Pro-Nicene Hermeneutical Techniques in the preaching of John Chrysostom: A case study of the homilies on John

by

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I certify that the substance of this dissertation of 29,562 words (excluding bibliography), has not previously been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree. I also certify that any assistance received in conducting the research embodied in the dissertation, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in the text or notes.

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Abstract

In light of recent contributions to our understanding of fourth century developments in the area of theological and trinitarian reflection by Lewis Ayres and John Behr, this paper seeks to develop and apply a set of nine criteria as a litmus test for pro-Nicene theological practices in the writings of John Chrysostom. With initial historical background in a number of elements pertaining to Chrysostom, namely social setting, rhetorical training, patristic exegetical practices, and the fourth century debates, the thesis then proceeds to identify these nine criteria which may be used as a basis for a close reading of Chrysostom. These nine criteria are then applied to Chrysostom’s Homilies on John, a series of sermons traditionally regarded as dominated by polemical and theological concerns. The presence of the majority of criteria and those of greatest significance establishes the case that Chrysostom be considered pro-Nicene in his theological approach as well as his doctrinal conclusions, and advances our understanding of the way theology and the reading of scripture mutually inform one another in this period and specifically within Chrysostom’s treatment of the Fourth Gospel.
# Contents

List of Abbreviations

0.1 Introduction

0.2 Textual Basis

Chapter 1: Historical Backgrounds to Chrysostom’s Preaching

1.1 Chrysostom’s Life

1.2 Antioch in the Fourth Century

1.3 The influence of the Second Sophistic, and the School of Libanios

1.4 Patristic Exegesis

1.5 Fourth Century Debates over Trinitarian Doctrine

1.6 Aetius, Eunomius, and the Heterousians

Chapter 2: Nine hermeneutic techniques common to pro-Nicene theologians of the Fourth Century

2.0 Section Introduction

2.1 Partitive Exegesis

2.2 The Simplicity of God

2.3 The Doctrine of Inseparable operations

2.4 Post-Constantinople Nicene Terminology

2.5 The utility and limitations of analogy

2.6 The Incomprehensibility of God

2.7 Purification of the Soul

2.8 The Semiotics of Creation

2.9 (Anti-Eunomian) Polemics against Logic, Rhetoric, and Sophistry

Chapter 3: Chrysostom’s usage of the nine hermeneutic techniques in his preaching on the Gospel of John

3.0 Overview of the homilies

3.1 Partitive Exegesis

3.2 The Simplicity of God

3.3 The Doctrine of Inseparable operations

3.4 Post-Constantinople Nicene Terminology

3.5 The utility and limitations of analogy

3.6 The Incomprehensibility of God

3.7 Purification of the Soul

3.8 The Semiotics of Creation

3.9 (Anti-Eunomian) Polemics against Logic, Rhetoric, and Sophistry

Chapter 4: Conclusions

Bibliography

Primary Text:

Secondary Texts:
## List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Journal Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABR</td>
<td>Australian Biblical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BibInt</td>
<td>Biblical Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colloq</td>
<td>Colloquium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTJ</td>
<td>Calvin Theological Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Journal of Eccliastical History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Orientalia christiana periodica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>Patrologia Graecia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProEccl</td>
<td>Pro Ecclesia</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Scripta theologica</td>
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<tr>
<td>StPrat</td>
<td>Studia patristica</td>
</tr>
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<td>SVTQ</td>
<td>St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLG</td>
<td>Thesaurus linguae graecae: Canon of Greek Authors and Works</td>
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<tr>
<td>TS</td>
<td>Theological Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Vigiliae Christianae</td>
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<td>WTJ</td>
<td>Westminster Theological Journal</td>
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0.1 Introduction

In recent years traditional schematisations of the history of theological debate during the 4th Century period, specifically those centred around the Councils of Nicaea in 325 and Constantinople in 381, the Trinitarian and Christological issues involved, and the development and resolution of various viewpoints on those issues, have been challenged and largely revised. Firstly there was a revision of our understanding of Arius, and perhaps more significantly, those traditionally labelled ‘Arians’, who now it appears had very little to do with the theological lineage of Arius at all.¹ This resulted in a more complex and nuanced understanding of the theology of those identified as Homoiousians, Homoians, and Anomoians.

Secondly, and more recently, Lewis Ayres has produced a substantial, and not uncontested, revisionist history of the whole period, turning attention from the theologians-formerly-known-as-Arians, to those traditionally identified as Homoousians, Orthodox, or Nicene.² He, in concert with Barnes, refers to the pro-Nicenes as a number of theologians who came to articulate theologies that explicitly or implicitly championed the use of Nicene terminology as an expression of their theology, which has come down to us as Classical Trinitarianism.

A large proportion of this historical work has centred, and rightly so, on those figures traditionally regarded as ‘major players’ in the 4th Century debates: Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Augustine³. In this thesis I propose to turn attention to John Chrysostom.

³ Regarding Augustine, not so much because of his role in those debates, but due to the significance of his Trinitarian understanding for the development of Western theological thought. Naturally, *de Trinitate*, but
Long regarded as one of the foremost preachers of Late Antiquity, Chrysostom’s enduring legacy as a preacher and commentator continued to have significant influence. Yet, as a later contemporary to the Cappadocians, he played no significant part in the resolution of ecclesiastical and theological disputes made and represented by Constantinople 381.

Ayres, in his work, speaks repeatedly of common pro-Nicene ‘strategies’ that tie together the pro-Nicene theologians, and of a shared grammar of theological discourse. He identifies three key strategies revolving around pro-Nicene approaches to (1) the unity and diversity of the Trinity, (2) Christology and Cosmology, and (3) Sanctification, Anthropology, and Hermeneutics of Scripture. The question that I propose to address is to what extent can Chrysostom be identified as pro-Nicene on the basis of his hermeneutical strategies. This will both make a case for treating Chrysostom alongside other pro-Nicene thinkers, as well as advance our understanding of Chrysostom’s exegesis by reference to theological dimensions of that exegesis.

In order to answer this question, I propose to do four things.

Firstly, I will briefly review some of the relevant historical background to Chrysostom’s preaching. This will include the historical period of Late Antiquity in Chrysostom’s lifetime; socio-cultural factors that may bear upon his preaching; Greek rhetoric as exemplified by Libanios and his school, and as practiced by classically-trained clergy in the Greek East; the city of Antioch; contours of patristic exegesis with reference to Antioch and Chrysostom’s

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1 Cf. e.g. Richard Gamble, ‘Brevitas et facilias: toward an understanding of Calvin’s hermeneutic’ WTJ 47 no 1 Spr (1985): 8-9. Chrysostom’s influence on the reformers, particularly Calvin, is but one example of his legacy.

2 Ayres, Nicaea and its legacy, chs 11, 12, 13. I will explore these strategies and Ayres’ approach in more detail in section 1.4 and 1.5.
contemporaries; the theological scene of the late 4th century in terms of the continuing and resolving Trinitarian debates.

Secondly, I will outline and articulate nine techniques that I consider representative of pro-Nicene theology. I prefer to describe these as ‘techniques’ rather than ‘strategies’ largely because the strategies that Ayres identifies are broader and more over-arching than those I identify, including several that would be subsumed under a single strategy in Ayres’ taxonomy.

Thirdly, I will apply these nine criteria to a close-reading of Chrysostom’s homilies on John’s Gospel. There are eighty-eight homilies on the Fourth Gospel. I will treat the corpus as a whole, drawing attention to the presence and utilisation of the nine techniques, with a focus on homilies that particularly exemplify those techniques, and texts which formed focal points of polemical discourse. It has been traditional to consider the sermons on John as anti-Anomoian, and so I include some discussion of anti-Anomoian elements. In this section I will also highlight some of Chrysostom’s distinctive treatment of John.

Fourthly, in the light of contemporary trends of pro-Nicene scholarship, exemplified by Behr and Ayres, I will draw some conclusions from the presence and/or absence of these criteria in Chrysostom’s treatment of the Fourth Gospel, with respect to the placement of Chrysostom’s theology and exegetical practice as pro-Nicene, and how this contributes to our understanding of shared pro-Nicene theological practices, as well as Chrysostom’s own hermeneutical and theological methods.
0.2 Textual Basis

I have taken as my Greek text Migne’s edition. This is the text as found in TLG, and a critical edition has yet to appear. The provenance of the Migne text is the 1834 Benedictine edition of Fix, itself a slightly edited version of Montfaucon’s early 18th century edition, corrected at points with the 1613 Savile text. Harkins refers to at least 140 manuscripts, representing a two-fold text tradition. The conflation of those two text traditions, and the lack of a critical edition (despite Harkin’s suggestion of its need), leaves something of a gap in this treatment of Chrysostom’s homilies on John, one that is beyond this study to remedy. Nonetheless, I am unpersuaded that the critical failings of the text bear significantly upon the criteria to be tested or the readings that result.

An interesting textual issue is raised by Taylor, reporting on the work of Boismard and Lamouille, that two different recensions of the Greek text support the hypothesis that the homilies are in fact composite. They suggest that the commentary material that forms the bulk of each homily was originally separate to the largely moral exhortation that concludes it. The often tangential nature of those exhortations is noted, but the bulk of my reading deals with the commentary material, so that the validity of my hypothesis is not challenged by their theory.

Throughout the study I have provided my own translations in the case of material from Chrysostom. The Greek text is provided in footnotes for all the citations. The numbering references are the divisions in the Benedictine edition, followed by the Migne reference.

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Chapter 1: Historical Backgrounds to Chrysostom’s Preaching

In any attempt to study the thought of an historical figure, some degree of historical contextualisation must be undertaken, in order to avoid anachronistic readings, eisegesis, and other errors. In evaluating theological elements in Chrysostom’s exegesis, with reference to a new approach to the theological history of the period, this becomes even more necessary. Therefore in this chapter I outline six elements of historical background which illuminate the figure of Chrysostom in his period, and so ground any analysis of his hermeneutical approach.

1.1 Chrysostom’s Life

On one level it seems almost redundant to talk about John Chrysostom’s life. A preacher who earned the title ‘Golden-mouth’, and has retained it through the history of the church almost needs no introduction. Yet sadly many people’s acquaintance with Chrysostom goes little beyond the meaning of his name.

Born ca. 349 in Antioch, John is a later contemporary to the Cappadocian Fathers by some fifteen to twenty years. Decisively, this age gap meant that much of his prime was in the aftermath and triumph of the Council of Constantinople 381. His family was well-off, his father a civil-servant, his mother a devout Christian who declined to remarry after her husband’s death. John undertook the standard education for someone of his class and time, and probably entered Libanios’ tuition aged 14 or 15.

In this detail, and much of this biography, I am indebted primarily to J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden mouth: the story of John Chrysostom -ascetic, preacher, bishop* (London: Duckworth, 1995).
The ecclesiastical situation in Antioch was complicated by divisions that harkened back to 331\textsuperscript{10} when anti-Nicene proponents ousted Eustathios. The complicated ecclesio-political manoeuvring of 360 lead to 3 rival claimants for the see: Euzoios, a moderate anti-Nicene; Meletios, Homoian in language but pro-Nicene in sympathies; and Paulinos, a staunch pro-Nicene.

Completing rhetorical studies in 367, John seemed headed for a top-class career in the imperial civil service, but in conversation with his friend Basil, they decided rather to devote themselves to the study of the scriptures. Around this time John became a close associate of Meletios, was baptised at Easter 368\textsuperscript{11}, and went on to become the bishop’s aide. He adopted an ascetic lifestyle, and encouraged Maximus (later of Seleukis) as well as Theodore (of Mopsuestia) to join his endeavours. He studied under Diodore, who with Flavian had emerged much earlier as prominent lay leaders of the pro-Eustathios faction in the fall-out from 331.

After 3 years John was appointed a Reader, ca. 371. Shortly thereafter he duped his friend Basil, fleeing an attempt at forced ordination and leaving his friend to it, while he retired to Mt. Silpios and pursued a stricter ascetic regime, firstly in the vicinity of others, then around 376 withdrawing further. This must have been an especially formative time for John, in terms of both his own ascetic practices and later sympathies, as well as study and reflection upon the scriptures. In late 378 he returned to Antioch, forced largely by his deteriorating health which never fully recovered from some of the ill-advised rigours he attempted. His return coincided with the accession of Gratian, the installation of Theodosius, and the general triumph of Nicene orthodoxy. He was soon ordained Deacon, probably early 381, and then Presbyter in early 386, by Flavian (Meletios’ successor). It is

\textsuperscript{10} Kelly, \textit{Golden mouth}, 11. The date is disputed.
\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Ibid.}, 17.
from his time as Presbyter and major assistant to Flavian’s work that much of John’s sermon output belongs. Formative events in this period include his own anti-Anomoian sermons, and the Riot of the Statues during Lent 387.

