

“I Will Pour Out My Spirit”: Didymus against Eunomius in Light of John 16:14’s History of Reception

Kellen Plaxco

Marquette University, USA

kellen.plaxco@marquette.edu

Abstract

This article provides an account of Didymus the Blind’s subtle attention to theological nuance and invites readers to reconsider his importance for the theological debates of the late fourth century. The polemical shape of Didymus’s theology of the trinity is underdetermined. This article argues that Didymus responded to Eunomius’s first *Apology*. The argument takes the shape of a short history of the reception of John 16:14. This verse was used in anti-monarchian tradition to distinguish the Holy Spirit from the Son, but it also led to low pneumatologies that in some cases implied angelomorphic pneumatology. Eunomius’s pneumatology in *Apology* 25 is a radicalization of this anti-monarchian reading of John 16:14, which Didymus opposed with careful attention to Scripture’s usage of terms for “pouring out.”

Keywords

Didymus the Blind – Eunomius – fourth century – pneumatology – John 16:14

Didymus the Blind is a Melchizedek of the fourth-century debates—“without father, without mother, without genealogy.” A number of detailed studies on the development of fourth-century doctrine mention Didymus in passing, but rarely does the treatment of Didymus’ intellectual contributions to the debate transcend the superficial. Scholars have often associated two anonymous works with him: Pseudo-Basil, *Against Eunomius* IV-V, and an anonymous *On the Trinity*.¹

¹ Didymus’s twentieth-century champion, Alasdair Heron, went as far as the evidence could take him toward a case for Didymus’s authorship of *Against Eunomius* and *On the Trinity*

However, proponents of Didymean authorship of these texts have struggled, for several reasons, to establish a level of confidence necessary to embolden a wider scholarly audience for them. Like so many other orphaned texts from antiquity, they languish in the shadows, fascinating artifacts for the eyes of the occasional specialist.

The question of authorship is not the only obstacle for those who would enlarge Didymus's readership. There is also the question of Didymus's polemical engagements. To survey scholarship on Didymus emerging in the wake of the Tura papyri discovered in 1941 is to receive the impression that Didymus did not engage in doctrinal controversy. Or, if he did, he was not up to the task of winning a significant following. Perusing a handful of books and articles on Didymus from the last fifty years yields a sense that when Didymus lashes out on the rare occasion at a "Eunomian" or an "Apollinarian," he does so more to project authority than to wield it. Didymus appears in the pages of twentieth-century scholarship as an under-informed pretender to doctrinal authority, untrained in the polemical cunning of his slightly elder Alexandrian contemporary, Athanasius.² Some have adduced this impression as circumstantial

(Alasdair, Heron, "Studies in the Trinitarian Writings of Didymus the Blind: His Authorship of the *Adversus Eunomium* IV-V and the *De Trinitate*," Tübingen Dissertation, 1972).

- 2 Hanson refers to the *De Trinitate* attributed to Didymus several times but concludes that it is not by Didymus and that the *Adversus Eunomium*'s author, even if it be Didymus, "is essentially a second-rate theologian" (R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy*, 318-381 [New York: Continuum, 2005] 653-58). Henry Chadwick's review, in 1963, of Doutreleau's edition of Didymus's *Commentary on Zechariah* all but sealed Didymus's fate in 20th-century patristic scholarship: "The doctrinal content is generally disappointing and meager" (Henry Chadwick, Review of *Didymus the Blind*, "In Zechariam", ed. L. Doutreleau, *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s.: 14 [1963] 183-185, at 184). In addition to Heron's, a handful of dissertations have studied Didymus's theology (e.g. Adolphe Gesché, *La christologie du "Commentaire sur les Psaumes" découvert à Toura*. Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot, 1962; Michael Ghattas, *Die Christologie Didymus' des Blinden von Alexandria in den Schriften von Tura: zur Entwicklung der alexandrinischen Theologie des 4. Jahrhunderts* [Münster: Lit, 2002]; Stephen Craig Reynolds, "Man, Incarnation, and Trinity in the Commentary on Zechariah of Didymus the Blind of Alexandria," Harvard Dissertation, 1966; Richard Bishop III, "Affectus hominis: The Human Psychology of Christ according to Ambrose of Milan in Fourth-Century Context," University of Virginia Dissertation, 2009 [Chapter 2]). However, more recent monographs have gravitated toward Didymus's contributions to Origenistic hermeneutics and pedagogy—for better (Wolfgang A. Bienert, *Allegoria und Anagoge bei Didymos dem Blinden von Alexandria*, *Patristische Texte und Studien*, Bd. 13. [Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1972]; Richard A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004]; Blossom Stefaniw, *Mind, Text, and Commentary: Noetic*

evidence against attributing to him *Against Eunomius* and *On the Trinity*.³ However, we do possess one doctrinal treatise that can be attributed to Didymus himself, even if only in Latin translation: *On the Holy Spirit*.⁴ What traces of polemical engagement might we find there?

This article does not address the question of Didymus's authorship of *Against Eunomius* or *On the Trinity*. Instead, it contextualizes the presence in *On the Holy Spirit* of a doctrinal refrain that reappears in those works. That refrain insists on the Holy Spirit's being “participated but not participating,” and so on the Holy Spirit's full divinity. Contextualizing Didymus's use of the metaphysics of participation in *On the Holy Spirit* is crucial for assessing Didymus's polemical disposition in part because it supports the conclusion that Didymus opposed the compressed but low pneumatology of Eunomius's first *Apology*.

I John 16:14: The Spirit's Reception from the Son and Low Pneumatology

In scholarship, Jerome's name is often associated with exaggeration, especially in the case of scholarship that concerns Origen or Origenism. However, Jerome did not exaggerate when he characterized Didymus as not given to rhetorical polish.⁵ Didymus's writing in *On the Holy Spirit* exudes no obvious structure. It barely evinces order at all, apart from a rough division of the discussion of a number of discrete, controversial biblical texts, and

Exegesis in Origen of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, and Evagrius Ponticus [New York: Peter Lang, 2010]); or worse (Robert Hill, “Introduction,” *Commentary on Zechariah* [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006]).

- 3 Though such a judgment would have been superficial: neither *Against Eunomius* nor *On the Trinity* evinces great rhetorical polish. Both works display the characteristic rambling concatenation Jerome felt obliged to apologize for in the preface to his translation of Didymus's *On the Holy Spirit*. On closer inspection, the roughly hewn structure of these anonymous texts counts as much in their favor for Didymus's authorship as “genre.”
- 4 Anglophone scholars will want to know that *On the Holy Spirit* has received a recent translation into English. See Athanasius and Didymus, *Works on the Spirit: Athanasius's Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit and Didymus's On the Holy Spirit*, translated by Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres. Popular Patristics Series 43 (Yonkers: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011).
- 5 *De spiritu sancto* (hereafter *Spir.*), pref. In the following discussion, for numeration of the text of Didymus' *On the Holy Spirit*, I refer to L. Doutreleau, s.j., ed., *Didyme l'Aveugle Traité du Saint-Esprit* (sc 386) (Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1992).

reads like a concatenation of polemical exegesis strung together from notes.⁶ Probably the style results from the fact that Didymus presented his arguments to students in a meandering lecture, proceeding wherever his mind took him.⁷ *On the Holy Spirit's* argumentation is compressed, and repetition abounds. Themes, not textual sequence, will guide our consideration of it.

The trek toward Didymus's confrontation with Eunomius begins with a single verse from the Gospel of John. John 16:14 occurs as one of a series of statements Jesus makes about himself, the Holy Spirit, and the relationship the Spirit has to both the Son and the Father.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you in all truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.⁸

The Holy Spirit mediates for us what the Father says to the Son. Because he plays the role of mediating what Jesus hears and says, "he will glorify [the Son] because he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (ἐκεῖνος ἐμέ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν). Jesus concludes with a statement that authorizes the Holy Spirit's reception from the Son, since "all that the Father has is [the Son's] (ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ ἐμά ἐστιν)." Furthermore, the Holy Spirit's angelic office is explicit: three times in this passage the Holy Spirit performs the function of a *messenger*, an *angelos*: ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.⁹

6 For what little structure there is, the arrangement provided by the English translation of DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, based on Doutreleau's edition, is satisfactory; it has undoubtedly colored my understanding of the text.

7 For more on the scholastic context of Didymus's extant writings, see Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle*, 13-35.

8 Jn. 16:13-15. ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάσῃ· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. ἐκεῖνος ἐμέ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. Πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ ἐμά ἐστιν· διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

9 Though Jesus's statement that the Holy Spirit "will announce to you" is not a statement that "the Holy Spirit is an angel," the function of delivering a revelation is associated with angelic figures, especially in apocalyptic literature. So, for example, in Revelation 2-3, the seven churches are each assigned their own angels, or messengers, who carry John's apocalypse to them. In Revelation 17:7-18, an angel explains to John his foregoing vision (John 17:1-6). We will return to this point momentarily.

John 16:14 could serve as the basis of an angelomorphic pneumatology that is “low” in the sense that it ranks the Holy Spirit as third in a vertical, hierarchical series. The ranking of “third” might be sufficiently “low” that the Spirit crosses over from classification with the Father and Son to classification with the angelic host. John 16:14 uses two terms that would tempt ancient readers to characterize the Holy Spirit as an angel inferior to the Son. First, the Holy Spirit is said to *receive from* the Son and, as a result of that reception, to *glorify* the Son. This position renders the Holy Spirit as a liturgical participant as opposed to the object of glorification. Second, the Holy Spirit is characterized as the interpreter of the sacred speech given from the Father to the Son. Each of these characterizations of the Holy Spirit takes on a particular valence when contextualized within two broad influential streams of literature: apocalyptic and Middle Platonic. I take up the thread in apocalyptic literature first by turning to the angelomorphic pneumatology of the *Ascension of Isaiah*.

