvious here that Basil's argument: “the object nature does not follow the names but, vice versa, names are invented (εὔρηται) after objects” (CE, 580, 26) is incorrect, because Eunomius shared it himself.

(61) Cf. *Apol.*, XIX, 1–4.

(62) See, for example, *Homily 16* (PG 31, col. 477.3–6) where Basil distinguished the word pronounced (ὁ τῆς φωνῆς προφερόμενος) from the internal word (ἐνδιάθετος), which somewhat resembles the Stoics' λόγος προφορικός and λόγος ἐνδιάθετος.

(63) Aristotle was a classical follower of the idea of all word meanings having been formed by social convention, see “[name] by convention (κατὰ συνθήκην), because no name is a name by nature (φύσει), but [only] when it has become a symbol (σύμβολον). For at any rate even the inarticulate noises

whole language community rather than with elitism in establishing language meanings, preferred by the Stoics.⁶⁴ Thus, Basil's criticism of Eunomius' doctrine rested on loosing the rigid relation between word, meaning, thought, and referent, maintained by Eunomius. Thus, as far as the notion "son," is concerned, it indicated something substantial (that is, God the Son) but sometimes Eunomius used it to denote the non-substantial as well.⁶⁵ Concerning the term "Unbegotten," Basil also did not accept Eunomius' approach, treating it at least in two ways in his *Contra Eunomium*: as meaning what is not characteristic of God⁶⁶ and as indicating the specific being of God the Father,⁶⁷ — hence showing that the word meaning depends on the context of its usage. This meant that God's names were not of noematic status but might be interpreted through propositions, that is, by means of statements about God. Another tactic in Basil's refutation of Eunomius' theory was his transition from Eunomius' discourse on common names to that of proper names, that is, the words that exclude self-knowledge by their definition. It is noteworthy that both tactics avoid a discourse about the meaning of language, instead focusing discussion on cognitive processes; the respective passages from the *Contra Eunomium* are found to mention "word," "thought," "subject" but contain no reference to "meaning."⁶⁸

One more point of divergence between the views of the two theologians is apparent if we consider their polemics in terms of the well known paradigm of Antiquity $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota - \theta\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota$, that dealt with the origin and nature of human language. To oppose the Epicurean doctrine about the natural but spontaneous and mindless origin of human words related to certain objects from the very beginning,⁶⁹ phi-

of beasts for example indicate something, but none of them is a name" (Aristoteles, *De interpretatione*, 16a, 26–29).

(64) Etymologizing, on the contrary, implied ordinary participants of the language participants.

(65) *Contra Eunomium*, PG 29, col. 588.34–41.

(66) *Ibid.*, 536.2–3.

(67) *Ibid.*, 605.31–34.

(68) About names as judgments (propositions) see Basil, *Contra Eunomium*, PG 29, col. 533.35–536.38. About discourse on proper nouns, used by Basil to explain the status of the names "Father" and "Son," see Basilius, *Contra Eunomium*, PG 29, col. 577.31–580.30. The latter passage contains elements of Stoic logic and physics, rather than those of the doctrine of language.

(69) Epicurus, *Epistula ad Herodotum*, 75 [ARRIGHETTI].

losophers developed two concepts of the dispensing of names (θέσις ὀνομάτων) that were in opposition to each other. One concept was that names were established in accordance with the object's nature, by a certain reasoning agent — a wise man, dialectician, demon or god (a principal point in this case was the elitism of the name-giver(s)). The other concept assumed that the name-object relation was established through acceptance by all the language community members, that is, arbitrarily, regardless of the nature of objects being named. The former position combined the principles φύσει and θέσει, that is, both establishment and nature of words (unlike the Epicurean position that denied θέσει). It was reflected in the *Cratylus* (387d4–5, 389d4–6), by Albinus (VI, 10), described in detail by Ammonius,⁷⁰ and is likely to have been used by the Stoics as well, taking into account Long's rather convincing treatment of their "formal naturalism,"⁷¹ as well as Cicero's teaching on the God-ordained establishment of names.⁷² The latter position that opposed φύσει and θέσει, and asserted that the language names were established (θέσει) by a convention of all members of the language community, was shared by Aristotle.⁷³

(70) In his *De interpretatione* I, 3 (34–40b), Ammonius notes the double meaning of "nature-based naming" (when names are said to be the products of nature and when they are said to correspond to the nature of objects), as well as the double meaning of "convention-based naming" (when it is believed that any human being could give any name to an object and when it is stated that names were ordained by the name giver). As a result, Ammonius concludes: "It is clear, that the second interpretation of 'nature-based naming' coincides with the second case of 'convention-based naming.'"

(71) See LONG, *Stoic Linguistics...*, 36–55, especially p. 40–49. It is noteworthy that many authors of Antiquity advanced the view on names as having been established by God, without speaking about names' correspondence to the named objects' nature, but implying it, see Cicero, *Tusk. disp.*, XXV, 62; *De rep.*, III, 2; Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, V, 30; Philo, *Legum allegoriae*, II, 14–15 [MONDÉSERT].

(72) See note 71 above. G. Rudberg ascribes these passages to Poseidonius, as well as the passage from Philo mentioned above (G. RUDBERG, *Forschungen zu Poseidonius* (Uppsala, 1918) 56–57).