The particular focus of this study is Chrysostom’s homilies on the Gospel of John. These are typically dated to 391.\(^\text{12}\) It is thus not my intention to provide an extensive resume of John’s life beyond the Antioch period. In late October 397 John was removed discreetly under imperial guidance to Constantinople, to take up that see. John was an active, vigorous bishop, which garnered him many successes, but equally many enemies. He was not always known for tact, and some of his downfall may be attributed to both his character faults and failure (or refusal) to succeed in political manoeuvres. The arrival of the Long Brothers in 401 set in motion a chain of events that led to his first, albeit brief, exile in 403, largely orchestrated by Theophilos of Alexandria, and then the second, more definitive punishment and exile from June 20\(^\text{th}\) 404. This saw John removed temporarily to Nicaea, then more permanently to Cucusos, before a final journey commencing mid-June 407, resulting in the aged and weakened John’s death, September 14\(^{th}\). Though he died in exile and official disgrace, John’s supporters were persistent, and over a number of years his reputation (in the East\(^\text{13}\)) was rehabilitated and restored, with the triumphal return of his remains to Constantinople in 438.

1.2 Antioch in the Fourth Century

In describing fourth-century Antioch, the primary social background to Chrysostom’s upbringing and ministry, we are rather well-equipped through a number of sources. Firstly, Libanios’ letters and orations form a substantial primary source for understanding the city, though with some provisos. These include a recognition of the stylistic constraints of the

\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., 90.

\(^\text{13}\) It was never so tarnished in the West.
rhetorical genre of the epistle, which not only exercised their particular functions (e.g. business correspondence, letters of recommendation, etc.) but more broadly fulfilled a social role between the educated men of the empire. Correlated to the constraints of reading Libanios’ extensive epistolary works, his orations provide a wealth of material which requires an equal degree of care: his panegyrical and invective pieces display a standard of idealisation which can be misleading; the occasions of many of his orations are fictive, read before a small audience but imagined into another setting; the adherence to strict Demosthenian Attic generalises specifics and filters technical terms from the period. Yet despite these difficulties, much can be gleaned from Libanios.

Furthermore, Chrysostom’s own extensive works, much of which was produced during his time in Antioch, cast a different but valuable light on the city. Less significant as an historical source is the 6th century Chronicle of John Malalas.

From Libanios, Chrysostom and Malalas the picture that emerges is of Antioch as the 4th leading city of the Empire, as Ausonius writes, behind Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria. Its administrative area was around 2500 square miles with a rural population anywhere up to 400,000, and an urban population between 150,000 and 300,000 but more than likely closer to 150,000. Chrysostom informs us that ten percent of the population were destitute to the point of requiring charitable alms, and estimates the wealthy at the same proportion.

Wealthy landowners formed something of a hereditary aristocracy and had control of the city council, whose power was in decline under increasing imperial authority. The regular

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15 Ibid., 25-38.
16 Ausonius Ord. urb. nob. ii.22. in Liebeschuetz, Antioch, 92.
17 Ibid., 41.
18 Ibid., 92-98.
19 Ibid., 98. cf. Chrysostom Hom. in Matth. 66.3 (PG 58 630).
presence of Emperors in Antioch or its vicinity brought at once both prestige and serious impositions to the city. The comes orientis appears to be the leading resident figure of Imperial authority, matched by a military figure (either the magister militum per orientem or the dux Syriæ et Euphratensis) who was stationed generally to the East rather than in the city proper. Considerable bodies of tradesmen and shopkeepers made up the urban population. There was also a fairly sharp linguistic divide between the Greek-speaking upper classes, and the Syriac-speaking land-workers and presumably urban underclasses.

‘[T]he volume of trade passing through Antioch must by the standards of the ancient world have been considerable’ as ‘[t]he network of roads linking Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean converges on Antioch.’ Therefore Antioch served as both a trade link to Persia and the Far East, even as it marked the Eastern military frontier of the Empire.

1.3 The influence of the Second Sophistic, and the School of Libanios

Besides the strictly social background of Antioch, Chrysostom emerges in a period and context heavily shaped by the rhetorical schools, to which we now turn. Chrysostom comes at the long tail of the impact of the Second Sophistic period in the Hellenistic world. Traditionally reckoned as a movement beginning in the first century and flourishing into the second, the Second Sophistic reflects a resurgence of appreciation for the art of rhetoric, especially in the Greek-speaking world, and also correspondingly, but in an

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20 Ibid., 115-6.
21 Ibid., 76.
22 Ibid., 77.
24 A resurgence, precisely in that the models of the Second Sophistic were a thoroughly conservative canon of Attic authors, primarily Athenian. Simon Goldhill, ‘Rhetoric and the Second Sophistic’ in The Cambridge
increasingly divergent manner, in the Latin-speaking West. One feature which helps us to understand the rise of the Second Sophistic is the significant shift in the political landscape in the wake of the establishment of Augustus’ Principate and its subsequent absolutising and monarchising heirs. That shift of political power was already on a trajectory before Augustus, but reaches its end in the singular authority of Augustus. This fundamental change in the power-structure at Rome led to the divorce of rhetorical speech from actual political decision making. No longer was rhetoric primarily an art of statecraft, but began to become art for art’s sake. Some of that transition can be seen in orations delivered to Caesar by Cicero after his rise to power, and in subsequent similar power-relations, where a rhetorical set-piece aims to offer advice or persuasion by very indirect means. For example, the overt and ostentatious flattery of an Emperor’s virtue in one respect, as a means to point out that Emperor’s deficiency in that same respect.

Tacitus is a keen observer of the phenomenon of the decline of rhetoric as a discourse for power. The Second Sophistic sees the rise of rhetoric as a self-reflexive art, rhetoric for rhetoric’s sake. This blossoms especially in the East, even though rhetoric there continues for some time to have a political and deliberative role in the somewhat freer affairs of most autonomous cities. The emergence and development of declamations, even declamatory contests, reflects the disappearance of the real power of public oration to influence public affairs, and its segmentation as an elite literary pursuit.

Companion to Ancient Rhetoric (ed. Erik Gunderson; Cambridge, UK ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2009), 228.

25 E.g. Cicero’s Pro Marcello and Pro Rege Deiotaro.

26 Tacitus’ Dialogus de oratoribus treats this as its presenting issue. Similarly in Historiae 1.1 Tacitus writes with regards to history-writing:

nam post conditam urbem octingentos et viginti prioris aevi annos multi auctores rettulerunt, dum res populi Romani memorabantur pari eloquentia ac libertate: postquam bellatum apud Actium atque omnem potentiam ad unum conferri pacis interfuit, magna illa ingenia cessere; simul veritas pluribus modis infracta, primum inscitiæ rei publicæ ut alienæ, mox libidine adzentandi aut rursus odio adversus dominantis

I suggest that what Tacitus says about the political conditions of history is equally true of the situation of meaningful political rhetoric in his day.
While the Second Sophistic as a movement is often dated as closing in 230\textsuperscript{27}, its cultural impact is significant and has a long tail. Rhetoric is seen, well into Late Antiquity, as the art to be learnt by the elites of society, and as a means of preparation for pursuing civil service and public office in the Imperial administration.\textsuperscript{28} It essentially became the dominant educational paradigm, encompassing what we would today term studies in informal logic (the analysis of arguments in common language), literary criticism and theory.\textsuperscript{29}

The fourth century period was characterised by a second significant change, in the relationship between Christians and the Roman establishment.\textsuperscript{30} The end of persecution and gradual shift from marginalised to favoured status that is associated with the ascension of Constantine I leads to a more settled period. This in turn contributes two factors that influence the education levels of church leaders. Firstly, the longevity of leaders not subject to persecution is increased, in turn increasing the output and influence of such leaders. Secondly, the increasing social prominence of the church engages converts from higher social backgrounds. This is reflected in the significant theologians of the century, nearly all of whom have aristocratic backgrounds and rhetorical educations. It is noteworthy, for instance, that of the eight great Latin Fathers, five were rhetorical professors first, and the other three rhetorically trained.\textsuperscript{31} A similar ubiquity of rhetorical training is to be found in Greek Fathers of the period.

\textsuperscript{27} If following Philostratus’ Lives of the Sophists.

\textsuperscript{28} On the way rhetorical education formed a cultural elite, see Peter Brown Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 35–117.


\textsuperscript{30} ‘State’ would be a somewhat anachronistic reading of authority and identity in the Classical World.

\textsuperscript{31} G.A. Kennedy, Classical rhetoric and its Christian and secular tradition from ancient to modern times (Chapel Hill, [N.C]: University of North Carolina Press, 1999): 167. Five rhetorical professors were Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Augustine, while the other three he mentions are Ambrose, Hilary, and Jerome.
Such rhetorical training manifests itself in the Patristic literature in a number of ways. In terms of oratory, Christian preaching of the period shows definite traces of that rhetorical training in the rhetorical techniques employed. This is despite significant, often vehement, censure against the pagan rhetorical tradition. On a more fundamental level, the training of rhetoric in the analysis of argument (specifically stemming from judicial rhetoric and its law-court application) came to be applied in dogmatic theology and doctrinal polemic, while the refinements of literary criticism came similarly to be applied in the reading of the Scriptures, shaping Patristic methods of exegesis and hermeneutics.

In Chrysostom’s case, he was afforded the opportunity to study rhetoric under one of Late Antiquity’s indisputable masters, Libanios of Antioch. Libanios was born in Antioch, 314, and studied rhetoric at Athens, the traditional and undisputed centre for rhetoric in Antiquity, between 336-340. He then taught rhetoric at both Constantinople and Nicomedia, before a brief return to Antioch in 353, and a subsequent, permanent return in 354. He took up the teaching of rhetoric in Antioch and, with the retirement of Zenobios, successfully competed and manouevred to take his chair and become the city’s official sophist. Libanios was a significant cultural and political figure in Antioch, and his correspondents include Julian the Emperor and Basil the Great. Libanios considered himself a contender equal, or superior, in stature to any at Athens (still first in reputation for rhetorical centres) and certainly Constantinople (whose prominence lay in part with its status as the imperial capital). Libanios’ extensive surviving works include numerous...

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32 It may be, I suspect, that the major difference between emerging Christian rhetoric and the earlier pagan rhetoric was that rhetoric among the pagans had become an end in itself, to demonstrate the rhetor’s mastery of rhetoric and so win praise and honour. Christian writers and preachers are instead employing rhetoric to persuade and move audiences towards holiness of life and the pursuit of God, so that the attainment of honour was not primarily self-directed. Whether this rationale holds true requires some investigation, but the invective against rhetoric rarely bears such nuance.


35 The politics more indirectly than the cultural.
orations and epistles and give a uniquely broad perspective on a number of topics, including the city of Antioch, the school of a successful sophist, and the declining paganism of high-cultured elites in Late Antiquity.

That Chrysostom studied under Libanios is not so remarkable, as that he flourished in this educational environment, and like many of his contemporaries took his remarkable learning into the Church. So much so that Libanios is famously reported as saying on his deathbed, when asked who should succeed him, 'John, if only the Christians had not stolen him.' More than a part of Chrysostom’s esteem is due to his mastery of the rhetorical tradition which he and his contemporaries drew from, and a part of his appeal to other leading church figures, both then and since, was that they too were raised and trained in a rhetorically-sensitised culture which had its own refined appreciation of rhetoric as rhetoric.

In this work I do not intend to dwell on a rhetorical study of Chrysostom’s preaching, whether considered as performative pieces or literary ones. Certainly such studies are valuable, as seen for example in Ameringer and Ryan. Despite such value, it is not the primary value of this study, yet I contend that it is indispensible to give recognition to the backdrop of rhetorical culture to Chrysostom’s role as preacher as well as the influence on the content of his sermons.

1.4 Patristic Exegesis

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36 Sozomen Ecclesiastical History 8.2.
38 P.J.Ryan ‘Chrysostom: a derived stylist?’ VC 36 no 1 Mr 1982: 5-14.
39 E.g. D.G. Hunter, ‘Libanius and John Chrysostom: New thoughts on an old problem’ SP 22 (1989): 129-135 which argues ‘that several of Chrysostom’s early ascetical works are concerned with Libanious’ defence of Hellenism and that these works reveal a continuing polemic with his former teacher.’ 129.
The exegesis of Chrysostom occurs in anything but a vacuum. Kannengiesser summarises, ‘His interpretation rested on a historical-grammatical method in strict conformity with the tradition of Lucian and Methodius of Olympus, Eusebius of Emesa, and Diodorus. True to Antiochene “theory,” he emphasized the “direct historical sense of the prophecies” explained biblical history and applied the poetic images of Scripture in his moral teaching.’ It is interesting to note that Chrysostom’s exegetical lineage goes back to Lucian, who is the real or nominal head of much mid-fourth-century Homoian and Homoiousian theologians, and yet Chrysostom’s theology is pro-Nicene.