The pneumatology of the *Ascension of Isaiah* is important not only because it represents a kind of angelomorphism that tempted early Christians, but also because it exhibits a tendency that would be exploited by anti-monarchian readings of John 16:14: a vertical ordering of the trinity. In this case, the ordering is “apocalyptic” in the sense that a series of figures passes a secret revelation down a chain. Isaiah receives the secret message from an angelic guide, third in a series.¹⁰ The *angelus interpres*, or “interpreting angel,” is a familiar trope in ancient Jewish and early Christian literature, and the *Ascension* exploits the hermeneutic function of the angel with an important twist: the angelic interpreter is no ordinary angel. The angel sent to Isaiah “was not of this firmament, nor was he from the angels of glory of this world, but he came from the seventh heaven.”¹¹ Isaiah emphasizes the distinction of this “glorious angel” from the rest of the angelic host: “His glory was not like the glory of the angels which I always used to see, but he had great glory, and an office, such that I cannot

10 For critical text of the *Ascension*, see Paolo Bettiolo and Enrico Norelli, eds. *Ascensio Isaiae*. Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995). For translation, see Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. The date and provenance of the *Ascension* is nebulous. The Greek portion of the text containing the narrative of Isaiah’s ascension may date as late as the fourth century CE, and probably as early as the second century. Robert Hall, “The Ascension of Isaiah Community Situation, Date, and Place in Early Christianity,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109, no. 2 (Summer 1990) 289-306, argues convincingly that the final form of the text was achieved by the mid-second century. I refer to *Ascension of Isaiah* here not to imply its later influence, but to provide evidence of angelomorphism prior to anti-monarchian readings of John 16:14, and to show why those anti-monarchian readings could have been taken to imply angelomorphism.

11 *Asc. Is.* 6:11-13.

describe the glory of this angel” (7:2). Upon asking the guide to disclose his identity, Isaiah is refused (7:1-6). The angel tells him he may not learn who he is until he has “taken [him] up through (all) the stages and have shown [him] the vision on account of which [the angel] was sent.” Only then, he says, “you will understand who I am; but my name you will not know, for you have to return into this body” (7:4-5).

At this point the speaker reports his feeling overjoyed at his guide’s warmth toward his desire to proceed. The guide senses this feeling and asks, rhetorically,

Do you rejoice because I have spoken kindly to you? . . . You will see one greater than me, how he will speak kindly and gently with you; and the Father of the one who is greater you will also see, because for this purpose I was sent from the seventh heaven, that I might make all this clear to you.¹²

In this report is a hierarchy of intensifying kindness: God the Father is the one “greater than” the one promised to “speak kindly and gently” to the prophet. That figure, in turn, is Christ. This leaves one plausible interpretation of the angelic guide leading the prophet back to the seventh heaven. When the angelic guide whose description is beyond compare finally leads Isaiah up through the seven heavens, the guide’s identity becomes clearer. In the seventh heaven, Isaiah is advised to worship an archangel (9:33-36), one who “has spoken in you,” and is informed that this is the Angel of the Holy Spirit. That the Angel of the Holy Spirit was the prophet’s guide all along is never made explicit but hangs in the air as the most reasonable conclusion.

The *Ascension of Isaiah* was not an isolated instance of speculation about the Holy Spirit’s angelic status. Earlier Jewish angelologies lent such speculation credibility. The angelology of Melchizedek was promising in this regard. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, Melchizedek is an exalted angelic figure who receives the names *el* and *elohim*. In a striking rewriting of Isaiah 61:2, one of the scrolls (11Q Melch.) refers to the jubilee year not as “the year of *Yahweh*’s favor,” but as “the year of *Melchizedek*’s favor.”¹³ In 2 Enoch 71-72, Melchizedek receives the genealogy Genesis claimed he lacked.¹⁴ Hebrews depicts Melchizedek as the archetypal owner of the spiritual authority God

12 *Asc. Is.* 7:7-8.

13 See Michael Wise, M. Abegg, Jr., and E. Cook, trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: a New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996) 455-57.

14 Genesis 14:17-20 mentions Melchizedek as blessing Abraham, and the author of Hebrews 6-7 deduces from Scripture’s silence regarding his origin that he was “without father, without mother, without generation” (Heb. 7:3).

the Father gave to the Son. Because Jesus’s priesthood is timeless—“according to the order of Melchizedek”—the author of Hebrews argues that “Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.”¹⁵ The community associated with the Nag Hammadi *corpus* also incorporated speculation about Melchizedek’s divinity into its cosmogony by describing Melchizedek as a heavenly archetype of the transcendent Sethian “race.”¹⁶

Speculation about Melchizedek’s angelic status became pneumatological in the third and fourth centuries. In a letter addressed to Evangelus, Jerome mentions an unattributed treatise that deals with the question of Melchizedek’s angelic nature in considerable detail.¹⁷ Its author claimed not only that Melchizedek was an angel, but also that he was the Holy Spirit. Jerome initially suspected Origen and Didymus of the heresy, but he was not able to find them guilty of identifying Melchizedek with the Angel of the Holy Spirit. Instead, Origen and Didymus agreed that Melchizedek was “one of the highest powers” (*supernis uirtutibus est locatus*).¹⁸

15 Heb. 7:15-22.

16 See especially *Nag Hammadi Codex IX*, “Melchizedek.” The text is so fragmentary that it is difficult to render a clear picture of what role Melchizedek was thought to have played in the gnostic cosmogony of aeons. He is referred to as “holy” and a “high priest” (4, 14). In 6, 16-18, he is “[from] [the] race (γένος) of the High-priest (ἀρχιερέως) [which is] above [thousands of thousands] and [myriads] of myriads of the aeons (αἰών)” (Pearson, trans.). For more on this enigmatic text, see “Introduction to Codex IX” in Birger A. Pearson, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 19-40.

17 The editors of the Nicene Fathers translation date Jerome’s Letter 73, to Evangelus, to the year 398. The date appears arbitrary, though it does seem to have been written after Jerome turned against Didymus and other “Origenists.”

18 “So immediately I discovered at the beginning of Origen’s homilies on the beginning of Genesis a writing about Melchizedek. There Origen, in a long and winding speech, was distracted from his main topic to the point that he called [Melchizedek] an angel, and with nearly the same arguments as your writer on the Holy Spirit, he was located among the highest powers. I then turned to Didymus, Origen’s follower, and I saw a man at the feet of his master holding the same opinion.” Jerome, *Ep. 73.2. Statimque in fronte geneseos primam omeliarum origenis repperi scriptam de melchisedech, in qua multiplici sermone disputans illuc deuolutus est, ut eum angelum diceret, isdem que paene argumentis, quibus scriptor tuus de spiritu sancto, ille de supernis uirtutibus est locutus. Transiui ad didymium, sectatorem eius, et uidi hominem pedibus in magistri isse sententiam.* For the critical edition of the text see Isidorus Hilberg, ed., *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae Pars II: Epistulae LXXI-CXX*, CSEL 55 (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Vienna, 1996) 13-23, here quoted from p. 14. We may probably dismiss as rhetorical flourish Jerome’s insinuation that he turned to the very first page of a codex of Origen’s sermons to find the stray detail he managed to unearth.

Jerome's picture fits with what we find in Origen's extant *Homilies on Genesis*. It would not have made sense for Origen to associate Melchizedek with the Holy Spirit, because he associated him with Christ.¹⁹ God the Father rewards the Son with eternal priesthood, and Christ is a "priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." Interpreting a key phrase in Hebrews 6:17, Origen explains that the Son's eternal priestly status discloses God's "immutable will."²⁰ Didymus, for his part, is careful to note that Hebrews 7:3 states that Melchizedek *resembles* (ἀφωμοιωμένος) the Son of God, and not *vice versa*.²¹

Jerome's anonymous treatise accords with Epiphanius's description of some "Melchizedekians" who regarded Melchizedek "as a sort of great power" (μεγάλην τινὰ δύναμιν).²² They, too, identified him with the Holy Spirit.

In turn, others call themselves Melchizedekians; they may be an offshoot of the group who are known as Theodotians. They honor the Melchizedek who is mentioned in the scriptures and regard him as a sort of great power. He is on high in places which cannot be named, and in < fact > is not just a power; indeed, they claim in their error that he is greater than Christ. Based, if you please, on the literal wording of, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," they believe that Christ has merely come

19 It would take us too far afield to open the question of whether Origen identified the Holy Spirit with John the Baptist at the time of his delivering his *Homilies on Genesis*. See Joseph Lienhard, "Origen's Speculation on John the Baptist or Was John the Baptist the Holy Spirit?" in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. Robert Daly (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992) 449-53.

20 Origen, *HomGen* 9.1. Hebrews 6:17 states: "... when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose (τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ), he guaranteed it by an oath." Didymus would agree with Origen's interpretation of Hebrews. In the *Commentary on Zechariah* (e.g., 1, 183), Didymus states that the reason those who are thirsty can drink and be filled by the Son is that the Son is immutable: "Anyone coming to him drinks, you see, for the reason that his position is immovable." It is the Son's constancy that enables him to be a divine source.

21 Didymus the Blind, *Zech.* 2, 69-71: "... since [Melchizedek] is God's servant not in shadow but in truth and in spirit, he will be *at the right hand* of the one seated and reigning on his throne. Being at his right, resembling God the Son and remaining a priest forever, he has a counsel of peace in respect of the one whom he resembles, the Son of God also being likewise at peace with the King of Salem—"peace," that is—and the king of righteousness, namely, Melchizedek" (Hill trans., 129). Didymus also mentions Melchizedek at *Zech.* 1, 183; 1, 239; and 1, 244. None of these additional references depart from reading Melchizedek as only an angelic power.

22 Epiphanius, *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34-64*, ed. Karl Holl, GCS (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), 324.13-4.

and been given the order of Melchizedek. Christ is thus younger than Melchizedek, they say. For if his place were not somehow second in line he would have no need of Melchizedek’s rank. Of Melchizedek himself they say that he < has come into being > “without father, without mother, without lineage”—as they would like to show from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews. They also fabricate spurious books for their own deception.²³

In order to understand the exegesis of Hebrews to which Epiphanius takes exception, the Spirit’s “reception” (λαμβάνω) from the Son in John 16:14 is important.