(73) See also: Nigid. *Fig. ap. Gell. Noct Att*, X, 4.1. Proclus attributes this position to Democritus and Hermogenes, see: Proclus, *In Cratylum*, XIV, p. 5, 17–20; XVI, p. 26–27 [DIELS]. As far as we know, Aristotle never used the notion θέσει in its technical meaning; the philosophical tradition of Antiquity used Aristotle's κατὰ συνθήκην as synonymous to θέσει, see Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, 24; Proclus, *In Cratylum*, 15, 27–30; 16, p. 28–30.

Therefore, Eunomius' doctrine of language, in general was characterized by the combination of the widespread principles of Antiquity, φύσει and θέσει. The above quotations (*Apol.* XII, 1–9; XVIII, 4–9) show, that in his first *Apology* Eunomius emphasized the agreement between the true names of God and the Son and their natures, suggesting the names' divine origin and believing that every real Christian could and should establish true names. Moreover, in the same work Eunomius wrote about names occurring κατ' ἐπίνοιαν which, unlike true names, did not signify any object, about homonymous words (having the same sound structure, but different in their meaning, for example, "eye" referring to God as opposed to that referring to the human being⁷⁴), and about synonyms sounding different but having the same meaning, which, in the case of divine names, all (for example, the Father and "He who is") meant "Unbegotten."⁷⁵

According to Th. A. Kopecek, when Eunomius involved synonyms in his argument, he allowed for some convention, that is, for certain social agreement in establishing word meanings.⁷⁶ It holds true concerning Eunomius' linguistic world picture but only at the stage of finding true names, while after the names have been established, conventionalism becomes of no importance at all. Kopecek seems wrong in treating the principle of "dispensing of name" (θέσει) as being identical to that of "convention," which becomes obvious when he describes Albinus' views on language, whose meaning of θέσει was, in fact, establishing names by dialecticians (not by convention) in accordance with an object's nature. Regarding Eunomius's teaching which was similar to the doctrine of Albinus, Kopecek attributes the same view to Eunomius (names correspond to the objects' nature (φύσει), at the same time, they were established by convention (θέσει)). Though Eunomius coupled φύσει and θέσει, meaning some reasonable agent of name establishment, so did Albinus. While it is only implied in the first *Apology*, the *Apology for the Apology* contains the explicit teaching of Eunomius; it was maintained that names were ordained by God in accordance with the nature of the object named,⁷⁷ and Christians must learn the origin of these true names.

(74) *Apol.*, XVI, 1–2.

(75) See note 31.

(76) KOPECEK, *A History of Neo-Arianism...*, vol. 2, 331–332.

(77) Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, II, 417 (concerning θέσει); *Ibid.*, II, 545 (concerning φύσει).

Eunomius's teaching is considered by Daniélou to be similar to the doctrine of Proclus. In fact, both combine φύσει and θέσει. Proclus understands θέσει as convention-based, when opposing it to φύσει,⁷⁸ but sometimes θέσει is coupled with φύσει when he writes that names are given by gods, demons, or human beings.⁷⁹

We may object to Daniélou's view, first, that coupling φύσει and θέσει was the position widespread in Antiquity; second, that, according to Proclus, the names given by human beings are of divine origin like those given by God, though to a lesser degree, and Proclus just in passing mentioned the names that were given by chance,⁸⁰ which is in contrast to Eunomius' argumentation in which such names (in his terms given κατ' ἐπίνοιαν) were given an important role, and such names were typical for the Stoic School; third, that Proclus' teaching about divine names is related to his teaching about emanation, while Eunomius' system did not accept any sort of emanation of God.

Similarly, we cannot agree with M. Troyano's statement that it was the Cappadocian Fathers, rather than Eunomius, who followed the principle of coupling φύσει and θέσει.⁸¹ Similar to T. Kopecek, M. Troyano misinterprets θέσει coupled with φύσει as name establishment by convention, rather than by a reasonable dispenser who knew the nature of the objects. Therefore, M. Troyano is right when saying that in the Cappadocians' view, language is a phenomenon that exists due to a convention; but what is wrong here, in our opinion, is that she puts the Cappadocians' doctrine into the wrong context. In fact, Basil's position corresponds to an interpretation of words and names as being dispensed by convention,⁸² while he considers communication as the main function of language.⁸³

(78) Proclus, *In Cratylum*, 15, 1–3; 16, 5–27.

(79) *Ibid.*, 18, 9–20, 21; *Theol. Plat.* 1, 29, 124.3–12 [SAFFREY and WESTERINK].

(80) Proclus, *In Cratylum*, 73, 1.

(81) M. TROIANO, I Cappadoci e la questione dell'origine dei nomi nella polemica contro Eunomio, *Vetera Christianorum* 17 (1980) 338–339.

(82) Basil, *Contra Eunomium*, PG 29, col. 632.44.

(83) This position is clearly expressed in Basil, *Homily 3*, PG 31, col. 23. 5–14.

SUMMARY

To sum up, Eunomius' argumentation "from names" should not be simplified and reduced to the statement that names are mystical expressions of the essence of the named or the identification of the lexical meaning as its ontological correlate. In the *Apology* Eunomius believed that he knew the natures of the Father and the Son, and wanted to attach definite terms to them by means of an intermediate element between thought and word, namely, by "meaning," perhaps following the practice adopted by the Stoic School. Based on Aristotle's paradigm, Basil's strategy was aimed at destroying Eunomius' word-referent relation. Considering the polemics between Eunomius and Basil in terms of the paradigm of "dispensing names" of Antiquity shows that Basil's position was in line with Aristotle's scheme of establishing names by people's convention. Eunomius' position was in line with the scheme widespread in the Hellenistic time but not alien to the Stoics — establishing names by a dispenser in accordance with the nature of what was named.