A comparative account of patristic exegesis of John’s gospel can be found in Wiles’ *The Spiritual Gospel*, which takes as its major texts Origen, Theodore, and Cyril, but not without numerous mentions of Chrysostom. Wiles makes good note that as early as Origen there is a principle of partitive exegesis, the conflict between John 7:28 and 8:19, ‘to be explained in the light of the general principle that the Saviour sometimes speaks of himself as man, and sometimes as a more divine nature and united to the uncreated nature of the Father.’ He terms this two-nature exegesis, and charts its use in John from Origen to Cyril.

While the traditional Alexandrian-Antiochene dichotomy is open to critique, it is not entirely useless. So, for example, Young helpfully draws on Frye to distinguish allegory and typology, ‘[typology] requires a mirroring of the supposed deeper meaning in the text taken as a coherent whole, whereas allegory involves using words as symbols or tokens, arbitrarily referring to other realities by application of a code, and so destroying the narrative, or surface, coherence of the text.’ While Chrysostom has some tendency to

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42 *Ibid.*, 113
44 Young, *Biblical exegesis*, 162.
moralise, he is less prone to allegorise per se, and his exegesis reflects that typical Antiochene type (or stereotype). The other lynchpin of Antiochene exegesis is generally cast as attention to historicity and grammar. While these are both questionable categories, in respect of the vast gap between contemporary understandings of historiography and literary analysis, both reflect ancient categories that are pervasive.

In the case of grammar, the kind of analysis of words, phrases, the sense of a clause, and the scope of a passage, all these may be embedded in the kind of training typical of classical rhetoric, to which we have referred to in section 1.3 above. Grammar formed the foundation of rhetorical training proper, and unsurprisingly provided the basic shape of ‘rules’ for textual interpretation.\(^45\) This is seen in Chrysostom not least in discussion of punctuation (homily 5\(^46\)), textual criticism and spelling (homily 17\(^47\)), and the connection between words and referents to determine the sense of a phrase (homily 3\(^48\)). As for the historical focus, Young gives a convincing account how this element of Antiochene exegesis also reflects the rhetorical tradition, particularly over and against the discrete traditions of the philosophical schools.\(^49\) Yet he is also eager to emphasis, that ‘[t]here was no hard and fast distinction between rhetorical and philosophical exegesis.\(^50\) Antioch and Alexandria share far more than they differ. Ayres’ account of Patristic exegesis is that it ‘takes as its point of departure the “plain” sense of the text of Scripture’, with plain sense related to a “community’s techniques for following the argument of texts”.\(^51\) He divides ‘early

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 171.  
\(^{46}\) John 1:3 Whether καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἐν. ὃ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν or καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἐν ὃ γέγονεν. ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν  
\(^{47}\) Bathabara versus Bethany in John 1:28  
\(^{48}\) Discussion of ἐν in Gen 1:2 and 1 Sam 1:11  
\(^{49}\) Young, Biblical Exegesis, 171-6.  
\(^{50}\) Young, Biblical Exegesis, 183.  
\(^{51}\) Ayres, Nicaea and its legacy, 32.
Christian exegetical/hermeneutical strategies into two categories, the grammatical and the figural\textsuperscript{52}, the former reflecting the rhetorical background mentioned above.

A further study of Chrysostom’s exegesis in rhetorical terms is Thurén’s 2001 study.\textsuperscript{53} Thurén enters the debate over rhetorical methods of biblical criticism, whether classical or generic, and how patristic exegesis by rhetoricians might illuminate that field. Thurén’s study focuses on Chrysostom’s treatment of Galatians, but the conclusions are pertinent, ‘Chrysostom does draw on his rhetorical training when interpreting the Bible. This is not reflected in his technical terminology’.\textsuperscript{54}

Tse identifies the two key concepts of συγκατάβασις and ἀκριβεία as the ‘warp and woof of his hermeneutical principles’, drawing on the homilies on Genesis.\textsuperscript{55} Both words find ample attestation also in the homilies on John, and reflect key elements of his approach. Regarding the former, it is reflected in how God accommodates to believers in the scriptures, as well as to how Christ himself speaks in the course of the narrative, as well as to the doctrine of the incarnation itself. ἀκριβεία is likewise important, as guiding the kind of strict grammatico-rhetorical\textsuperscript{56} mentioned above. Hill argues that ἀκριβεία in the Scriptures is a function of συγκατάβασις with the advantages of ‘clarity of teaching on some point, promotion of the reader’s/listener’s own salvation, refutation of other people’s wild interpretations of Scripture’.\textsuperscript{57} Furthermore ἀκριβεία on the part of the Scriptures calls

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{54} Thurén, 213.
\textsuperscript{56} One would be reluctant to situate Chrysostom as the first grammatico-historical exegete of scripture, in the modern sense of the term.
\end{flushright}
forth ἀκρίβεια from the interpreter.⁵⁸ Both these principles will be commented on in passing, but do not form the central investigation of this thesis.

Other studies of Chrysostom in recent times have focused on the social setting and audience of Chrysostom⁵⁹, including with reference to the sermons on John⁶⁰, text criticism⁶¹, rhetoric⁶². Even writing that veers close to the thesis at hand fails to address the kind of exegetical-theological connection that this study addresses.⁶³

Chrysostom’s historical context as a patristic exegete is further defined by two figures, Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Diodore was primarily active in Antioch, ran an ἀςκησις in the city, in which both Chrysostom and Theodore trained, and so was a primary figure in establishing and continuing a more formalised sense of an Antiochene school. His work is largely lost, except fragments and his commentary on the Psalms, due in the greater degree to his condemnation along with Theodore as originators of Nestorianism. Since his surviving work relates to the Psalms, I have not focused on Diodore.

Chrysostom’s fellow student Theodore of Mopsuestia earned the title ‘the Interpreter’, since his gift was more in the writing of commentaries than speechcraft. He also studied under both Libanios and then Diodore, and was condemned along with the later.

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⁵⁸ Ibid., 35.
⁵⁹ E.g. P. Allen and W. Mayer. ‘Chrysostom and the preaching of homilies in series: A re-examination of the fifteen homilies In epistolam ad Philippenses (CPG 4432)’, VC 49 (1995) 270-289. Allen and Mayer have written numerous papers in this field, of this type, for which see the Bibliography. For an alternate approach, cf. Jaclyn Maxwell Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his Congregation in Antioch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.)
commentary on John’s gospel survives in Syriac along with Greek and Latin fragments of the same.\textsuperscript{64} Theodore is treated comparatively under criterion nine.

\textbf{1.5 Fourth Century Debates over Trinitarian Doctrine}

The background to Chrysostom’s preaching career inevitably involves the sweep of the debates of the fourth century over the relation of the Son to God. Similarly, the background to this current thesis is the revision of contemporary accounts and understandings of the theological history of that same period.

A traditional account\textsuperscript{65} of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century began with an identification of Arius as the instigator of heretical defection from a uniform orthodox understanding of the Trinity. Following Arius’ anathematisation at the Council of Nicaea (325), there was apparent consensus on this issue. But shortly thereafter significant, if not overwhelming, sections of the church revealed themselves to be ‘Arian’ in theology, leading to the evolution of Arian, semi-Arian, and neo-Arian theologies in the decades to come. Athanasius, by his outstanding resilience and insistence upon orthodox truth, defended the faith, which project was taken up by the Cappadocian Fathers, and finally prevailed at Constantinople in 381, after which Arianism went into decline.

Such a textbook account has undergone two major sweeps of revision in recent times. The first is a re-evaluation of ‘Arianism’. It is now widely accepted that, apart from Arius and a


few actual followers, there was no such thing as ‘Arianism’ that seriously survived Arius’ denunciation.\textsuperscript{66} To call theological developments after 325 ‘Arian’ is severely to misjudge the historical and theological character of them. It is not until 339, when the exiled Athanasius is in Rome, and almost certainly in contact with Marcellus of Ancyra, that he begins to employ the language of ‘Arians’ for his (rhetorical) opponents, a legacy that has stamped historical accounts since.\textsuperscript{67}

So, there are no real ‘Arians’ after Arius. Instead, there are a number of distinct theological ‘trajectories’ that existed pre-Nicaea, and continued post-Nicaea to develop and conflict. Ayres identifies four: an Alexander-Athanasius one, an Eusebian one, a Marcellan one, and Western anti-adoptionism.\textsuperscript{68} The Eusebian one represents those (a significant portion of Eastern clergy) who could comfortably coalesce around the theology of Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea. Behr suggests the term ‘Lucianists’, on account of a supposed or assumed link to Lucian of Antioch.\textsuperscript{69} Behr centres their theology around three major points: (1) an emphasis on the Son as a distinct, concrete being (whether hypostasis or ousia), (2) the concept of image as the key to relating the Father and Son, (3) that the Son took a human body without a soul;\textsuperscript{70} to this we might add the common move of attributing the Son’s generation to the Will, not the Essence, of the Father. It is this Eusebian party that accounts for most of what is called ‘Arianism’ in the post-Nicaea period.

The second wave of revision is represented by Lewis Ayres’ account in \textit{Nicaea and its legacy}, an account that he offers as ‘a paradigm...exploring the theologies that came to be counted as ‘orthodox’ at the end of the century...mov[ing] beyond simplistic east/west divisions and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{66} Ayres, \textit{Nicaea and its Legacy}, 100-104.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 105-113.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 41-84.
\item \textsuperscript{69} John Behr, \textit{The Nicene Faith} (2 vols, Crestwood, N.Y. : St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004), 48-53.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 53.
\end{itemize}
to respect the diversity of ‘pro-Nicene’ theologies better than available accounts.”

His offering is an attempt, not to supersede the major works by Hanson and Simonetti, but to produce a narrative and evaluation that integrates the last thirty years or so of revisionist scholarship. Ayres’ account is persuasive, and one of my fundamental premises in this examination of Chrysostom is that his account of how pro-Nicene theologians share a common grammar of theology and a theological ‘culture’ is correct, cohesive, and useful. In particular, the rejection of an East/West dichotomy is a welcome corrective to long held dichotomies, which allows an appreciation of pro-Nicene commonalities not driven by language/geography. Other key elements of his approach include (a) an approach to the debates as ‘about the generation of the Word or Son from the Father’ rather than ‘on the status of Christ as “divine” or “not divine”’. This is a broader question than one narrowly focused on Christological or Trinitarian questions, since a full account of the Son’s generation has implications for ontology, soteriology, and epistemology; (b) that the debates were as much about the grammar of theology, that is ‘a set of rules or principles intrinsic to theological discourse, whether or not they are formally articulated’. Insomuch then as these are questions about the reading of scripture, the question of a pro-Nicene theological culture should have import for the way a late 4th century figure conducts exposition. Ayres’ approach is thus fundamental to this study.

Nonetheless, Ayres’ approach has not been without criticism. Reviews of his book include Wiles, Beckwith, Gerber, Köstenberger, Smith, Winkler, Russell, Beeley.

71 Ayres, Nicaea and its Legacy, 1.
73 Manlio Simonetti, La Crisi Ariana nel IV secolo, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum, II (Rome: Augustinianum, 1975).
74 This is particularly important given the long-standing tendency to read East/Greek theology as starting from the three persons, West/Latin theology as starting from the oneness of essence.
75 Ayres, Nicaea and its Legacy, 3.
76 Ibid., 14.
77 Maurice Wiles, review of Ayres, Nicaea and its legacy JTS, ns 56 no 2 O (2005): 670-675.
Wózniak, and Behr. Of these, Beeley critiques Ayres’ vision of a ‘Newmanic ideal of doctrinal progress’, as well as the lack of integration of cultural material, the centrality of simplicity and incomprehensibility, and the uncritical use of Theodosius’s legislation. Beckwith notes a lack of engagement with western material. Wiles critically questions whether the account of pro-Nicene theology that Ayres’ offers is ‘superior on the ground that it does justice to the divine mystery that a non-Nicene theology wholly fails to do’, as well as a broader meta-critique of Ayres’ approach in contradistinction to his own. Gerber, Smith, et alia, offer fairly benign reviews. John Behr offers the most pointed critique, both in his review, and among the papers presented at the 2005 conference at Harvard, published in HTR 100. In his review, Behr highlights the lack of detailed engagement with particular figures’ theologies, as well as Ayres’ choice to redefine the issue as ‘not “simply” Christology’ and yet make a ‘version of “Trinitarianism”’ the standard for his pro-Nicene theology. In his Harvard paper, Behr questions whether Ayres isn’t working within a fundamentally Western-Augustinian framework which subsumes and blinds any real Eastern independence. He also makes some significant criticism of Ayres’ translation practice. Behr further criticises Ayres’ tendency to systematise and fail to closely engage

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87 Beeley, review of Ayres, 238.
88 Ibid., 238-9
89 Beckwith, review of Ayres, 399.
90 Wiles, review of Ayres, 673
91 Wiles, review of Ayres, 673-4.
93 Behr, review of Ayres, 129
95 Ibid., 147.
with texts. Overall, I am sensitive to the concerns and critiques raised against Ayres, but remain persuaded that a reading of fourth century texts does indeed bear out his three strategies and concept of pro-Nicene theology as culture and grammar. Nonetheless, only the reading of texts will advance that hypothesis. This precisely is the task of this current thesis: to treat at further length texts that bear upon the fourth century.