The term λαμβάνω is freighted with ontological significance in Platonic tradition. It travels with a group of terms related to “participation” in post-Platonic philosophy. In the *Timaeus*, Plato had described matter as the “receptacle” which, in a process “difficult to describe,” receives form. The Demiurge gives matter form on the basis of a resemblance to an original paradigm.²⁴ In describing the process of “stamping” matter with forms, Timaeus says, “the figures that enter and depart are copies of those that are always existent, being stamped from them in a fashion marvelous and hard to describe . . .”²⁵ Timaeus describes what would come to be known as “prime matter” “as a Kind invisible and unshaped, all-receptive (πανδεχές), and in some most perplexing and most baffling way partaking of the intelligible (μεταλαμβάνον δὲ ἀπορώτατά πη τοῦ νοητοῦ).” Nothing in the perceptible world is cut off from sharing in intelligible reality. In appropriation of *Timaeus*, terms for “reception” stand for the link between “this world” and the “higher” world of the forms. The link between the two worlds occurs not at the level of the receptacle and its elements but at

23 Μελχισεδεκιανούς πάλιν ἕτεροι ἑαυτοὺς καλοῦσιν, ἀποσπασθέντες τάχα ἀπὸ τῶν Θεοδοτιανῶν καλουμένων. οὗτοι τὸν Μελχισεδέκ τὸν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς λεγόμενον δοξάζουσι, μεγάλην τινὰ δύναμιν ἡγοῦμενοι. εἶναι δὲ αὐτὸν ἄνω ἐν ἀκατονομάστοις τόποις καὶ ἀληθῶς εἶναι τοῦτον οὐ μόνον δύναμιν τινά, ἀλλὰ καὶ μειζότερον τοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆ ἑαυτῶν πλάνη φάσκουσι. Χριστὸν δὲ ἡγοῦνται ἀπλῶς ἐληλυθότα καὶ καταξιωθέντα τῆς ἐκείνου τάξεως, δῆθεν ἐκ τοῦ ῥητοῦ τοῦ εἰρημένου “σὺ εἶ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ”. ὡς εἶναι αὐτόν, φησίν, ὑποδέεστερον τοῦ Μελχισεδέκ. εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦν ἐν δευτέρᾳ τινὶ εἰσαγωγῇ κείμενος, οὐκ ἂν τῆς ἐκείνου τάξεως ἐπέδεετο. περὶ αὐτοῦ δὲ τοῦ Μελχισεδέκ φασιν ὅτι “ἀμήτωρ, ἀπάτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος”. ἐγένετο, ἐκ τῆς πρὸς Ἑβραίους τοῦ ἀγίου Παύλου ἐπιστολῆς παριστᾶν βουλόμενοι. πλάττουσι δὲ ἑαυτοῖς καὶ βίβλους ἐπιπλάστους, ἑαυτοὺς ἀπατώντες. GCS 31; Holl, ed. (1922) 324, 1.1-5. It is tempting to infer from Epiphanius’s mention of “spurious books” that he has encountered the anonymous treatise that fell into the possession of Jerome’s correspondent, Evangelus. At Epiphanius, *Panarion* 11.5, 2-5; Frank Williams, trans. 82.

24 Plato, *Tim.* 48e-51d.

25 Plato, *Tim.* 50c.

the level of the Demiurge who looks to an eternal archetype of Being in order to fashion the cosmos that comes to be.²⁶

Readings of the *Timaeus* could diverge on matters of detail, but the link between Being and Becoming established by the Demiurge was a feature common to many Platonic theologies. Numenius provides a characteristic application of terms of reception and participation in this context. He posits a primal distinction between the Demiurge, which he equates with Mind (*Nous*), and which constructs the *Cosmos*, on one hand, and the eternal Being to which the Mind looks, on the other hand. The distinction is couched in terms of participation and reception.

If it be granted that Existence, and the Idea, is intelligible, and that Mind is older than this, as its cause, then it must be concluded that this Mind alone is the Good. For if the Creating Divinity is the principle of Becoming, then surely but the Good be the principle of Being. Inasmuch as the Creating Divinity is analogous to him, being his imitator, then must Becoming (be analogous) to Being, because it is its image and imitation.²⁷

The myth of the Demiurge grounds a series of two entities that receive and pass on characteristics in an imitative chain. The Demiurge reproduces what he sees, imitating the Good by looking to the Good—the eternal model—and copying it out in his creative acts. The continuity between the Good and the “world of becoming” is guaranteed by the Creator’s faithful reception of the good and his passing it along in creation. An ontological hierarchy in turn makes this reception possible. Only if the Demiurge *receives from* the Good can he pass the good along, and his reception implies his inferiority to the original he receives. So, Numenius says, “Mind alone is the Good,” the “Good-in-itself,” and is “older than” every Idea it causes—including the “Creating Divinity.” In this way, the Good is superior to the Demiurge.

26 Plato, *Tim.* 29a-d.

27 Kenneth Guthrie, trans. *Numenius of Apamea, the Father of Neo-Platonism; Works, Biography, Message, Sources, and Influence* (Grantwood, N.J.: G. Bell, 1917); for the Greek, see É. des Places, *Numénius. Fragments* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1974), Frag. 16. Εἰ δ' ἔστι μὲν νοητὸν ἢ οὐσία καὶ ἡ ἰδέα, ταύτης δ' ὡμολογήθη πρεσβύτερον καὶ αἴτιον εἶναι ὁ νοῦς, αὐτὸς οὗτος μόνος εὔρηται ὦν τὸ ἀγαθόν. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ ὁ μὲν δημιουργὸς θεὸς ἔστι γενέσεως, ἀρκεῖ τὸ ἀγαθὸν οὐσίας εἶναι ἀρχή. Ἀνάλογον δὲ τούτῳ μὲν ὁ δημιουργὸς θεός, ὦν αὐτοῦ μιμητής, τῇ δὲ οὐσίᾳ ἢ γένεσις, ἢ εἰκὼν αὐτῆς ἔστι καὶ μίμημα. Eusebius quotes this passage in the *Preparation for the Gospel* XI, 22,3-5.

Returning to Epiphanius’s “Melchizedekians,” Hebrews states that Christ is a “priest κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Melchizedek.” If interpreted in Platonic terms, the Spirit’s reception from the Son in John 16:14 implies that the Spirit receives from the Son in a series of caused entities. The tendency to use the language of “order” to arrange Christ with respect to “Melchizedek” can be explained as a Platonic reading of John 16:14’s use of the verb λαμβάνω to name the relationship between the Son and the Spirit. The phrase κατὰ τὴν τάξιν (“according to the order of Melchizedek”) could mean that Melchizedek represents a special order of priesthood. On the other hand, if read on Platonic ground, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν means that Christ is a priest *after the order* of Melchizedek. This second reading means that Melchizedek was an eternal priest *before* Christ received his position as an eternal priest from God the Father. Earlier Christian tradition had used the term τάξις to arrange the Trinitarian persons in a series.²⁸

The *Refutatio omnium haeresium* attributed by some to Hippolytus appears to have been an earlier source for Epiphanius. In the mid-third century, its author could write that Theodotus the banker “attempted to establish that Melchizedek constitutes a kind of greatest power, and that this one is greater than Christ. And they allege that Christ happens to be according to the likeness (of this Melchizedek).”²⁹ Note the Timaeian terminology: Christ comes to be according to the image of Melchizedek. (Ps.-)Hippolytus’s “Theodotians” had read Hebrews 7:17 in terms of the Demiurge’s looking to an image. God the Father, the Demiurge, created Christ by looking to the paradigm, Melchizedek. Epiphanius accuses the Alexandrian Hieracas of having taken the further step of identifying Melchizedek with the Holy Spirit.³⁰ If the Holy Spirit is

28 See Michel Barnes, “The Beginning and End of Early Christian Pneumatology,” *Augustinian Studies* 39:2 (2008), 169-86, at 184-86, for a discussion of “ordering” the Trinity as a distinctive anti-monarchian tactic.

29 Hippolytus, *Ref.* VII.36.2-5: . . . καὶ αὐτὸς Θεόδοτος καλούμενος, τραπεζίτης τὴν τέχνην, λέγειν δυνάμιν τινα τὸν Μελχισεδέκ εἶναι με(γ)ίστην, καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι μείζονα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὐ κατ’ εἰκόνα φάσκουσι τὸν Χριστὸν τυγχάνειν. (Ps.-)Hippolytus’s descriptor for Melchizedek, δυνάμιν τινα . . . με(γ)ίστην, is comparable to Epiphanius’s μεγάλην τινα δυνάμιν. For Greek text, see Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Hippolytus, Refutatio omnium haeresium*, Patristische Texte und Studien, Bd. 25 (New York: W. De Gruyter, 1986).

30 Epiphanius, *Panarion* II.5, 2-5; Frank Williams, trans. (modified) 82. καὶ ὁ μὲν Ἰερακάς ὁ Αἰγύπτιος αἰρεσιάρχης νομίζει τοῦτον τὸν Μελχισεδέκ εἶναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον διὰ τὸ “ἄφομοιούμενος, φησί, τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές”. ὡς ἀπὸ τῆς λέξεως ἧς εἶπεν ὁ ἅγιος ἀπόστολος “τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις”. ὁ δὲ ἐπιστάμενος τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος οἶδεν ὅτι ὑπὲρ ἐκλεκτῶν ἐντυγχάνει τῷ θεῷ. ἐξέπεσε δὲ καὶ οὗτος παντελῶς τοῦ προκειμένου. οὐ γὰρ σάρκα ἐνεδύσατο τὸ πνεῦμά ποτε· σάρκα δὲ μὴ ἐνδυσάμενον οὐκ εἶχεν εἶναι βασιλεὺς τῆς Σαλήμ καὶ ἱερεὺς τόπου τινός. καιρῷ δὲ

Melchizedek, who in turn is prior to Christ in a series, Epiphanius knows a latter-day instance of the “hyper-pneumatology” Origen faced in *On First Principles*.³¹ To invoke John 16:14’s statement that the Spirit receives from the Son would oppose the hyper-pneumatology based on Hebrews 7:17.

To judge from the range of evidence from (Ps.-?)Hippolytus, Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanius, Melchizedek’s identification with the Holy Spirit occurred as early as Origen’s day and outlasted Didymus’s lifetime. Frequently enough, the question was not necessarily *whether* the Holy Spirit was an angelic creature, but with which angelic creature the Spirit should be identified. Given the persistence of such angelomorphic tendencies well into the fourth century, it is easier to understand why Jesus’s statement in John 16:14 about the Holy Spirit might be rendered not simply as, “He will *proclaim* to you,” but as, “He will be an ‘angel’ to you.”³² John 16:14’s use of λαμβάνω to name the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit would only reinforce the suspicion that the Holy Spirit receives from the Son as an inferior entity. Several anti-monarchian readers of John 16:14 would read the verse just this way.

II Tertullian, Origen, Novatian, and Eusebius on John 16:14

Following Tertullian’s reading of John 16:14, low pneumatological tendencies established themselves in anti-monarchian readings of this verse from Origen to Eusebius. That tradition took extreme form in Eunomius’s contention that the Holy Spirit is a creature “filled” by the Son, “third in both nature and order” (τρίτον καὶ φύσει καὶ τάξει).³³ We will now survey anti-monarchian readings of

ὅτε περὶ τούτου τοῦ Ἱερακᾶ καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ αἰρέσεως τὴν ἀνατροπὴν ποιήσομαι, τότε ἐν πλάτει περὶ τούτων διηγήσομαι, τῆς δὲ ἀκολουθίας τὰ νῦν ἐπιλήψομαι. “The Egyptian heresiarch Hieracas believes that this Melchizedek is the Holy Spirit because of ‘made like unto the Son of God he remains a priest continually,’ as though this is to be interpreted by the holy apostle’s statement that ‘the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.’ Anyone who understands the mind of the Spirit knows that he intercedes with God for the elect. But Hieracas too has gone entirely off the track. The Spirit never assumed flesh. And not having assumed flesh, he could not be king of Salem and priest of anywhere.”

31 Barnes, “Beginning and End,” 182.

32 Rowan Williams was not the first to suggest that the Son and the Spirit had long been characterized as “angelic liturgists” in Alexandria—perhaps in Origen’s case—but his treatment remains a characteristically rich and suggestive argument along those lines. See Rowan Williams, “Angels Unawares: Heavenly Liturgy and Earthly Theology in Alexandria,” in *Studia Patristica Vol. 30* (Louvain: Peeters, 1997) 350-63.

33 Eunomius, *Apol.* 25.22.

John 16:14 from Tertullian to Eusebius. With the exception of Tertullian, each of these figures uses the logic of reception in John 16:14 to order the Son and the Spirit as superior to inferior. Each is willing to pay the price of distinguishing the three from one another with a grammar of intra-trinitarian participation: a low pneumatology.

John 16:14 could be used to show that the Trinitarian persons are distinct figures with distinct activities. On the other hand, Jesus’s statement in John 10:30 that “I and the Father are one” was a staple of monarchian exegesis.³⁴ Tertullian appeals to John 16:14 as part of a larger attempt to distinguish the three trinitarian *personae*. He invokes John 16:14 to recover John 10:30 from monarchian exegesis. According to his reading, Jesus’s statement that the Spirit “receives from what is mine,” taken with the implication that the Son, too, receives from what belongs to the Father, means that the three are distinct, not identical.

He is called “another Comforter,” indeed; but in what way He is another we have already shown.³⁵ “He shall receive of mine,” says Christ, just as Christ Himself received of the Father’s. Thus the connection (*connexus*) of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, yields three gathering together (*tres . . . cohaerentes*), who are yet distinct One from another (*alterum ex altero*). These three are one essence, not one person, as it is said, “I and my Father are One,” in respect of unity of substance, not singularity of number.³⁶

So Tertullian rules out “numerical singularity” of the Godhead to oppose monarchianism. He presupposes that the Spirit’s reception of what belongs to Christ entails the numerical distinction of Son from Spirit. The three are united in terms of undivided divine “substance”—though Tertullian stops short of explaining how a unity of substance is not a numerical unity. John 16:14 is useful to him as a means of articulating the distinction between the Son and the Holy Spirit, because in this passage the Spirit receives from the Son. Reception implies distinction in number, as one receives from another.

34 For John 10:30’s role in monarchian exegesis, see Mark DelCogliano, “The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Anti-monarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6.1 (2012), 117–38.

35 In *Adv. Prax.* 13, Tertullian invokes the illustration of the sun and its ray, which he says are “as much two things and two *species* of one undivided substance, as God and His Word, as the Father and the Son.” It is not clear whether he means to apply the same metaphor to the kind of unity the Holy Spirit shares with the Son and the Father.

36 Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.*, 25: *Ita connexus patris in filio et filii in paraclete tres efficit cohaerentes, alterum ex altero. Qui tres unum sunt, non unus, quomodo dictum est: ego et pater unum sumus, ad substantiae unitatem, non ad numeri singularitatem* (CCSL 2:1159–1205).

Origen, too, uses John 16:14 to oppose monarchianism, and in a similar way. He goes beyond Tertullian by tying John 16:14 to an “ordering” of the three persons in a hierarchical scheme. The ordering in turn provides a precedent of ambiguous consequence. Origen does not refer to John 16:14, as one might expect him to, in a key passage, in *Commentary on John* 2.76, in which he writes that the Holy Spirit “seems to have need of the Son ministering to his *hypostasis*, not only for it to exist, but also for it to be wise, and rational, and just, and whatever other thing we ought to understand it to be by participation in the aspects of Christ which we mentioned previously.”³⁷ John 16:14 would have provided a suitable warrant for Origen’s suspicion, but he does not invoke the passage here.

He does invoke John 16:14 twice elsewhere, once early and once late in his *Commentary on John*.³⁸ At 20.263 Origen says:

whenever . . . the Holy Spirit or an angelic spirit speaks, it does not speak from its own resources, but from the Word of truth and of wisdom. This is made clear also in the Gospel according to John where he teaches about the Paraclete and says, “He will receive from me, and will announce to you.”³⁹

Origen includes the Holy Spirit with other angelic spirits in classifying it as speaking “not . . . from its own resources (ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων), but from the Word of truth and of wisdom.” The context indicates that Origen is more concerned to authenticate the Spirit by distinguishing “true” from “false” spirits, as much as he would distinguish the Spirit from the Son. So his reading of John 16:14 in this case is as likely to be anti-Gnostic as anti-monarchian. In any event, Origen’s deployment of the verse here includes no protection against ontological subordination of the Spirit to the Son; indeed, it seems to turn upon just such an arrangement.

Origen’s other reference to the verse in the *Commentary on John* (2.127) is more telling. He uses John 16:14 to clarify what it means for the Son to “minister to [the Holy Spirit’s] *hypostasis*.” The Son teaches the Holy Spirit to be what it is:

For that the Holy Spirit also is instructed by [Christ] is clear from what is said about the comforter and the Holy Spirit: “Because he will receive

37 Origen, *Jo.* 2.76.

38 Origen, *Jo.* 2.127; 20.263.

39 Origen, *Jo.* 2.263; Heine trans., 260 (modified).

from me and will announce it to you.” Now we must inquire very carefully if the Spirit, by being instructed, contains all things which the Son, who is from the beginning, knows by contemplating the Father.⁴⁰

Origen’s compressed speculation suggests that the Son knows certain things directly—“by contemplation of the Father”—which the Holy Spirit knows indirectly. The fact that the Holy Spirit receives knowledge from the Son reinforces the Spirit’s inferiority to the Son. The inferiority does not, however, undermine the Spirit’s authority. Origen is careful to point out that the Holy Spirit “comprehends all things,” even if at second remove. The Holy Spirit receives from the Son, and the reception corroborates Origen’s interpretation that the Holy Spirit is “instructed” by Christ.

Origen was not alone in taking anti-monarchian exegesis of John 16:14 one step further than Tertullian had by applying a Platonizing hierarchy to the relationship between the Son and Holy Spirit. Novatian, too, uses the verse to subordinate the Spirit to the Son. He draws a twofold characterization of the Son and Spirit in *Trin.* 16.2-3. On one hand, he says, this verse demonstrates that the Son is indeed the source of the Holy Spirit’s information, and on this point his reading of the verse mirrors Origen’s. He reads John 16:14 as authorizing the Holy Spirit *because* the Son is superior to the Holy Spirit. This also entails that the Holy Spirit is “less than” (*minor*) the Son.

The premise that motivates Origen’s logic also drives Novatian’s: *reception* implies ontological hierarchy.⁴¹ Novatian concludes from John 16:14 that Christ is “greater than the Paraclete.” “If [the Paraclete] received from Christ the things which He will make known, then surely Christ is greater than the Paraclete, since the Paraclete would not receive from Christ unless He were less than Christ,” Novatian explains.⁴² Novatian uses John 16:14’s logic of reception to justify an ontological hierarchy of Son over the Holy Spirit, and that logic draws on a Platonizing reading of the key verb λαμβάνω. The presence of the verb ἀναγγελεῖ is not acknowledged, but the Holy Spirit’s status as an

40 Origen, *Jo.* 2.127. “Ὅτι μὲν γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸ αὐτῷ μαθητεύεται, σαφὲς ἐκ τοῦ λεγομένου περὶ παρακλήτου καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος· “Ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήψεται, καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.” Εἰ δὲ μαθητευόμενον πάντα χωρεῖ, ἃ ἐνατενίζων τῷ πατρὶ ἀρχόμενος ὁ υἱὸς γινώσκει, ἐπιμελέστερον ζητητέον.