A second major theoretical background to this current work is John Behr’s own *The Nicene Faith*. The critical reception of this 2-volume work has been generally positive, as seen in reviews by Louth\textsuperscript{96}, Wiles\textsuperscript{97}, Edwards\textsuperscript{98}, Lienhard\textsuperscript{99}, Norris\textsuperscript{100}, Williams\textsuperscript{101}, Blowers\textsuperscript{102}, and Payton\textsuperscript{103}, which offer some minor criticisms. Norris, in his brief review, critiques Behr on his reading of Gregory of Nazianzus, as well as downplaying Athanasius’ violence, but again these criticisms are relatively minor. His re-orientation of how Athanasius is to be read, as an *apologia crucis*, and his detailed engagement with different theologians (more comprehensive than Ayres’ volume), are also distinctives. To Behr I owe the particular sense that the 4\textsuperscript{th} century was characterised by competing hermeneutical schemes worked out on the reading of the scriptures themselves.\textsuperscript{104}

To return to the historical scenario, if Chrysostom’s ecclesial career is roughly charted between 367 (the end of his rhetorical studies) and 404 (his death in exile), then it will be predominantly the background of the 60s-80s that concerns us. The significant turning point in 359 of the twin councils of Ariminum and Seleucia\textsuperscript{105}, where an on-paper Homoian

\textsuperscript{97} Maurice Wiles, review of Behr *The Nicene Faith* JTS, ns 56 no 2 O (2005): 669-670.
\textsuperscript{100} Frederick Norris, review of Behr *The Nicene Faith* TS, 67 no 2 Je (2006): 457.
\textsuperscript{103} James Payton Jr., review of Behr *The Nicene Faith* CTJ, 40 no 1 Ap (2005): 131-133.
\textsuperscript{104} Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 3-8; 11-15. Behr establishes the point in his introduction, and then exemplifies it throughout his work.
\textsuperscript{105} Hanson, *The search*, 371-80.
consensus was beginning to push the largely Homoiousian parties to realise the danger of an Heterousian solution, and thus to move in a more pro-Nicene direction.\textsuperscript{106} Athanasius’ \textit{De Synodis} about this time seems primarily directed towards exactly such swaying: to show Homoiousian supporters that what they are seeking to safeguard will only be safeguarded by homoousion.\textsuperscript{107} The 60s also saw significant division in Antioch, which Athanasius sought to reconcile with his \textit{Tome to the Antiochenes} ca. 362, ultimately failing.\textsuperscript{108} Significantly, Aetius was recalled during Julian’s brief reign, giving radical Heterousians a chance to reorganise and consolidate.\textsuperscript{109} Meletius’ council in Antioch 364 shows the growing trend of anti-Heterousian sentiment.\textsuperscript{110} During the 370s Basil of Caesarea really comes to the fore, both in ecclesial politics and his rapprochement to Valens and Damasus, as well as theologically, particularly against the Heterousian party.\textsuperscript{111}

The aftermath of the battle of Adrianople in 378 saw the ascendancy of Theodosius\textsuperscript{112}, and without confusing the political and theological, there is no doubt that his reign as Emperor was crucial in securing the victory of pro-Nicene theology, as seen in the Edicts of Theodosius, which formulate a pro-Nicene theology without necessarily depending upon a technical vocabulary\textsuperscript{112}. The Council of Constantinople (381), while still not functioning to determine theological orthodoxy ‘for all time’, definitely has a sense of laying this debate to rest. Not only its creed (examined in part under criterion four), but its canon anathematising Eunomians, Eudoxians, Pneumatomachians, Sabellians, Marcellians,

\textsuperscript{107} \textit{Ibid.}, 171-7.
\textsuperscript{108} Behr, \textit{The Nicene Faith}, 97-100.
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid.}, 269.
\textsuperscript{110} Though note the hostility between Athanasius and Meletius; \textit{vid.} Hanson, \textit{The search}, 652.
\textsuperscript{111} Ayres, \textit{The Nicene Faith}, 222-229.
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Ibid.}, 240.
\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Ibid.}, 251-2.
Photinians, and Apollinarians (and all manner of Arians), is roundly definitive for theological orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{114}

It is in the wake of this that Chrysostom’s preaching must be considered. He is too late a theological figure to really figure in the developments of the 370s that lead to Constantinople, and his own arrival in Constantinople is significantly subsequent. Antioch is its own theological ‘scene’\textsuperscript{115}, but his theological ‘orthodoxy’ has almost never been questioned. By the time of this body of sermons, awareness of the Creed of Constantinople is almost certain. His context is less polemical than the theological writings of, say, the Cappadocian fathers, and homilies over against other genres provide a different avenue to gain perspective on late fourth century pro-Nicene orthodoxy.

1.6 Aetius, Eunomius, and the Heterousians

In the few references to Chrysostom’s homilies on John, it is not uncommon to find them cast as anti-Anomoian in content or context, such as in C. Marriot’s preface to the Schaff edition, ‘even in his less generally controversial words, we often meet with discussions of their [Anomoian] tenets. But in these homilies he is continually meeting with texts which they perverted to the maintenance of their heresy, and turning them into weapons for its confutation.’\textsuperscript{116} Although by circa 391 most moderating Homoiousian groups were in decline, the Anomoian party, with an alternative church hierarchy, still persisted.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 253–9.
\textsuperscript{115} I.e. It has distinct historical and theological factors compared to Constantinople, but it is also by no means independent.
\textsuperscript{116} NPNF, 1–14, xi.
Historically their roots lie with Aetius, trained in a Lucianic tradition\textsuperscript{117}, deacon at Antioch in the 340s, before being shuffled away to Alexandria where he acquired Eunomius as a disciple.\textsuperscript{118} Their careers, such as they were, fluctuated between Antioch and Alexandria, before the condemnation and exile of Aetius in 360 at the Council of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{119} The 360s and 70s saw the writing of Eunomius’ \textit{Apology}, Basil of Caesarea’s \textit{Against Eunomius}, and Eunomius’ \textit{Apology for the Apology}, his own exile to Naxos probably helping the literary output.

The importance of the Anomoian position is that it is built on a theory of theological language that dichotomises between \textit{ἀγέννητος} as either expressive of God’s very essence, or else a mere human utterance of mortal conceptualisation. ‘The term “unbegotten” is, for Eunomius the primary and most exact designation for God; it applies to him and no-one else, and so... it is the determining factor by which all other words used of God are qualified.’\textsuperscript{120} At the heart of the Eunomian account is a strict correlation of names with essences, which is then extended so that (a) God is unbegotten, descriptive of essence, entails (b) other names for God are synonymous with unbegotten, and (c) anything unbegotten cannot, by definition, be included in the singularity of God. This goes to the heart of the unlikeness of the Anomoian position, the Son is essentially unlike the Father; ‘...it is not possible to liken, compare, or associate, with respect to essence, another being to the Unbegotten, for this can only conclude in an equivalence, driving one to conclude that the Son is equal (ἴσον) to the Father, which contradicts the Lord himself, who clearly stated “the Father is greater than I” (John 14:28; \textit{Apologia II}).’\textsuperscript{121}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{117} Behr, \textit{The Nicene Faith}, 267. \\
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 268. \\
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., (citing Theodoret \textit{Ecclesiastical History} 2.27-8). \\
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 273 \\
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 275-6
\end{flushleft}
Ayres, for his part, prefers the term Heterousian to Anomoian in his account, on the grounds that ‘Anomoian’ was rejected by Aetius and Eunomius since they only taught unlikeness according to essence, of which Heterousian is a more precise indication.\textsuperscript{122} Ayres notes Aetius’ ‘use of certain types of syllogism and logical argument.’\textsuperscript{123} This strict logical and philosophical approach, I submit, is part of the key characterisation of the Heterousian theology, which Basil and Gregory tackle by pulling apart in several directions, and which occasions anti-Eunomian anti-sophistry polemic.

To give a brief representation of how the Cappadocians dismantle one aspect of Eunomian logic, Eunomius writes, ‘He is not such [unbegotten], however, by way of privation; for if privatives are privatives with respect to the inherent properties of something, then they are secondary to their positives.’\textsuperscript{124} That is, Eunomius understands privatives to necessarily entail first the presence of the thing deprived, that to be armless is once to have possessed arms. In those terms, the error is obvious. Basil of Caesarea begins to take this apart in his account of positive and negative terms\textsuperscript{125}, and his claim that ‘“ingenerate” is only a negation.’\textsuperscript{126} That is, it is neither a ‘negation of a negation’, such that all theology is negative theology, nor is it a positive term, and so in neither case can ingeneracy be the positive naming of God’s essence, which is Eunomius’ exact position.

It is beyond this study to rehearse all the details of Aetius, Eunomius, Basil, and Gregory of Nyssa’s controversy, nor is it entirely pertinent.\textsuperscript{127} Under criterion nine, however, I aim to

\textsuperscript{122} Ayres, \textit{Nicaea and its legacy}, 145. Wiles, review of Ayres, 672 critiques his use of this term, but it does match Eunomius’ own insistence that he teaches likeness, but not according to essence.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, 145-6.
\textsuperscript{124} ἀλλά μὴν οὐδὲ κατὰ στέρησιν· εἴ γε τῶν κατὰ φύσιν αἱ στερήσεις εἰδὶ στερήσεως, καὶ τῶν ἔχεων δεύτεραι.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Ibid.}, 139.
highlight and isolate a number of places in the homilies where Chrysostom seems to have Heterousian theology clearly in view, as well as consider his treatment of John 14:28, considered a key Heterousian verse.
Chapter 2: Nine hermeneutic techniques common to pro-Nicene theologians of the Fourth Century

2.0 Section Introduction

The method I employ in the following chapter is to undertake a close reading of selected passages from Chrysostom’s homilies on John. In each case the passage bears upon one of the nine techniques outlined in this chapter. Accordingly, in this chapter I treat each of these techniques, giving an account of the technique and its relation to the strategies outlined by Ayres, or alternatively to Behr’s approach.

The readings themselves are neither a systematic commentary upon the homilies, nor a mere statistical analysis, as if the weight of numbers in terms of technique-occurrences would produce an assessable result. This is particularly the case when considering criterion four, pro-Nicene terminology. Rather we are seeking to examine in what contexts do these techniques or criteria appear, what manner of use does Chrysostom put them to, and how do they function within the argumentation and persuasion of the sermons.

I am consciously drawing upon Ayres’ work in Nicaea and its Legacy, as he writes:

By a theological strategy I mean a pattern of argumentation, a way of relating together particular themes, and a tendency to highlight particular themes or topics for discussion: a strategy is thus a matter of both form and content.128

128 Ayres, Nicaea and its legacy, 273.
The nine criteria I subsequently employ can be seen as subsets of those strategies, more specific forms and themes that guide and inform Chrysostom in his theology and his exegesis. The majority of the criteria below relate to the first of Ayres’ strategies, ‘Speaking of Unity and Diversity in the Trinity’129, wherein he argues that pro-Nicene reflection on ‘irreducible unity of the three irreducible persons’ occurs ‘always bearing in mind the absolute distinction between God as the only truly simple reality and creation.’130 The criteria of partitive exegesis falls here as an exegetical correlation to firm Person-Nature and God-Creation distinctions. Also under this strategy should be considered the doctrines of Simplicity, of Inseparable Operations, Incomprehensibility, Analogy, and Terminology. Each of these provides a distinct contribution to Chrysostom’s pro-Nicene theology, as will be seen in Chapter 3.