41 Whether Novatian is opposing the same “hyper-pneumatology” faced by Origen is an open question. But in any case John 16:14 is associated with the Holy Spirit’s distinction from and subordination to the Son and the Father in anti-monarchian polemic.

42 Novatian, *Trin.* 16.3: *Sed si a christo accipit quae nuntiet, maior ergo iam paraclete christus est, quoniam nec paracletus a christo acciperet, nisi minor christo esset* (CCSL 4). FOTC, DeSimone trans., 62.

angel is left open as a possibility, if not a direct consequence, of the resulting ontological hierarchy.

The anti-monarchian tradition of John 16:14 finds its most extensive deployment in Eusebius's polemical use of it against Marcellus. Eusebius glosses John 16:14 with the logic of participation Origen had developed in his *Commentary on John*. Eusebius makes a series of references to John 16:14 as part of an argument with Marcellus in his *Ecclesiastical Theology* 3.4-5.⁴³ He provides an extensive quotation of Marcellus's *Against Asterius*, whom he says states:

... if the Word were to appear to have come from the Father Himself and has come to us and "The Holy Spirit" (as even Asterius confessed) "proceeds from the Father," and again the Savior says concerning the Spirit that "He will not speak on His own authority (ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ), but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you," doesn't the monad in this ineffable statement appear clearly and obviously to broaden into a Trinity without in any way suffering division?⁴⁴

According to Marcellus, Jesus's statements in John 16:13-15 entail that the Trinity proceeds from a Monad to a Dyad and, finally, a Triad. In no case, Marcellus insists, is the substance or reality divided materially. The procession remains immaterial, such that the three are names, but they are not the names of separated entities.

Our concern lies less with reconstructing Marcellus's theology and more with recognizing the traditional force of Eusebius's reading of John 16:14. In opposition to Marcellus, he writes:

The only-begotten Son of God teaches that He Himself has come forth from the Father because He was always with Him, and likewise of the Holy Spirit, who exists as another besides the Son. The Savior Himself

43 In what follows I have benefited from the use of an unpublished translation of *De ecclesiastica theologia* by Kelley Spoerl. I am grateful to Prof. Spoerl for allowing me to consult her translation ahead of its publication.

44 Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 3.4.2-3; Spoerl trans. εἰ τοίνυν ὁ λόγος φαίνοιτο ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξεληθὼν καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐληλυθὼς, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὡς καὶ Ἀστέριος ὡμολόγησεν, παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, αὐθίς τε ὁ σωτὴρ φησιν περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ὅτι "οὐκ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ λαλήσει, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει, καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. ἐκεῖνός με δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἔμου λήψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν", οὐ σαφῶς καὶ φανερώς ἐνταῦθα ἀπορρήτῳ δὲ λόγῳ ἡ μονὰς φαίνεται, πλατυνομένη μὲν εἰς τριάδα, διαιρεῖσθαι δὲ μηδαμῶς ὑπομένουσα;

shows this clearly when He says, “He will take what is mine and declare it to you.” For this would be unmistakable proof that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not one and the same. For that which takes from another is thought to be other than the one who gives.⁴⁵

Eusebius contends that John 16:14 proves that the Holy Spirit is “a different entity from the Son” (ἕτερον ὑπάρχον παρὰ τὸν υἱόν).⁴⁶ According to him, the “Son” and “Holy Spirit” are not different names for a single reality if in fact the Holy Spirit “receives from” the Son, as John 16:14 states. Eusebius’s reading of the verse presupposes its anti-monarchian utility for distinguishing the giver (Son) from the receiver (Spirit)—as with Tertullian, Origen, and Novatian.

After introducing his reading of John 16:14 in *Ecclesiastical Theology* 3.4, Eusebius elaborates on his point in the following section, 3.5. His elaboration plays on the various ways the Son speaks of the reception of the Holy Spirit. He cites, first, John 14:15-17, which closes with the Son’s statement that the world cannot “receive” the “Spirit of truth.” This is supposed to entail, according to Eusebius, that “the Spirit is another counselor and other than Himself.” Jesus’s breath prepared the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit. The logic of reception guarantees that the Son and the Spirit are distinct entities:

For the one who gives and that which is given could not have been the same, but the one who provides [the Spirit] was the Savior and that which is given was the Holy Spirit, and those received the Spirit were the apostles, while the breath purified the apostles, as I said, or also effected the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, for it is possible to interpret this event in either of these ways.⁴⁷

Eusebius is satisfied that he has shown that “the Holy Spirit is another existing alongside [the Son].” He ratifies this statement by reference to a litany of other

45 Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 3.4.9; Spoerl trans.: ὁ δὲ μονογενὴς υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξεληλυθὲν αὐτὸν διδάσκει διὰ τὸ συνεῖναι αὐτῷ πάντοτε, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον δὲ πνεῦμα ὁμοίως ἕτερον ὑπάρχον παρὰ τὸν υἱόν. ὃ δὴ σαφῶς αὐτὸς ὁ σωτὴρ παρίστησιν λέγων “ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.” ἀντικρυσ γὰρ παραστατικὸν ἂν εἴη τοῦτο τοῦ μὴ εἶναι ἓν καὶ ταῦτὸν τὸν υἱόν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα· τὸ γὰρ παρ’ ἑτέρου λαμβάνον τι ἕτερον παρὰ τὸν διδόντα νοεῖται.

46 Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 3.4.9.

47 Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 3.5.2-3; Spoerl trans. τὸ δὲ διδόναι αὐτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα πάλιν ἕτερον αὐτὸν παρίστη τοῦ διδομένου· οὐκ ἂν γὰρ ὁ αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ διδοὺς καὶ τὸ διδόμενον, ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν παρέχων ἦν ὁ σωτὴρ, τὸ δὲ διδόμενον τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, οἱ δὲ λαμβάνοντες οἱ ἀπόστολοι, τὸ δ’ ἐμφύσημα καθαρτικὸν ὡς ἔφην τῶν ἀποστόλων ἢ καὶ ἐνεργητικὸν τῆς μεταδόσεως τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ἐκατέρως γὰρ νοεῖν δυνατὸν.

passages.⁴⁸ Upon returning to the question of Jesus's "breath" he comes to a more precise statement about the Holy Spirit's transcendence over all other spiritual powers:

For when "He breathed upon" [them], then, He also gave to them a share in the grace of the Holy Spirit, such as could effect the forgiveness of sins. For "there are varieties of gifts," of which a part were given to [the disciples] when [the Savior] lived with them, and after these He filled them with an [even] greater and more perfect power. He spoke to [the apostles] about this in the Acts of the Apostles: "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

A little further on, Eusebius concludes that

the Savior Himself taught that the Holy Spirit exists as another besides Himself, outstanding in honor and glory and privileges, greater and higher than any [other] intellectual and rational substance (for which reason He has been taken up into the Holy and thrice-blessed Trinity). Yet He is surely subordinate to [the Son]. Indeed [the Son] showed this when He said, "For He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak"—obviously, from my treasure. For in Him are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Therefore, He Himself, seeing as He is the only-begotten Son, receives from the Father and listens to Him, while the Holy Spirit supplies what He receives [from the Son]. Hence He says, "He will take what is mine and declare it to you."⁴⁹

Following this clear subordination of the Holy Spirit to the Son and the Father, Eusebius acknowledges both that the Father and Son, too, are spiritual.

48 John 14:23, John 14:25-26, John 16:7, John 5:19, John 20:17.

49 Eusebius, *Eccles. theol.* 3.5.17-19; Spoerl trans. αὐτὸς ὁ σωτὴρ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἕτερον ὑπάρχειν παρ' ἑαυτὸν ἐδίδαξεν, τιμῇ μὲν καὶ δόξῃ καὶ πρεσβείοις ὑπερέχον καὶ κρείττον καὶ ἀνώτερον πάσης τῆς νοεράς καὶ λογικῆς τυγχάνον οὐσίας (διὸ καὶ συμπαρείληπται τῇ ἁγίᾳ καὶ τρισμακαρία τριάδι), ὑποβεβηκὸς γε μὴν [εἶναι] αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ παρίστη εἰπὼν "οὐ γὰρ ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ λαλήσει, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει". παρὰ τίνος δὲ ἀκούσει, διασαφεῖ λέγων "ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν", ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ δηλαδὴ θησαυροῦ· ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ "εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι". αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν ἄτε υἱὸς μονογενῆς παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς λαμβάνει καὶ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀκούει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον παρ' αὐτοῦ χορηγεῖται· διὸ φησιν "ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν".

He then walks a fine line between overt angelomorphic pneumatology and his own position.

... given that the Holy Spirit is another alongside the Father and the Son, showing his individuality (*idioma*), the Savior has called Him Counselor, distinguishing Him from the common run of angels through the title “Counselor.” For the angelic powers also are spirits. For it has been said, “He who makes His angels spirits.”⁵⁰ But none of these can be equal to the Spirit-Counselor. For this reason, only this [Spirit] has been taken up into the holy and thrice-blessed Trinity.⁵¹

Eusebius feels pressed to explain the presence of the Holy Spirit in the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19. This is the second time he has said that the Holy Spirit “has been taken up into the . . . Trinity.” A few lines later, he confirms that, indeed, the Father makes all things through the Son—“both visible and invisible and surely also . . . the very existence of the Spirit-Counselor.”⁵² Eusebius does not state explicitly that the Holy Spirit is an angelic being, but he leaves open the possibility that the Holy Spirit is a created spiritual being “taken up” into the Trinity on account of its holiness.

III Eunomius: “The Holy Spirit is Filled with Sanctification and Instruction”

It ought now to be clear that by the time Eunomius came to write his *Apology*, the fact that the Holy Spirit is said to “receive from” the Son in John 16:14, paired with an anti-monarchian tradition of reading John 16:14, would entail a logic according to which the Holy Spirit is inferior to the Son because he “receives from” the Son. The Spirit’s inferiority could reasonably entail an angelomorphic

50 Quoting Hebr. 1:7.

51 Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 3.5.21; Spoerl trans. ἀλλὰ γὰρ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἑτέρου ὄντος παρὰ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν, τὸ ἰδίωμα παριστάς ὁ σωτὴρ κέκληκεν αὐτὸ παράκλητον, τὸ κοινὸν τῆς ὁμωνυμίας ἀφορίζων διὰ τῆς τοῦ παρακλήτου προσηγορίας, ἐπεὶ καὶ αἱ ἀγγελικαὶ δυνάμεις εἶεν ἂν πνεύματα· “ὁ” γὰρ “ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα” εἴρηται. ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν τούτων ἐξισοῦσθαι δύναται τῷ παρακλήτῳ πνεύματι. διὸ τῆ ἁγία καὶ τρισμακαρία τριάδι . . . The “individuality” (*idioma*) of the Spirit’s *hypostasis* derives from Origen’s *Commentary on John*, and it is later emphasized by Eunomius in *Apol.* 25.17. Eunomius describes the Spirit as “having his own existence” (ἰδίαν ἔχον ὑπόστασιν).

52 Eusebius cites John 1:3 to support this contention.

pneumatology, especially if it were combined with subtle attention to Origen's *Commentary on John*. Such a low pneumatology would have considerable authority.

Eunomius wrote his first *Apology* in 360, and Basil did not respond to it for at least three and perhaps as many as five years.⁵³ Didymus was one of the first to respond. Lewis Ayres has suggested that Didymus's reading of John 16:14 responds to Eunomius's argument, based on Eunomius's combination of John 16:14 with John 5:19, that the Holy Spirit worships the Son.⁵⁴ We can say more, however. For it is not only to Eunomius's exegesis of John 5:19 that Didymus responds in *On the Holy Spirit*. He responds to a basic logic dependent upon anti-monarchian exegesis of John 16:14.

Consider the context of Eunomius's compressed pneumatology. Eunomius took cues from both Origen's *Commentary on John 2* and intervening developments in Platonism since Origen's death—possibly the Platonism of Plotinus. The suspicion that, in his *Apology*, Eunomius was drawing on Neoplatonic thought, is not new. That Eunomius was a “Neoplatonist” means different things to different readers, so it is important to specify Eunomius's sources and state clearly the consequences of his Neoplatonic borrowings. That Eunomius had absorbed important points of Neoplatonic doctrine is at least plausible.⁵⁵ However, no one has yet pointed to Eunomius's *Apology* 25 for a point of contact between Eunomius's theology and Neoplatonic philosophy. Yet here is a straightforward correspondence.

In *Apology* 25, Eunomius argues that the “natures” of the three follow their “order.” He claims that when Scripture says we worship “in the Spirit,” it means that the Spirit cannot be the object of worship. The point reinforces an anti-monarchian reading of John 16:14 even if it does not invoke the text directly. Instead of being identical with the Only-Begotten, or another “offspring” of the Father, the Holy Spirit “is third both in nature and in order since he was brought into existence at the command of the Father by the action of the

53 On dating the *Apology*, see Richard Vaggione, *Eunomius: The Extant Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5-9. For dating *On the Holy Spirit*, see DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, *Works on the Spirit*, Introduction; and Mark DelCogliano, “Basil of Caesarea, Didymus the Blind, and the Anti-Pneumatomachian Exegesis of Amos 4:13 and John 1:3,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 61 (2010), 644-58.

54 See Lewis Ayres, “The Holy Spirit as the ‘Undiminished Giver’: Didymus the Blind’s *De Spiritu Sancto* and the Development of Nicene Pneumatology,” in *The Holy Spirit in the Fathers of the Church: The Proceedings of the Seventh International Patristic Conference, Maynooth, 2008*, 57-72 (Portland: Four Courts, 2010), 66-7. Ayres points out that Eunomius bases his position on John 5:19; Eunomius's appeal to John 16:14 is more oblique.

55 See Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence II: The way of negation, Christian and Greek* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1986), 128-59.

Son.”⁵⁶ Eunomius appeals to the precedent of Origen’s *Commentary on John* 2’s exegesis of John 1:3.⁵⁷ Origen had said that “the Holy Spirit is the most honored (τιμιώτερον) of all things made through the Word.” Similarly, Eunomius concludes that the Holy Spirit

is honoured in third place as the first and greatest work of all, the only such “thing made” of the Only-begotten, lacking indeed godhead and the power of creation, but filled with (πεπληρωμένον) sanctification and instruction.⁵⁸

Elsewhere Eunomius invokes a distinction between the one who worships and who is worshipped (ὁ τε προσκυνούμενος τοῦ προσκυνούντος) as an interpretation of Jesus’s statement, in John 16:14, that the Holy Spirit “will glorify me.”⁵⁹ The logic implied by John 16:14 also appears in Eunomius’s pneumatology under the rubric of the Holy Spirit’s “being filled.”⁶⁰ This characteristic of the Holy Spirit takes precedence for Eunomius, presumably because it is logically primary. It is one of two distinctive features of the single chapter Eunomius devotes to the Holy Spirit in his first *Apology*. The other distinctive argument is one he shares with Didymus. It is the anti-monarchian argument that the Holy Spirit is a divine agent, not merely an activity of God.⁶¹

Eunomius’s statement that the Holy Spirit’s being “filled with sanctification and instruction” (ἀγιαστικῆς δὲ καὶ διδασκαλικῆς πεπληρωμένον) deserves attention. Origen had suggested that “the Holy Spirit has need of the Son ministering to his hypostasis.”⁶² And if the Holy Spirit’s role is to sanctify, then the Spirit must have received the power to sanctify from the Son, just as the Son received

56 Eunomius, *Apol.* 25.22-24: ἀλλὰ τρίτον καὶ φύσει καὶ τάξει, προστάγματι τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ γενόμενον, τρίτῃ χώρᾳ τιμώμενον ὡς πρῶτων καὶ μείζον πάντων καὶ μόνον τοιοῦτου τοῦ μονογενοῦς ποίημα . . .

57 See Origen, *Jo.* 2.73-75, here at 2.75: τὸ πάντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου γενομένων τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα πάντων εἶναι τιμιώτερον καὶ τάξει πρῶτων πάντων τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς διὰ Χριστοῦ γεγεννημένων.

58 Eunomius, *Apol.* 25.

59 Eunomius, *Apol.* 20.21.

60 Eunomius, *Apol.* 25.

61 The subtle point that the Holy Spirit is “filled” does not reappear, however, in the summary confessional statement appended in the manuscript tradition to the *Apology*. For more on this issue, see Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, “The Holy Spirit as Agent, Not Activity: Origen’s Argument with Modalism and Its Afterlife in Didymus, Eunomius, and Gregory of Nazianzus,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 3 (2011), 227-48.

62 Origen, *Jo.* 2.76: . . . ἔοικε τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα διακονοῦντος αὐτοῦ τῇ ὑποστάσει, οὐ μόνον εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφὸν εἶναι καὶ λογικὸν καὶ δίκαιον καὶ πᾶν ὅτιποσούν χρῆσθαι αὐτὸ νοεῖν τυγχάνειν κατὰ μετοχὴν τῶν προειρημένων ἡμῖν Χριστοῦ ἐπινοιών.

his various titles from the Father. Eunomius's assertion makes sense as the formulation of a logical consequence of Origen's theology in the *Commentary on John* 2. It also fits with broader anti-monarchian reading of John 16:14.

It was not only Origen's precedent that gave weight to Eunomius's pneumatology. The Platonic tradition had continued to develop along lines concordant with Origen's hierarchical ordering of first principles. Origen himself had initiated a coupling of Hebrews 1:3 with Wisdom 7:25-26 to describe the Son, as the Father's Wisdom, an "ἀπόρροια of the pure glory of the Almighty." Origen uses ἀπόρροια to distinguish the Son's divine origin: he radiates as an ἀπόρροια not from the Father himself, but from his glory, as Hebrews 1:3 states.⁶³ Origen's statement, however, begs an important question: what does it mean to call the Son an "emanation" (ἀπόρροια) of the Father's glory?

The term ἀπόρροια is frequent in neither Scripture nor the Middle Platonic tradition. Numenius never uses it, nor does Alcinous in his *Didaskalikon*. Whereas Plotinus and other Platonists speak generically of incorporeal procession, the term ἀπόρροια and its cognate terms mark Plotinus' thought.⁶⁴ Plotinus also speaks—if only once—of an overflowing (ὑπερερρῶν) of the One. Plotinus nevertheless remained squeamish about using physical metaphors to describe the One.⁶⁵

In Plotinus's scheme of emanation, the One "spills over" and produces the One existent, which in turn generates the primal triad Being-Life-Mind. Plotinus describes the first being to proceed from the One as "filled" by the One when it "halts" and turns to "look toward" the One.⁶⁶

This, we may say, is the first act of generation: the One, perfect because it seeks nothing, has nothing, and needs nothing, *overflows* (ὑπερερρῶν), as it were, and its superabundance makes something other than itself. This, when it has come into being, turns back upon the One and *is filled* (ἐπληρώθη), and becomes Intellect by looking towards it. Its halt and turning towards the one constitutes being, its gaze upon the One, Intellect.

63 See Origen, *Jo.* 13.25; cf. *Princ.* 1.2.10.

64 For ἀπόρροια, see *Enn.* II.3.11.9 and especially III.4.3.25, where Plotinus describes "outpouring" in terms of the doctrine of undiminished giving; for other occurrences, see, e.g., *Enn.* II.1.3.26-28; III.2.2.18; VI.8.9.45; VI.7.22.8 (quoting Plato, *Phaedrus* 251b).

65 John Whittaker, "Proclus, Procopius, Psellus, and the Scholia on Gregory Nazianzen," *Vigiliae Christianae* 29 (1975), 309-313, at 1. See *Enn.* 5.2.11. Though Plotinus only used the term ὑπερερρῶν here, the usage caught the eye of many commentators and enjoyed widespread later influence in the Platonic tradition. Gregory Nazianzen appears to have known this particular line in the *Enneads*, if not others. See, famously, *Or.* 29.2.