2.1 Partitive Exegesis

Concerning the term ‘partitive exegesis’, Behr observes:

Seen from this perspective, the issue between the Nicenes and the non-Nicenes is a matter of exegesis. Both sides took Scripture as speaking of Christ. The non-Nicenes, however, insisted on an absolutely univocal exegesis, which applied all scriptural affirmations in a unitary fashion to one subject....For the Nicenes, on the other hand, Scripture speaks throughout of Christ, but the Christ of the kerygma, the crucified and exalted Lord, and speaks of him in a twofold fashion, demanding in turn a “partitive” exegesis: some things are said of him as divine and other things

129 Ibid., 278
130 Ibid.
are said of him as human – yet referring to the same Christ throughout. Seen in this way, the conflict turns upon two different ways of conceptualizing the identity of Christ.131

Behr continually applies this principle in his account of the fourth century throughout his two-volume *The Nicene Faith*, and it is consonant with the patristic texts. I would suggest a single refinement: that the twofold fashion of referring to Christ speaks not so much to him now as divine, now as human, though this can be seen as an important element in the pre-Chalcedonian debates on the nature of the union, but rather it speaks of Christ now in regard to the economy, now in regard to the eternal Son.

There is little reference to partitive exegesis in Ayres’ work, apart from a description of Gregory of Nazianzus’ ‘clear articulation of the principle that scriptural material may be attributed either to the pre-incarnate Word or to the incarnate Word’.132 Yet, I would argue that in light of the definitions of three central pro-Nicene principles133, including a ‘clear version of the person and nature distinction’, that a principle of partitive exegesis is by no means inimical to Ayres’ broader project, and would substantiate the claim that pro-Nicenes share a fundamental grammar of theology as applied to their reading of scripture.

So, in formulating the criterion of partitive exegesis, we seek to answer the question, ‘To what extent does Chrysostom distinguish the sense of statements referring to Christ with regard to either the divine and human natures, or else Christ in the economy of the incarnation and Christ in his eternal personhood?’

This criterion is, as Behr has put it, a key discriminator between pro-Nicene and non-Nicene exegetes, and thus its presence will affirm the identification of Chrysostom as pro-

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Nicene in his exegesis. Its absence would weaken significantly such an identification. The question of the manner and extent of this exegetical technique will, further, cast light on the polemical and homiletic shape of *In iohannem*.

### 2.2 The Simplicity of God

The second criterion is the simplicity of God. To say that God is simple is to assert that, unlike creation, God is a being of such a kind as to have no composites, no parts, portions, nor divisions. This is for the pro-Nicenes both a conclusion of their theology, and in turn an exegetical axiom which informs hermeneutical strategy.

An excellent treatment of the Doctrine of Simplicity in its Patristic evolution is to be found in Radde-Gallwitz’s volume, which has the advantage of treating this doctrine in synchronicity with Chrysostom’s period, and the contra-Eunomian engagement of Basil and Gregory.\(^1\)

While Chrysostom does not deploy anything like the sophisticated developments of simplicity as found in Basil and Gregory, he does seem to operate, as we will see, with an assumption of simplicity. This confirms Ayres’ own examples, which he precedes with, ‘the cases I offer are unremarkable: that is, they are to be found en passant in sections of longer arguments and appear to be offered on the assumption that readers will share similar assumptions.’\(^2\) He then offers brief examples from Nyssa’s *Refutation of Eunomius’ Confession* and Hilary’s *On the Trinity*. ‘Thus, in pro-Nicene texts the primary function of discussing God’s simplicity is to set the conditions for all talk of God as Trinity and of the relations

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between the divine ‘persons’, to shape the judgments that we make in speaking analogically, not to offer a description of divine being taken to be fully comprehensible.”\end{singlespace}

2.3 The Doctrine of Inseparable operations

The Doctrine of Inseparable operations can be understood as two fairly straightforward propositions. Firstly, that the Persons of the Godhead have such a unity of being that the action of any person is at the same time the action of all three as one. The consequence of the first proposition is that actions or operations cannot be used to distinguish between the persons, but rather any action ascribed to one person of the Trinity, is appropriable to the others.

The second proposition is not as explicit as the first, but is grounded in it. Certain activities are the prerogative of God alone, whether by right or by power.\footnote{For in some matters, we might say that a human has arrogated to themselves the place of God and so ‘is playing God’, whereas in other matters it is simply not possible for a human to act as God does.} When a proper-to-God activity is ascribed to two agents, then, its implication is not a duality of gods, but the unity of the agents. Equal operations reveal an equal power, or better a singular power, which is the one God.

These two propositions form the core of the doctrine of inseparable operations, which frame how pro-Nicenes understand the Trinity. As Ayres writes, ‘Inseparable operation sets bounds to how we envisage the persons but it does not do so only by indicating that we are to think of them as more a unity in our sense than a plurality.’\footnote{Ibid., 287.}; and, ‘[it] also sets bounds

\begin{singlespace}
\footnote{Ibid., 287.}
\footnote{For in some matters, we might say that a human has arrogated to themselves the place of God and so ‘is playing God’, whereas in other matters it is simply not possible for a human to act as God does.}
\footnote{Ayres, Nicaea and its legacy, 296.}
to or shapes how we envisage the diversity of the persons by shaping habits of speech that keep us attentive to the mystery of God’s unity and diversity.”

Under this criterion, then, our aim is to observe once again where and how Chrysostom deploys the concept of inseparable operations as an exegetical tool in understanding John’s gospel and its doctrinal content, and communicating that to his audience.

### 2.4 Post-Constantinople Nicene Terminology

In coming to address the topic of terminology, a certain reticence about results must be maintained. The absence of specific, technical terminology may not indicate the absence of a certain position. It is quite possible to explicate a pro-Nicene Trinitarianism without using standardised terminology, and in a homiletic setting that may even be expected. On the other hand, the presence of terminology may represent a kind of appeal to orthodoxy, and indicate that the author wishes to align themselves with a specific theological position or tradition (even if their own interpretation of it would be rejected or unrecognisable by its proponents).

With that proviso, I propose to examine the presence and significance of ‘post-Constantinople Nicene’ terminology. By this is meant terminology that has come to signal an allegiance to the creeds of 325 and 381 in light of a broader pro-Nicene theology. My test cases are the presence of the following language:

From the Creed of Constantinople, 381, the use of the following phrases:

τὸν ιὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενή

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139 Ibid., 297.
From the Creed of Nicaea, 325:

There are two other phrases that are worth investigating in this area. The first is the use of ἀπαράλλακτος and its forms. The second is ὑπόστας. In the case of the former, it goes back at least to Alexander and Athanasius, but its real significance emerges as used by Basil, in Epistle 361 to Apollinaris. Over the question of ὀμοούσιος, Basil’s addition of ἀπαράλλακτος to qualify ὀμοιός κατ’ ὑπόσιαν, is ultimately part of a trend to move the ὀμοούσιος sympathisers to a ὀμοούσιος position.

The latter term, while not a major term earlier in the century and its debates, by this period has received a terminological nuancing and stands as a technical word for the distinction of Persons.

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140 Ibid., 44.
141 Ibid., 189. The authenticity of this correspondence has been disputed.
Ayres makes much of the Theodosius’s Edicts, which while no doubt translated and widely disseminated, being in Latin, and not possessing a technical vocabulary (that being a very part of Ayres’ arguments: the pro-Nicene theology was about more than jargon), are of less use to us in this section.

The approach has been to search for these phrases, both exactly and with minor variation. I have treated the results incidentally, highlighting those that are of particular interest, rather than presenting an exhaustive treatment. However, I have in each case indicated the other occurrences.

2.5 The utility and limitations of analogy

In Ayres’ account of pro-Nicene theology, he draws attention to the process of analogy as found in pro-Nicene authors. ‘Pro-Nicenes assume that one can draw no analogies between God and creation that will either deliver knowledge of God’s essence or that can involve us in grasping clearly where and why any analogy fails.’ 142 This ultimate failure of analogy does not inhibit pro-Nicenes from using analogy, but instead developing theories of analogy that accommodate analogy’s fatal flaw: that in the strict sense there can be no proper analogy between Creator and Creation. Indeed, when one comes to consider the actual analogies used by pro-Nicenes, they simultaneously illustrate the analogy, while showing up the limits of analogy as a method, in Ayres’ words, ‘in the course of their texts such [analogical] predication is displayed primarily as a process of making judgements, and

142 Ibid., 284.
judgements in which one displays clearly the ultimate failure of any given analogy; the face of the divine transcendence and simplicity'.

Despite this ultimate failure, ‘[w]hen pro-Nicenes deploy analogies their purpose is often to illustrate aspects of Trinitarian theology: the generation of the Son, inseparable operation, the difference between Son and Spirit.’ Ayres suggests we should therefore avoid discussion of ‘pro-Nicene analogies’ for the Trinity, and instead focus on how those analogies function, which is exactly what I propose to do in this analysis.

Secondly at this juncture, Ayres notes, ‘[d]ifferent analogies are used together or are displayed side by side; analogies are also displayed only in order to demonstrate the inadequacies of other analogies or to enable the reader to see where they themselves fail.’ This too will be seen in Chrysostom’s homilies.

The application of this criterion then, is to investigate Chrysostom’s use of analogy, particularly in relation to the Godhead. While, unsurprisingly, Chrysostom uses numerous figures, analogies, and illustrations throughout his homiletic series, our concern is only with those points where such analogies bear upon the unity, diversity, and essence of the Godhead.

2.6 The Incomprehensibility of God

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143 Ibid., 285.
144 Ibid., 289.
145 Ibid.
‘Pro-Nicenes universally assert that God’s nature or essence is incomprehensible.’{146} The accounts of divine knowledge that pro-Nicenes develop is conditioned upon distinctions in objects of knowledge, the fundamental one being that knowledge of God’s essence is not possible, but certain knowledge about God, often knowledge of God’s operations, is both possible and desirable. This is seen in Basil’s distinctions{147} as well as Gregory’s{148} in respect of knowing the essence versus knowing the power or activity.

Chrysostom’s series On the Incomprehensible Nature of God is perhaps more widely read than his homilies on John, and so it can be assumed that Chrysostom has a doctrine of incomprehensibility. Once again, the question is how that doctrine manifests and is applied in preaching on Scriptural texts.

2.7 Purification of the Soul

Ayres’ third strategy revolves around ‘Anthropology, epistemology, and the reading of Scripture’{149} which he accounts for in two aspects, ‘shared accounts of the soul’s purification and the reading of Scripture.’{150} With regards to the former, he says, ‘All pro-Nicene authors believe that at the heart of the purification necessary for Christians lies a reordering of human knowing and desiring.’{151} It is ‘dual-focus’, in regards to an intertwining of, yet distinction between, the trained soul and the body, the body’s actions in the world and the soul’s growth in its imaging of Christ. So, ‘the soul is understood to enable Christian bodily action, and that action is, in turn, understood to aid the

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{146} Ibid., 282.
{147} Ibid., 282-3.
{148} Ibid., 355.
{149} Ibid., 325.
{150} Ibid.
{151} Ibid., 326.
development of appropriate contemplation of the mysterious and immediate presence of Christ and the Spirit in the Christian soul. \footnote{152}

In the first instance, this criterion is concerned with how attention to the soul and its purification impacts upon the life of the body, and so is in some sense the prerequisite to theological reading. My concern will thus be more with purification as the precursor to theologising, rather than the way in which Chrysostom derives moral exhortation from the exegetical bulk of his homilies. \footnote{153}

This criterion should be judged as of lesser weight to my argument, as I have focused more closely on techniques that relate to the first strategy outlined by Ayres, and to establish the presence of the third strategy in terms of anthropology and purification would require further analysis of other techniques that fall within its scope.

### 2.8 The Semiotics of Creation

Under Ayres’ second strategy, he considers how the reshaping of pro-Nicene theology impacts cosmology and soteriology. Leaving aside the Christological theme, especially of sanctification as participation and union with Christ, there is the question of ‘the ways in which pro-Nicenes adapt and negotiate a number of theological and philosophical traditions in their reflection on the created order.... An account of the Word as the consubstantial expression of the divine perfection is at the heart of these shared strategies.’ \footnote{154} Ayres sees this occurring in two ways, ‘[t]he first interweaves understandings of the created order’s structure with questions of Trinitarian and soteriological doctrine.

\footnote{152}{\textit{Ibid.}, 330.}  
\footnote{153}{Often, I would argue, tangentially at best. A study of this area would be productive though.}  
\footnote{154}{Ayres, \textit{Nicaea and its legacy}, 312.}
The second is an increasing attention to the semiotics of the created order, attention to the ways in which the created order leads human minds to contemplation of the Creator.\textsuperscript{155} He then provides Basil and Augustine on Genesis as his examples. His conclusions are the emphasis ‘on presenting the creation as revelatory of the Triune God’s infinite power’, that ‘[t]he figural nature of creation points us always to a God beyond comprehension who is to be approached by a process of purification and reflection on the mysterious nature of the human soul’,\textsuperscript{156} and ‘that the creation is intended to draw the human soul towards God, and that, hence, it has an intentional semiotic structure.’\textsuperscript{157}

The question of criterion eight, then, is to what extent does Chrysostom incorporate this kind of strategy in his preaching on John’s Gospel? Does he, too, pay attention to the ‘semiotics of the created order’, such that creation begets contemplation of the Creator? The presence of such a theme would further strengthen the case for seeing Chrysostom as pro-Nicene in his theological and hermeneutical approach.