66 Plotinus, *Enn.* V.2.1.

Since it halts and turns towards the One that it may see, it becomes at once Intellect and being. Resembling the One thus, Intellect produces in the same way, *pouring forth* (προχέας) a multiple power—this is a likeness of it—just as that which was before it *poured it forth* (προέχεε). This activity springing from the substance of Intellect is Soul, which comes to be this while Intellect abides unchanged: for Intellect too comes into being while that which is before it abides unchanged. But Soul does not abide unchanged when it produces: it is moved and so brings forth an image. It looks to its *source* and *is filled* (πληροῦται), and going forth to another opposed movement generates its own image, which is sensation and the principle of growth in plants.⁶⁷

Plotinus here delineates a process of emanation from the One to Nous to Soul. He uses several forms of the verb πληρώω to describe the procession.

Eunomius insists that the Holy Spirit is “filled” (πληροῦται), and his insistence invites comparison with Plotinian emanation.⁶⁸ It is difficult to know whether Eunomius used Plotinus’s *Ennead* v.2 directly in order to argue that the Holy Spirit is “filled.” His statement is far too compressed to command certainty, even if the logic fits. But it does seem probable that Eunomius drew on

67 Plotinus, *Enn.* V.2.1.7-22; Armstrong trans., 59-61. καὶ πρώτη οἷον γέννησις αὐτῆ· ὃν γὰρ τέλειον τῷ μηδὲν ζητεῖν μηδὲ ἔχειν μηδὲ δεῖσθαι οἷον ὑπερερρῆ καὶ τὸ ὑπερπλήρες αὐτοῦ πεποιήκεν ἄλλο· τὸ δὲ γεγόμενον εἰς αὐτὸ ἐπεστράφη καὶ ἐπληρώθη καὶ ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπον καὶ νοῦς οὗτος. Καὶ ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο στάσις αὐτοῦ τὸ ὄν ἐποίησεν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ θέα τὸν νοῦν. Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔστη πρὸς αὐτό, ἵνα ἴδῃ, ὁμοῦ νοῦς γίγνεται καὶ ὄν. Οὗτος οὖν ὢν οἷον ἐκεῖνος τὰ ὅμοια ποιεῖ δύνανται προχέας πολλήν—εἶδος δὲ καὶ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ—ὥσπερ αὐτὸ αὐτοῦ πρότερον προέχεε· καὶ αὕτη ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς τοῦτο μένοντος ἐκεῖνου γενομένη· καὶ γὰρ ὁ νοῦς μένοντος τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο. Ἡ δὲ οὐ μένουσα ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ κινήθεισα ἐγέννα εἶδωλον. Ἐκεῖ μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα, ὅθεν ἐγένετο, πληροῦται, προελθοῦσα δὲ εἰς κίνησιν ἄλλην καὶ ἐναντίαν γεννᾷ εἶδωλον αὐτῆς αἴσθησιν καὶ φύσιν τὴν ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς.

68 John Rist demonstrated, in an important article from 1981, that even *Enn.* v.1’s most striking metaphysical aspects redound to earlier tendencies in Middle Platonism, available to the likes of Clement and Origen (and others) without access to Plotinus’s *Enneads*, and Rist’s argument stands unchallenged. See John Rist, “Basil’s ‘Neoplatonism’: Its Background and Nature,” in Paul J. Fedwick, ed., *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium* (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1981), 137-220. Significant traces of Plotinus are not to be found prior to the late fourth century among Christians. In fact, third- and fourth-century Christians need not have encountered Plotinus to adumbrate a Christian God as a series of three principles, or *hypostases*, arranged in an emanative scheme. Parallels with Gnosticism notwithstanding, Christians might have taken cues from Numenius, if they saw fit.

Plotinus, and his pneumatology could cite the precedent of Origen's pneumatology in the *Commentary on John*.

Eunomius did not simply reproduce a Platonic scheme in Christian guise. He was adapting a traditional feature of Platonist metaphysics—ontological hierarchy—for an end to which that feature had been put in anti-monarchian Christian polemic for generations. Anti-monarchians since Origen had tended to use a generically Platonic grammar of participation to distinguish between the three and to range them hierarchically in “vertical” order. Had Eunomius turned to Origen's statement in *Commentary on John* that the Holy Spirit “has need of the Son ministering to his *hypostasis*,” it would have been difficult for him not to see Plotinus's language of one existent's being “filled” by its superior. The fit between Origen's pneumatology and Plotinian ontology in hindsight was sensible enough, and Eunomius drew the sensible conclusion. The Holy Spirit is a celestial creature “filled” by the Father with the Son's virtues.⁶⁹

IV Didymus Against Eunomius: “I Will Pour Out my Spirit”

In *On the Holy Spirit*, Didymus offered one of the first straightforward denials that the Holy Spirit is “an invisible creature.”⁷⁰ But whose proposition did he deny? The account to follow is not the first to suggest that Didymus recognized and resisted an earlier, stronger tradition in Alexandria that involved the Holy Spirit as the leader of the angelic host in a heavenly liturgy.⁷¹ I argue, however, that Didymus was not only responding to angelomorphic pneumatology generally or generically. He was responding to a specific instance of it: the explicitly low pneumatology of Eunomius's *Apology* 25.⁷²

69 Other instances of John 16:14's reception are worthy of attention but occur too late to have been relevant to the dispute between Didymus and Eunomius. One is especially ironic. Epiphanius uses the verse to castigate Paul of Samosata's latter-day defenders. The irony is that Epiphanius has taken up a position on this verse that stands in line with Eunomius, who in turn derived it from Origen, whom Epiphanius would not have relished having inspired his own view on the trinity. See Epiphanius, *Panarion* II, 65.6.8.

70 Didymus, *Spir.* 62.

71 See Alasdair Heron, “The Holy Spirit in Origen and Didymus the Blind: A Shift in Perspective from the Third to the Fourth Century,” in *Kerygma und Logos*, ed. by Adolf Martin Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979) 298–310.

72 My account here broadens the basis for the perspective taken by the text's recent translators. See DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, 40–42; and Ayres, “Undiminished Giver.”

Didymus makes extensive use of participation terminology.⁷³ A thoroughgoing distinction between God, as substantially good, and creatures, as good-by-reception or participation, is fundamental to Didymus’s strategy in *On the Holy Spirit*.⁷⁴ Didymus sets himself the task of answering this key question: is the Holy Spirit holy in and of himself, or is the Holy Spirit holy “through participation in another’s sanctity”?⁷⁵ Didymus is at pains to differentiate the Holy Spirit from the angels, and his definition of participation depends on a distinction between angels, which are mutable, and the divine nature, which is not. Didymus’s linking of the ability to be participated with immutability forms the basis of his argument that the Holy Spirit is not an angel. An angel, by definition, can change. “The Divine Utterances demonstrate that the angels changed and fell.”⁷⁶ Most angels preserved in blessedness, but “those who were similar in nature to them that changed,” so the difference between an angel that falls and one that does not is a difference in degree, not kind. It is the *nature* of an angel to have the capability of “falling away.” Angels are capable of conversion, whereas the source of divine nature is not.

Motivating Didymus’s insistence on the mutability of angels is Origen’s doctrine of the pre-existence of rational entities that fell away from their Creator. Origen distinguishes between God in which goodness resides naturally, or essentially, and the good angels, in which goodness resides as a separable accident.⁷⁷ In Rufinus’s translation of *On First Principles*, Origen says everything created by God is mutable intrinsically. He explains that because

rational beings . . . were made when before they did not exist, by this very fact that they did not exist and then began to exist they are of necessity

73 In the following discussion, for numeration of the text of Didymus’ *On the Holy Spirit*, I refer to L. Doutreleau, S.J., ed., *Didyme l’Aveugle Traité du Saint-Esprit* (sc, 386) (Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1992).

74 The wide-ranging deployment of this concept and its attendant terminology by Didymus in *On the Holy Spirit* provided some of Mingarelli’s most compelling evidence in his case for Didymus’ authorship of *On the Trinity*, a text that also shows a widespread polemical use of the concept. See L. Doutreleau, *Le De Trinitate est-il l’Oeuvre de Didyme l’Aveugle?* in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 45 (1967), 514-57, at 529: “. . . these nearly identical formulations regarding the participated Spirit are found nowhere else. Neither Athanasius, nor Pseudo-Athanasius, nor Basil, nor Epiphanius, nor even those who came after him, Jerome and Ambrose, imagined this precision, which permits the explication of certain exceptions in using πνεῦμα without the article by protecting its divine sense.”

75 Didymus, *Spir.* 19.

76 Didymus, *Spir.* 58: *Nam et angelorum conuersiones et ruinas diuina eloquia demonstrant.*

77 See, for example, *Princ.* 1.V.3.

subject to change and alteration. For whatever may have been the goodness that existed in their being, it existed in them not by nature but as a result of their Creator's beneficence."⁷⁸

Rational entities are created, so they are mutable. Because created rational entities possess goodness as a separable attribute, they can lose goodness. Origen opposes the fact that rational entities participate in goodness with God's possession of goodness without the possibility of loss.⁷⁹

Returning to Didymus, some were deducing from the Holy Spirit's low ontological status that the Holy Spirit is a created rational entity like the good angels. Like those good angels, the Holy Spirit would remain a creature that receives goodness. Nevertheless, there would remain the logical possibility that the Holy Spirit could cease to possess goodness because the Spirit receives it. The difference between the Angel of the Holy Spirit and the rest of the angelic host would be a difference in degree, not kind. That the Holy Spirit could change would be a logical consequence of its angelic nature and so, theoretically at least, it could fall.