### 2.9 (Anti-Eunomian) Polemics against Logic, Rhetoric, and Sophistry

In considering how Chrysostom’s homilies might be polemical against the Heterousian position, I have two distinct approaches in mind. The first is a theme that is fairly consistent across not only pro-Nicene writers, but arguably fourth century theological writers more broadly. This is a critical stance towards classical \textit{paideia}, rhetoric, and sophistry. This is slightly remarkable, since in the post-Constantine period large numbers of church leaders are emerging from a rhetorical background, and put it to effective use.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 313-4.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 317.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 320.
The kind of deep ambivalence about that is best exemplified by Jerome, and his well-known ‘abstinence’ from Cicero and the classics. While this is widespread, it is wielded as a particularly sharp polemical retort to the Heterousians and Eunomius in particular, who are portrayed as being clinically logical and sophistically deceptive. So the first question is where and how does Chrysostom deploy that kind of anti-logical and anti-rhetorical polemic in his homilies.

The second approach is to take the verse John 14:28, traditionally a key Heterousian verse, and consider its treatment comparatively, in Eunomius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Chrysostom. A comparative study of other verses would, I suggest, yield other results, particularly those verses in John’s prologue. However, as will be seen, John 14:28 provides a valuable negative case.
Chapter 3: Chrysostom’s usage of the nine hermeneutic techniques in his preaching on the Gospel of John

3.0 Overview of the homilies

There are 88 homilies which Chrysostom devotes to John’s gospel. Somewhat surprisingly, the bulk of the homilies are given over to the earlier portions of the gospel text, with chapter 1 the basis for homilies 1-21, almost a quarter of the whole series. By homily 44 we are only midway through chapter 6, and homily 66 finishes up chapter 11 of the gospel, so that 75% of the homilies are given to roughly half the book. In contrast, each chapter of the gospel gets about 2-3 homilies attention for chapters 12-21. The setting may be early morning, given the brevity of the homilies compared to other series, and presumably mid-week. I have not attempted any kind of reconstruction of setting and audience, as typified by Allen and Mayer.\textsuperscript{158} The major bulk of each homily is taken up with commentary on the text, followed by a usually shorter admonition, ‘which were often tangential remarks to the main theme of his homily.’\textsuperscript{159} Introductions range from the brief exhortation to pay attention, to some lengthy digressions upon the failure of the audience to engage with Scripture in their everyday life. Chrysostom’s primary concern is to elucidate the meaning of the text for his hearers, while the moral exhortation and admonition reveals a spiritual concern for the life and purity of his congregation.

3.1 Partitive Exegesis

\textsuperscript{158} Vide supra Section 1.4.

\textsuperscript{159} Abe Attrep, ‘The teacher and his teachings: Chrysostom’s homiletic approach as seen in commentaries on the Gospel of John’ SVTQ 38 (1994): 293-301. Attrep’s study focuses on exactly those admonitions, in the first 47 homilies.
The first example of partitive exegesis in action in Chrysostom’s *In Iohannem* comes in homily 3. After a fairly long introduction and exhortatory digression, Chrysostom turns to the matter at hand, fixing the content of the homily in a polemical context, as he says:

> For contests lie before us against the enemies of the truth, against those devising all stratagems, so that they might tear down the glory of the Son of God, but rather tear down their own glory.\(^{160}\)

He then commences to engage with Heterousian exegesis of John 1:1, with their argument that 1a does not refer to absolute eternity, since the same phrasing of ‘in the beginning’ is found also in Genesis 1:1-2 to speak of the heavens and the earth, that is the created universe, which are not from eternity. The opponents’ argument essentially rests on a kind of straight-faced grammatical literalism: where the same form of words is found, they are meant in the same way. So ‘in the beginning’... ‘as’ must refer in the case of Christ to a temporal beginning, since in Genesis 1:1-2 it refers to a temporal beginning. Chrysostom also brings forward a second proof text of theirs, the beginning of 1 Samuel 1:1 in the Septuagint: ‘Ἄνθρωπος ἦν ἐξ Αρμαθαιμ Σιψα.... ‘A man was...’, or better ‘There was a man from Armathaim-Sipha....’

John’s refutation of their exegesis is principled, as the following shows:

> Why do you mix the unmixed, and confuse things distinct, and make the things above the things below? For in that place “was” does not show the eternity alone, but also “In the beginning was” and “The Word was”. Just as then “being”\(^{161}\), whenever said of a man, clarifies only present time; but whenever concerning God,

\(^{160}\) Ἀγὼν τοῖς ἀληθείας ἐχθροῖς, πρὸς τούς πάντα μηχανωμένους, ὥστε καθελέν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὴν ἑαυτῶν *In Iohannem* 3.2 PG 59.39.

\(^{161}\) ὢν.
shows eternity; thus also “was”, spoken concerning our nature, signifies past time to us, and this itself having been limited; but whenever concerning God, manifests eternity.\footnote{162 Τί τὰ ἄμεσα μιγνύεις, καὶ συγχεῖς τὰ διαιρόμενα, καὶ τὰ ἐνω τὰ κάτω ποιεῖς; ἔνταθά γὰρ τὸ, ἦν, οὐ δείκνυοι τὸ ἀδιόν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ, ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν, καὶ τὸ, ὁ λόγος ἦν. ὥσπερ οὖν τὸ, ἦν, ὅταν μὲν περὶ ἀνθρώπου λέγηται, τὸν ἑνεστῶτα χρόνον δηλοὶ μόνον· ὅταν δὲ περὶ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀδιόν δείκνυοιν· \textit{In Iohannem} 3.2 PG 59.39.}Chrysostom’s line of argument, then, is to ensure that distinctions are observed, so that we ask not only about what was said, but that we take our line of meaning from reference to the thing spoken of. Thus, he goes on to explain that when we speak of the earth or of a man, our concept of those entities already determines what we should understand about them, if we read that the earth ‘was’ or that the man ‘was’. He likewise points out that both the statements in Genesis 1:1-2 and 1 Samuel 1:1 predicate something of the subject. Of the former that it was formless and void, of the latter that he was from Armathaim-Sipha. In John 1:1a though, the statement is absolute, so as to lead us to understand the absoluteness, or the eternality, of the Son’s existence.

Here then is also demonstrated one of Chrysostom’s overarching exegetical concerns, that we should investigate scripture μετὰ ἀκριβείας with \textit{exactitude}. For Chrysostom, the words of scriptures are spoken and inspired with all due care and precision of meaning, and his introductory exhortations in the homilies are replete with the call for us to attend to scripture with exactitude, so that we will get at the right meaning. Chrysostom’s exactitude is demonstrated in his exegesis of John 1:1, as he comes to 1b.

What then do I say? That this “was”, concerning the Word, is indicative only of eternal being; for “In the beginning was the Word” he says; the second “was”, his being relative to someone. For since this is especially proper\footnote{163 ἰδιόν.} of God, eternal and without beginning, he places this first. Then, so that someone hearing “was in the
beginning” also say that he was unbegotten, he immediately assuages it, before saying what he was, saying that he was “with God.” And lest any one suppose the Word to be simply one uttered or conceived, he prefixed the article, just as I said, and through this second expression he takes up the same point. For he did not say, “He was in God” but “He was with God”, revealing to us his eternity according to his person.

While I have to this point been tracing the exactness of Chrysostom’s exegesis, and his concern for understanding the usage of words with reference to those words’ referents, we come now to a very clear demonstration of partitive exegesis in the proper sense.

Chrysostom engages in further hypothetical banter with his opponents, who are willing to grant the Son’s ‘with God’, provided it is likewise affirmed ‘yet created’. Chrysostom replies that this would have been perfectly clear if the Evangelist had written ‘In the beginning God made the Word’, which he certainly could have. This leads to the raising of the objection that Peter says exactly that, ‘made’ in Acts 2:36. It is easy to forget that Chrysostom is not actually engaged in a dialogue, but is raising objections and proceeding through a debate for rhetorical effect. Chrysostom again:

“Yes”, they say: “but Peter says this clearly and explicitly.” Where and When?

“When conversing with the Jews he says, “God made him Lord and Christ.” Why then do you not add that which follows on, “this Jesus whom you crucified”? Or are you ignorant that of the things spoken, some are of his unmixed nature, others of

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164 ἀγέννητον.
165 I.e. in the mind.
166 Τί οὖν φησίν; Ὅτι τοῦτο τὸ, Ἡν, ἐπὶ τοῦ Λόγου, τοῦ εἶναι ἀῤῥὶς μόνον ἐστὶ δηλωτικὸν: Ἐν ἀρχῇ γὰρ ἦν, φησίν, ὁ Λόγος· τὸ δεύτερον δὲ ἦν, τοῦ πρὸς τινα εἰσίν. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ μάλιστα τοῦ θεοῦ τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἴδιον, τὸ ἀῤῥὶς καὶ ἀναρχον, τοῦτο πρῶτον τέθεικεν. Εἶτα, ἢν μὴ τις ἄκοιν τὸ, ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ, καὶ ἀγέννητον αὐτὸν εἴπη, εὐθέως αὐτὸ παρεμβήσατο, πρὸ τοῦ εἰπὲν τί ἦν, εἰπὼν ὅτι Πρὸς τὸν Θεόν ἦν. Καὶ ἢν μὴ λόγον αὐτὸν ἀπλῶς νομίζῃ τις εἶναι προφητικὸν ἢ ἐνδιάθετον, τῇ τοῦ ἄρθρου προσθήκῃ, καθάπερ ἐφθην εἰπὼν, καὶ διὰ τῆς δευτέρας ταύτης τοῦτο ἀνέθλη ρημαῖον. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν, Ἐν Θεῷ ἦν, ἀλλὰ, Πρὸς τὸν Θεόν ἦν, τὴν καθ’ ὑπόστασιν αὐτοῦ ἀδιότητα ἐμφαίνων ἠμῖν. In iohannem 3.3 PG 59.40.
167 Acts 2:36.
the economy? But if it is not, but you will take it all absolutely concerning the
Godhead, then you will introduce a possible Divinity. But if not possible, neither
created... Besides, both “Lord” and “Christ” are not of essence, but of dignity.168

Observe these features: Chrysostom emphatically insists that the context of the citation
determines the meaning of the text. He realises as a matter of sensible exegesis that it
matters in what situation and circumstance things are said and written. Second,
Chrysostom demands that the conclusion of verse 36 be added. Not only is the
circumstantial or historical setting to be considered, but the textual context of the
statement must be brought to bear. Third, and most pertinent, Chrysostom
uses that
following clause of 36c to support his partitive exegesis, ‘of the things spoken, some are of
his unmixed nature (the Son in his eternal personhood and Deity), others of the economy
(the Son in respect of his Incarnation as man).