However, Didymus identifies the Holy Spirit with the divine and immutable source of all mutable goods. He makes the identification by defining participation in terms of causality, as follows:

Now because he is good, God is the source and principle of all goods. Therefore he makes good those to whom he imparts himself; he is not made good by another, but is good. Hence it is possible to participate in him but not for him to participate.⁸⁰

Didymus moves immediately from this definition of God's goodness as uncaused to an application of it to the Son's divinity. Because Scripture speaks of the Son as God's "wisdom,"

78 Origen, *Princ.* 11.9.2: Butterworth trans., 130; *rationabiles istae naturae . . . factae sunt cum ante non essent, hoc ipso, quia non erant et esse coeperunt, necessario conuertibiles et mutabiles substiterunt, quoniam quaecumque illa inerat substantiae earum uirtus, non naturaliter inerat sed beneficio conditoris effecta*; GCS p. 165.

79 Didymus, *Spir.* 56; note the similarity between Rufinus's translation of Origen and Jerome's translation of Didymus. Rufinus's Origen describes the angels as *conuertibiles*, and Jerome's Didymus states that the Holy Spirit is *inconuertibile*. That Didymus has swayed Rufinus's translation of Origen is a tantalizing prospect.

80 Didymus, *Spir.* 17: *Deus uero cum bonus sit, fons et principium omnium bonorum est. Facit igitur bonos eos quibus se impertit, bonus ipse non factus ab alio, sed subsistens: ideo capabilis, non capax.*

[the Father’s] only-begotten Son is *Wisdom* [1 Cor 1.24] and sanctification; he does not become wise but makes wise, and he is not sanctified but sanctifies. For this reason too it is possible to participate in him but not for him to participate.⁸¹

The strategy is to associate the Son with a title (here, “Wisdom”) that suggests the Son is a “source” on the same level with God the Father. The Father does not participate in some higher goodness; the Son does not participate in some higher “wisdom.” Neither, then, can be said to participate. The Son is a *source* in the same way the Father is. So, too, Didymus argues, is the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is also an immutable, eternal substance, then the Holy Spirit cannot be identified with created substances such as angels.⁸²

Didymus’s argument that the Holy Spirit must be characterized as immutable and “participated but not participating” is exegetical. Its contours fit with a polemic against Eunomius’s pneumatology in *Apology* 25. Didymus offers a distinctive case for the Holy Spirit’s identity as immutable divine source by showing that the language of “pouring forth,” used in Romans 5:5 and Joel 2:28, is reserved by Scripture for the divine nature alone, as opposed to angelic creatures. God sends, and does not “pour forth,” angels, he argues.⁸³ A being that is “poured forth” is a being that is “participated in by others.”⁸⁴ Didymus’s insistence is motivated by an alternative reading of Scripture according to which the Holy Spirit is itself “filled” by the higher power of Christ. That view belongs to Eunomius.

In *Spir.* 31-33, Didymus groups a number of biblical texts that speak of “filling.” In order, they are: Luke 1:15 (*implebitur*), Luke 1:41 (*repleta*), Luke 1:67 (*repletus*), Acts 2:4 (*repleti sunt*), Acts 4:31 (*repleti sunt*), Ephesians 5:18 (*implemini*), Acts 6:3 (*plenos*), and Acts 7:55 (*plenus*). Of these texts, we are left to guess what Didymus’s Greek might have been, but the uniformity in Jerome’s translation

81 Didymus, *Spir.* 17: *Unigenitus quoque Filius eius, sapientia et sanctificatio, non fit sapiens, sed sapientes facit, et non sanctificatur, sed sanctificat. Unde et ipse capabilis est, et non capax.*

82 Didymus, *Spir.* 55; DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, Ayres 13. *Capabilem substantiam uocat, quae capiatur a plurimis et eis sui consortium tribuat; capacem uero eam quae communicatione substantiae alterius impleatur, et capiens aliud, ipsa non capiatur ab alio.*

83 Didymus, *Spir.* 49-50.

84 Didymus, *Spir.* 50. Cf. Didymus, *Spir.* 34: “Therefore, whoever fills all creatures, at least those which are able to participate in power and wisdom, is not one of those whom he himself fills. It must be concluded from this that his nature is different from that of all creatures.” This is a form of an argument that, whatever else might be said of the Holy Spirit, it differs *substantially* from creatures.

is striking: whatever Jerome's biblical text might have been, Didymus had amassed a group of texts that all refer to a similar set of terms. If the modern critical text is close to the text Didymus had before him, then Didymus was not concerned with a set of terms, but with a single term. In the critical edition of these texts, the following forms appear: Luke 1:15 (πλησθήσεται), Luke 1:41 (ἐπλήσθη), Luke 1:67 (ἐπλήσθη), Acts 2:4 (ἐπλήσθησαν), Acts 4:31 (ἐπλήσθησαν), Ephesians 5:18 (πληροῦσθε), Acts 6:3 (πλήρεις), and Acts 7:55 (πλήρης). It does not seem a stretch to suggest that Didymus is making a point about a single term's Scriptural use. The point hinges on the sense one gives to the Greek verb πληρόω and its derivative forms.⁸⁵

Usage of the term πληρόω is not widespread in Platonic discourse. Plotinus's use of it in *Ennead* v.2, alongside his more idiosyncratic vocabulary, is distinctive. So when Didymus uses the term to describe the Holy Spirit as an agent, not an object, of its activity, the evidence should point us in the direction of Plotinus, not simply the broader Platonic tradition. Yet, this fact does not resolve the question of whether Didymus knew Plotinus. It only suggests that Plotinus's terminology motivated Eunomius's pneumatology. Recall that the term πληρόω (the root of Plotinus's ἐπλήρώθη) appears both in Plotinus and in Eunomius's statement that the Holy Spirit is filled with the power of sanctification and instruction.⁸⁶ It is also behind Jerome's Latin translation of Didymus when he writes, for example, that "the presence of an angel or some other lofty nature that was made fills (*non implet*) neither the mind nor the understanding since it too is filled up (*completur*) from elsewhere," or that the Holy Spirit "is not one of those whom he himself fills (*non est ex his quae ipse complet*)."⁸⁷

Didymus seizes upon the language of "pouring forth" to argue that any entity that is "poured forth is participated in by others." The language of "pouring forth," recall, had been reserved by Plotinus for the One alone. Only the One "overflows" in Plotinus's scheme. Porphyry speaks of one substance's "completion" or "filling" (συμπλήρωσις) of another substance—both "becoming one with the other substance" *and* not ceasing to be what it is. Behind Porphyry's logic is a version of the doctrine of the "undiminished giver" according to which that "source" imparts its qualities without change or loss.

In addition to refuting Eunomius's implicit appeal to Scripture, Didymus adds, positively, that Scripture reserves a special manner of speaking for the

85 Athanasius does not apply the terms for "filling" to the Holy Spirit, reserving instead the metaphor for "fountain" and "river" to the Father and Son, respectively. Cf. Athanasius, *Serap.* 1.19.2.4.

86 Vaggione trans., 69. Rist (1981) does not notice the reference.

87 Didymus, *Spir.* 34.

Holy Spirit: the Holy Spirit is “poured out.” Compared to Athanasius, Basil, and Gregory Nazianzen, only Didymus makes much of the fact that Scripture never speaks of God “pouring out” angels and reserves such terminology for the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is nowhere said to be “filled,” and if Scripture additionally speaks of the Holy Spirit as “poured out,” Didymus argues that the Holy Spirit cannot be identified with angelic entities, which are “sent” but not “poured out.” Positively, the Holy Spirit must be identified with divine nature in the same way that the Father and the Son are.

That the Holy Spirit *does* participate in the Son was an axiom that marked a venerable anti-monarchian theological position stretching back at least to Didymus’s own intellectual master, Origen. Eunomius could legitimate his pneumatology by direct recourse to that tradition’s authority in Eusebius. In opposing Eunomius, Didymus was guarding Origen’s legacy against some of its most extreme consequences.

V Conclusion

Didymus opposes Eunomius’s theology of the Holy Spirit in spite of the fact that Eunomius’s pneumatology draws on Origen’s *Commentary on John* and a well-established anti-monarchian tradition of ordering the trinitarian persons hierarchically on the basis of John 16:14. In addition to arguing at length and in various ways that the Holy Spirit “is participated but does not participate,” Didymus insists that the Holy Spirit “fills” creatures as it is “poured out.” And to be “poured out,” Didymus argues, is not something Scripture says about created entities like angels. Only the divine nature, and so only the Holy Spirit, can be “poured out” in order to “fill” creatures. Didymus’s polemic requires sensitivity to the philosophical force of Eunomius’s position. Though he may not have known Plotinus’s *Enneads*, Didymus had to know enough Platonism to recognize a conceptual threat to the full divinity of the Holy Spirit when he saw one, and the threat derives from the logic of divine nature that “fills but is not filled.”

One lesson to take from the case of Didymus’s *On the Holy Spirit* is that caution is appropriate in noticing parallels between fourth-century Christians and Neoplatonic texts. Didymus had a wealth of indirect exposure to Hellenistic philosophy through his access to Origen’s writings, as well as the writings that had accumulated in Alexandria’s library since Origen’s death. Given the relative dearth of contact between Plotinian Platonism and Christianity prior to the late fourth century, we should take even more caution. If Didymus wrote *On the Holy Spirit* in 361, he is more likely to have drawn on and reacted to Origen and Middle Platonism than Plotinian Platonism, since Plotinus’s

influence seems not to have penetrated to influential Christian intellectual circles until the 380s, beginning with Basil of Caesarea.⁸⁸ Yet Didymus should not be dismissed as only having absorbed philosophy through “catechetical” means. Though Didymus may not have known Plotinus directly, he was shrewd enough to recognize Eunomius’s use of Platonism to radicalize Origen’s theology. Scholarship unaware of connections like these could only remain insensitive to them because of a single but important presumption that should be abandoned: Didymus the Blind was not a subtle thinker.

88 Rist, “Basil’s Neoplatonism,” remains important for its survey of evidence indicating a lack of Christian awareness of Plotinian or Porphyrian Platonism prior to 380 CE.