That Chrysostom links the line of his opponents’ argument to the introduction of a possible
Deity is not immediately an obvious move. Yet, given the Heterousians’ desire to protect
the impassibility of God, Chrysostom is trying to underline that Jesus must be categorised
as either the one impassible God, with the Father, or else his divinity is destroyed in the
terms that pro-Nicenes understand divinity to operate.169

168 Να, φησίν ἀλλ’ ὁ Πέτρος τούτο εἶπε σαφῶς καὶ διαφρήθην. Ποῦ καὶ πότε; Ὄτε Ἰουδαῖοις διαλεγόμενος ἔλεγεν, Ὄτι Κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ Χριστὸν ὁ Θεὸς ἔποιησε. Τί σον καὶ τὸ ἔξος ὁ προσέθηκας, ὅτι Τούτον τὸν Ἱησοῦν ὅν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε; Ἡ άγνοεις ὅτι τῶν λεγομένων τὰ μὲν τῆς ἀκρατίας φύσεως, τὰ δὲ τῆς οἰκονομίας ἐστίν; Εἰ δὲ µὴ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπλῶς ἐπὶ τῆς θεότητος ἐκδέξει, καὶ παθητὸν εἰσάξεις τὸ θεῖον εἰ
δὲ µὴ παθητόν, οὐδὲ ποιητὸν.... Ἀλλως τε τὸ Κύριος καὶ τὸ Χριστὸς, οὐκ ἔστιν οὐσίας, ἀλλ’ ἐξωματικὸς. In 
Iohannem 3.3 PG 59.41.
169 Cf. Ayres’ rejection of reading the controversy as a debate about which side of the Creator/creation divide
the Son belongs on. Rather, the very flexibility of the term ‘God’ in the early 4th century is part of the debate,
whose resolution involves an account of divine simplicity that makes Chrysostom’s logic tenable. Ayres, 
Nicaea and its legacy, 4; 14.
The final element of the above citation further affirms the partitive nature of Chrysostom’s exegesis in this instance. ‘Lord’ and ‘Christ’ are not titles of essence, in fact Chrysostom’s commitment to the incomprehensibility of God renders all ‘titles’ of essence empty. Rather, they must be seen here as titles of dignity, referred specifically to the incarnate Son in the economy of salvation, since the Son lacked nothing of divinity, and so it is only as man that he can be made ‘Lord’ and ‘Christ’.\textsuperscript{170}

Homily 3.4 extends the line of Chrysostom’s argument in a negative direction. It exhibits two argumentative techniques. The first of these is Chrysostom’s principle of condescension in regards to discourse. Briefly, Chrysostom regularly inquires as to why a certain statement is made in a certain way, especially as to why the most high Son so often speaks of himself in a more lowly manner. The answer is consistently that it is part of Christ’s condescension or accommodation, in order to make his teaching more persuasive, and so little by little lead his hearers up to more sublime truths concerning himself. The second of these techniques is the importance and opportunity afforded here to the Evangelist of correction his reader’s opinions.\textsuperscript{171} For if the Son were not eternal and consubstantial, then nowhere else does the Evangelist run so great a risk of people conceiving the Son to be eternal, consubstantial, and all the rest that characterises pro-Nicene orthodoxy. So if that were the case, why then does the Evangelist not correct such notions? Indeed, similarly Jesus is silent about many things that are true, for the sake of condescension; it is hardly then consistent that he would remain silent about something that was false, rather than humbly correcting an over-high estimation of his nature. Chrysostom lists a veritable catalogue of lofty statements by Christ\textsuperscript{172} that would be unfitting for him to speak if they were not true. The conclusion of this homily is typical for

\textsuperscript{170} The emphasis here is on the ‘being made Lord’, rather than ‘Lord’ considered by itself.

\textsuperscript{171} Elsewhere this is deployed similarly of Christ’s opportunity to correct his audience’s opinions.

\textsuperscript{172} In sequence: John 5:30, 12:49, 14:11, 14:9, 5:23, 5:21, 5:17, 10:15, 10:30.
Chrysostom, in that he moves into moral exhortation and application that is (often) tangentially related to the doctrinal content of the homily as a whole. It is, in this instance (and again often throughout *In Iohannem*), focused on the evil of pride and vainglory.

The necessity of applying the principle of partitive exegesis is seen in homily 27, on John 3:13-16.

‘Son of Man’ here he calls not the flesh, but he names from the lesser essence, his whole self, so to speak. For this is his custom frequently from the Godhead, frequently from the Humanity, to call the whole.  

That Jesus himself uses terminology drawn from either of his two natures as to refer to his entire self, while preserving everywhere a unity of Person, requires of the exegete an exactness in referring expressions to their appropriate nature.

Partitive exegesis of a slightly different sort finds evidence in homily 38:

On this account whenever there be a discourse concerning the Sabbath, neither as man alone does he give a defence, nor as God alone, but at times in this manner, at times in another. For he wishes both to be believed, both the condescension of the economy, and the dignity of the Godhead. On this account he now makes defence as God. For if he was going to always converse with them from merely human

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173 Υἱὸν δὲ ἀνθρώπου ἐνταῦθα οὗ τὴν σάρκα ἐκάλεσεν, ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλάττονος οὐσίας δόλον ἐσυνών, ἵν’ οὕτως ἐ丕κα, ὄνομασε νῦν. Καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο ἐθὸς αὐτῶ, πολλὰκι μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς θεότητος, πολλὰκι δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος τὸ πᾶν καλεῖν. *In Iohannem* 27.1 PG 59.159.

174 The text under discussion is John 5:16-17, which Chrysostom has contrasted with Matthew 12.
affairs, they would have remained in the same lowliness. Wherefore that this might not be, he brings the Father into the midst [of the discussion].

Here the necessity of partitive exegesis is not related solely to determining in what sense an expression is used of the Christ, but also to the manner in which Christ himself conducts his discourse. This, naturally, is related by Chrysostom to Jesus’ purposes in speech, and so to two major elements of those purposes. Firstly, Jesus’ general custom to accommodate his speech through condescension to the infirmity of his listeners; and secondly, Jesus’ aim to lead them into more sublime or lofty understanding, which requires them to believe in both his Divinity and his Humanity.

This concern to establish both Jesus’ Divinity and his Humanity is not found only in Jesus’ discourse, but also among the Evangelist’s concerns, as Chrysostom affirms in homily 48, reflecting on the words οὐ γὰρ ἔιχθεν ἐξουσίαν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ περιπατεῖν, saying:

What then are these enigmas? Away with [the word]: not that you might suppose that he spoke enigmas, did he speak thus, but so that he might make plain that he both offers proofs of the Godhead, and of the Humanity. For when he says, “He had not power”, he converses as concerning a man, and of one doing many things in a human manner; but when he says, that ‘he stood in their midst, and they did not seize him’, he demonstrates clearly the power of the Godhead. For he flees as a man,
and he appears as a God; speaking both truly. For the being in the midst of those plotting yet not seizing him, makes clear his unconquerable and incontestable [nature]; and to restrain himself, confirms and establishes the economy, so that neither Paul the Samosatene has anything to say, nor Marcion, nor those infected with those men’s teaching. On this account therefore he stops up their mouths.\footnote{Τίνα δὴ ἐςτὶ τά ἁνίγματα; Ἀπαγε: οὐχ ἵνα αἰνίγματα λέγειν νομισθῇ, οὕτως εἶπεν, ἀλλ’ ἵνα δηλώσῃ ὦτι καὶ τὰ τῆς θεότητος ἐπεδείκνυτο, καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος. Ὄταν μὲν γὰρ λέγη, ὦτι ἑξουσίαν οὐκ εἴχεν, ὡς περὶ ἀνθρώπου διαλέγεται, πολλὰ καὶ ἀνθρωπίνως ποιοῦντος ὦταν δὲ λέγη, ὦτι ἐν μέσοις αὐτοῖς εἰστίκει, καὶ οὐ κατείχον αὐτὸν, τῆς θεότητος τὴν δύναμιν ἐνδείκνυται δηλονότι. Καὶ γὰρ ἐξευγινὸν ὡς ἀνθρωπος, καὶ ἐφαίνετο ὡς θεός ἀμφότερα ἀληθέως· τὸ τε γὰρ ἐν μέσοις ὄντα τοῖς ἐπιθυμεῖνοι μὴ κατέχεσθα, τὸ ἀκαταγωνιστὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄμαχον ἐδήλος· τὸ τε ὑποστέλλεσθαι, τὴν οἰκονομίαν ἐβεβαιοῦς καὶ ἑπιστοῦτο, ἵνα μὴς Παῦλος ὁ Σαμοσατεὺς ἔχῃ τὶ λέγειν, μὴς Μαρκίων, καὶ οἱ τὰ ἐκείνων νοοῦντες, Διὰ τούτου τὸν πάντων ἐμφράττει τὰ στόματα. In iohannem 48.1 PG 59.269.}

Here we see Chrysostom’s application of partitive exegesis not to Jesus’ discourse about himself, but to the Evangelist’s purposes, in establishing for belief both Jesus’ Godhead and Humanity. As an application of the principle, it resolves the apparent difficulty, the ‘enigma’ of the text of John 7:1-2, as to why on the one hand Jesus was restricted in some degree of power, yet elsewhere the Jewish opponents are mysteriously restricted in their power over Jesus. Further, the application of the principle feeds directly into contemporary anti-heretical polemics. Though neither Paul nor Marcion remain strong, ‘live’ options for non-orthodox Christians, the casting of contemporary opponents as in line with historical heretics, who had already been decisively condemned, is a broader rhetorical strategy. The denial of Jesus’ full humanity or divinity by new means remains Chrysostom’s real concern, but it suits his purposes to paint it in old terms.
Yet the strategy of Christ doing things according to his humanity is not purely a pedagogical technique to establish that very humanity, but also has an ethical element. As in the opening of homily 49:

The things ‘economised’ by Christ in a human manner, he does not economise for this reason alone, that he might establish the Incarnation, but so that he might also instruct us towards virtue. For if he did all as God, whence would we be able to know, falling into undesired things, what we ought to do?\textsuperscript{178}

The comment is made by Chrysostom in conjunction with John 7:9ff. He has in mind the power of Christ to seemingly go about with impunity and quell the agitation of the crowds, which he refers to the divine power of the Son. Here, however, he goes in secret, in order to avoid creating such a tumult, which unlike the former action, is an act done in a ‘human manner’, and so subject to ethical imitation by his followers and Chrysostom’s audience.

A further reference to Jesus’ miracles is found back in homily 47, “For this belongs to his Godhead, to bring the secret things into the open.”\textsuperscript{179} At the same point he mentions the incident of Nathanael under the fig tree in John 1. In both cases Jesus’ knowledge is explicable, for Chrysostom, by reference to a characteristic of his Divinity. Miracles are attributable, by and large, to the Godhead.

Further clear examples of partitive exegesis are found in homily 53:

\textsuperscript{178} Τὰ ἀνθρωπίνως ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ οἰκονομοῦμενα, οὐ διὰ τοῦτο μόνον οἰκονομεῖται, ἵνα τὴν σάρκωσιν βεβαιώσηται, ἀλλ’ ἵνα καὶ ἡμᾶς παιδεύῃ πρὸς ἁρματήν. Εἴ γὰρ πάντα ὡς θεὸς ἔπραττε, πόθεν ἐδυνάμεθα ἡμεῖς εἰδέναι, περιπτάτοντες ἄβουλήτης, τι χρῆ ποιεῖν; In iohannem 49.1 PG 59.273. I can think of no real English translation to express οἰκονομοῦμενα without losing the association with the technical sense of ‘economy’, so I have preserved the awkwardness in this translation.

\textsuperscript{179} καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο τῆς αὐτοῦ θεότητος, τὸ τὰ ἀπόφημα φέρειν εἰς μέσουν In iohannem 47.2 PG 59.264, commenting on John 6:61-62.
“And the Father is with me.” For, in order that they do not suppose, “Who sent me,” to be denotive of inferiority, he says, “is with me.” For the former is of the economy; the latter, of the Godhead.\textsuperscript{180}

This comment coming from John 8:29. Also, in homily 75, commenting on 14:20, Ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρα γνώσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγώ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν ἐμοί, καὶ ἐγώ ἐν ὑμῖν, Chrysostom writes:

When of the Father, it is of essence; but of them, the expression is of like-mindedness and aid that is from God. “And how is this rationally”, one says to me, “said?” “How then is the opposite rational?” For great and very limitless is the chasm between Christ and the disciples.\textsuperscript{181}

Here Chrysostom utilises a form of partitive exegesis that does not distinguish the sense in which a phrase is applied to Christ, i.e. whether it properly refers to either his Human or Divine nature, but the identical expression applied first to Christ and then to the disciples. This aligns more broadly with his exegetical concern to interrogate the exact sense in which certain expressions and phrases are used and are to be understood. Its importance here is vital for Trinitarian debate. If the identical expression is to be understood identically in both the case of Jesus and of the disciples, then it will result in the substantial inferiority of the Son.\textsuperscript{182}

Note the grounds that Chrysostom provides for applying partitive exegesis to this statement. Against the \textit{prima facie} case that it is improper or illogical to take an identical

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{180} Καὶ μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ Πατὴρ. Ἰνα γὰρ, μὴ νομίσωσι τὸ, ὃ πέμψας με, ἐλαττώσεως εἶναι, λέγει, Μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐστι. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ, τῆς οἰκονομίας ἐς τῆ, τῆς θεότητος. \textit{In iohannem} 53.2 PG 59.294.
  \item \textsuperscript{181} Ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τοῦ Πατρὸς, οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν: ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτῶν, ὁμοιότι αἱ καὶ βοηθείας τῆς παρα τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ ἐρήμουν. Καὶ πῶς ἔχει λόγον, εἰπὲ μοι, φησί; πῶς μὲν οὖν τὸ ἐναντίον ἔχει λόγον; πολὺ γὰρ τὸ μέσον καὶ σφόδρα ἄπειρον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν μαθητῶν. \textit{In iohannem} 75.2 PG 59.405.
  \item \textsuperscript{182} Theoretically one might use it to elevate the ontological status of the disciples, that being the diametrically opposite manoeuvre, but one that can justifiably be left aside.
\end{itemize}
expression, in the same context, to mean two different things, Chrysostom suggests that to insist that it be taken to signify the identical ontological reality is in fact the illogical move. Why? Because there already exists an ontological gap between Jesus and the disciples such that we understand the Son-in-Father expression to mean something different that the mutual indwelling relationship of the Son and the disciples.

This can be paralleled elsewhere over debates about sonship, where Christ is Son by nature, whereas Christian believers are sons by adoption or by grace. In this way, partitive exegesis in some instances works to establish or uphold the Son’s unique status of Divinity, and at other points of interpretation assumes the Son’s Divinity in order to tease out the distinction between the Christ and his human followers.

### 3.2 The Simplicity of God

Homily 5 contains the first real exploration of simplicity in Chrysostom’s series.

But when you hear, “in him was Life”, do not suppose [him] composite; for going on further he says also of the Father, “Just as the Father has life in himself, thus he has given also to the Son to have life.”\(^{183}\) But just as you would not say, on this basis, that the Father is composite, so neither the Son. For even elsewhere he says, “God is Light”\(^{184}\); and again, “he dwells in light unapproachable.”\(^{185}\) All these things are said, not that we might understand composition, but so that we might be led up little by little to the height of doctrines. For since not easily would someone of the many

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184 1 John 1:5.
185 1 Tim 6:16.
conceive, how his life was Life *enhupostatos*\(^{186}\), first he spoke the humbler expression, and subsequently leads those instructed to the loftier [conception].\(^{187}\)

The occasion that elicits this comment is his long treatment of John 1:3. Indeed, Chrysostom spends a disproportionate four initial sermons introducing the series and working through John 1:1-2 in exacting detail, as befits his concern with ‘exactitude’. The opening of homily 5 includes considerable consideration of where to punctuate the Greek, with Chrysostom concluding against the modern consensus, on the basis that this is a reading with a heretical lineage and untenable theological conclusions.

The logic of Chrysostom’s argument deserves careful attention here. One could easily suppose from ‘in him was Life’ that Life was an indwelling component of the Son, even as some God-in-flesh Christologies might suppose. Chrysostom reads 1:3 against 5:26, with the ready argument that 5:26 speaks of God having life in himself. One would not conclude, Chrysostom presupposes, from this statement which is functionally identical to the ‘in him was Life’, that God had a composite nature, and Life was some component or part in it. The ‘just as...thus...’ comparison of 5:26 differs from the identity of expression found in homily 75 on John 14:20\(^{188}\), in that here a likeness of manner is adduced to the likeness of expression, so that the same thing applies in the same way. Thus, the Son ‘has life’, which is another way of approaching the ‘in him was Life’. Though this is not the place for Chrysostom’s exploration of 5:26, we might well note that the Son has Life as an inalienable idioma, but it is derivative from the Father.

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\(^{186}\) Life impersonate (on analogy to in-carnate), that is the Christ.

\(^{187}\) Ὅταν δὲ ἀκούσῃς, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ Ἰωάννην τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, μὴ σύνθεταν ὑπολάβῃς καὶ γὰρ προὶ καὶ περὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς φησίν· Ὄσπερ δὴ Πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν αὐτῷ, οὕτως ἔδωκε καὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦν ἦν ζωὴν ἐν αὐτῷ. Ἀλλ’ ὤσπερ τὸν Πατέρα οὐκ ἐν εἶπος διὰ τὸ τοῦτο συγκεῖται, οὕτως καὶ τὸν Υἱόν. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἰδίον ἔδωκεν, ὅτι Φωτός ἦσθαι ὁ θεός καὶ πάλιν, ὅτι Φωτὸς οὐκ ἐγένετο ἁπάτω. Τάύτα δὲ πάντα ἐρήμητα, οὐχ ἴσα σύνθεσιν ὑπολάβωμεν, ἀλλ’ ἵνα κατὰ μικρὸν ἀναχώρησαν πρὸς τὸ τῶν δομάτων ζωῆς. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐκ ἦν εὐκόλως ἐνόησαν τὰ τῶν πολλῶν, πῶς ἔστιν αὐτῷ ἐνυπόστατος ἡ ζωή, πρῶτον μὲν εἰκόνισα εἶπε τῷ ταπεινότερον, ἐπείτα δὲ παίδευθητας πρὸς τὸ ψηλότερον ἐγεῖ. *In Ioannem* 5.3 PG 59.57.

\(^{188}\) Vide supra.
Chrysostom’s logic is tight: if 5:26 gives no cause for rejecting the simplicity of God the Father (the uncontested proposition), then neither does 1:3 give grounds for rejecting the Son’s simplicity. A similar argument is then brought forward with reference to 1 John 1:5 and 1 Timothy 6:16, before Chrysostom gives his typical explanation for the manner of expression here. It involves condescension to infirmity of understanding, in order to avoid misunderstanding, matched elsewhere by a ‘leading up’ to a loftier doctrine.

Before leaving this passage it is worth commenting on the slightly unusual ἐντπόσσασος. The expression is used only here in In Iohannem. The sense is best rendered with some reference to emerging theological jargonisation of ὑπόσσαςιν, though we are still a long way from a 5th century development of ἐντπόσσαςις and ἀντπόσσαςις. It might best be understood here along lines similar to incarnate or en-anthropic. In Christ the Divine Life, Life in itself, has become hypostatised, in the person of the incarnate Son.

Homily 30 contains a number of comments that pertain directly and indirectly to simplicity.

What is this which he says, “God gives the Spirit without measure”? He wishes to show that we all received the activity of the Spirit by measure; for ‘Spirit’ in this passage signifies the activity; for this it is that is divided; but he [Jesus] has the entire activity unmeasured and whole. If his [the Spirit’s] activity be unmeasured, much more the Essence. Do you see that the Spirit also is infinite? The one therefore having received the activity of the Spirit, the one knowing the things of God, the
one saying, “What we have heard, we speak, and what we have seen, we attest”, 189 how might this one be justly suspected? 190

In this comment on John 3:34, Chrysostom applies something of his own careful rhetorical questioning, as he writes but a little later, ‘These things I say, so that we might not simply pass by the things contained in the Scriptures, but both the object of the speaker, and the infirmity of the listeners, and many other things in them we might examine closely.’ 191

Firstly, Chrysostom considers these verses to be part of the John the Baptist’s continued discourse, not a return to the narrator’s voice, as can be seen in his comments directly upon v33, ‘Here he fastens upon his own disciples’. 192 Secondly, Chrysostom understands the clause under consideration to speak with reference to the Christ, since 34a refers to the Christ. Yet, the language of ‘measure’ and ‘give’ is itself an accommodation or condescension to their understanding of the Christ as man. This leads to the contrast that Chrysostom puts before his audience, ‘that we all receive the activity of the Spirit by measure’, but Christ receives it unmeasured.

Note the prior assumption by Chrysostom that it is the activity (ἐνέργεια) that is divided, because the Spirit himself cannot be divided. And yet this assumption is transformed into a conclusion of Chrysostom’s logic. If Christ has the Spirit’s activity unmeasured (which the text states), and the Spirit’s activity (absolute) is unmeasured, and if the activity be

189 John 3:11.
190 Τί δέ ἐστιν ὁ φησιν, Οὐκ ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν ὁ Θεός τὸ Πνεῦμα; Θέλει δεῖξαι, ὅτι πάντες ἢμεῖς μέτρῳ τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνέργειαν ἐλάβομεν; Πνεῦμα γὰρ ἐντάθει τὴν ἐνέργειαν λέγει, αὕτη γὰρ ἐστιν ἡ μεριζομένη, ὁτὸς δέ ἀμέτρητον ἔχει καὶ δλόκληραν πᾶσαν τὴν ἐνέργειαν. Εἰ δέ ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτοῦ ἀμέτρητος, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἡ ὁσία Ὑἱός καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἀρχιερῶν; ‘Ο τοίον πάσαν τοῦ Πνεύματος δεξάμενος τὴν ἐνέργειαν, ὁ τά τοῦ Θεοῦ εἴδως, ὁ λέγων, ὃς ἠκούσαμεν, ἄλλοι δὲ καὶ ἐσώ σφαξαμεν, καὶ ὁ ἐσώ σφαξας, διάφοροι, μαρτυροῦμεν, πῶς ἁν εἴη δίκαιος ὁ προφήτης; In iohannem 30.2 PG 59.174. I have taken δίκαιος to be corrected to δικαίως, either textually, or in sense.
191 Τάσυ δὲ λέγω, ἵνα μὴ ἁπλῶς τὰ ἐν ταῖς Γραφαῖς κείμενα παρατρέχωμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν σκοπὸν τὸν λέγοντος, καὶ τὴν αὐθεντικὴν τῶν ἀκροατῶν, καὶ πολλὰ ἔστω τὰ ἐν αὐτῶς καταμανθάνωμεν. In iohannem 30.2 PG 59.174.
192 ἐντάθει καὶ τῶν ἱδίων καθάπτεται μαθητῶν In iohannem 30.2 PG 59.173.
unmeasured, then the essence likewise; and finally, what is unmeasured except what is
infinite or limitless. In this way Chrysostom equates that which is unmeasurable not to
abundance and infinitude as magnitude, as we might be inclined, but to raw simplicity: God
is one, and as such the essence cannot be divided. It only makes theological sense then to
speak of receiving the activity of the Spirit as ‘measured’. Here again we see how a doctrine
of simplicity both informs exegesis and arises out of it, in a manner we might sometimes
find circular.

Homily 32 contains a very explicit and related comment on simplicity. Chrysostom opens
his homily with these words:

The Scripture calls the grace of the Spirit sometimes “fire”, sometimes “water”,
showing that these names are not indicative of essence, but of activity. For the
Spirit is not composed of differing substances, being both invisible and simple. 193

The doctrine of simplicity is again an axiom here, paired with the Spirit’s invisibility, this
too being an attribute of God (cf. John 1:18, to begin with). So the Spirit being both invisible
and simple, cannot be composite, and therefore this theological principle must play into
how we understand terms such as ‘fire’ and ‘water’ when used of the Spirit, as with similar
figures elsewhere for the Christ (Bread, Door, etc.). Chrysostom’s point feeds into a larger
anti-Eunomian position, but his argument here is that since such diverse names cannot be
descriptive of essence, for then the essence would have to be composite of such things as

193 Τοῦ Πνεύματος τὴν χάριν ἡ Γραφὴ ποτὲ μὲν πῦρ, ποτὲ δὲ ὕδωρ καλεῖ, δεικνύοντο δὲι οὐκ οὐσίας ἐστὶ ταῦτα
παραστατικά τὰ ὅνωματα, ἀλλ’ ἐνεργείας. Οὔτε γὰρ ἐκ διαφόρων συνέστηκεν οὐσίων τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἀδρατὸν τε
καὶ μονοειδὲς ὁ ν. in iohannem 32.1 PG 59.183.
‘fire’ and ‘water’, they must be understood as indicative of activity. And as Chrysostom shortly goes on, they fittingly speak of the Spirit’s work: fire indicative of the rousing power of grace and destruction of sin, water signifying cleansing and refreshment. The contrast between activity and essence in both this passage and the former, demonstrates how such a distinction allows for theological exactness, in preserving God’s simplicity (and thus by implication the divinity of the Son), while admitting diversity of ascription in language, by careful consideration of the referents.

These three examples demonstrate that the doctrine of simplicity is certainly part of Chrysostom’s theological approach. All three show Chrysostom treating God’s simplicity as a presupposition, which he then employs in his exegesis of the text of the Gospel. Yet, these are the most striking examples of the doctrine’s deployment in the homily series. One might therefore conclude that it is not a widespread and dominant methodological move on Chrysostom’s part, but rather a piece of his doctrinal grounding which is brought to bear when the text and Chrysostom’s point warrants it.

3.3 The Doctrine of Inseparable operations

The doctrines of simplicity and inseparable operations are linked by Ayres in his presentation of them as part of the pro-Nicene strategy of speaking of the unity of God.\(^\text{194}\) Chrysostom is far more explicit in deploying the doctrine of inseparable operations than that of simplicity, but the two are certainly intertwined in his understanding of the unity of

\[^{194}\text{Ayres, Nicaea and its legacy, 280-2; 286-8.}\]
God. So, in the passage from homily 30 presented above in 3.2, the doctrine is not far from
the forefront, as when Chrysostom say, ‘but he [Jesus] has the entire activity unmeasured
and whole’. The Christ, unlike the disciples, has the entire activity of the Spirit
‘unmeasured’, meaning undivided or not portioned out, reflecting that all three persons of
the Godhead share entirely in their operations or activity.

Unsurprisingly, a fuller treatment comes when Chrysostom addresses John 5. Following on
from verses 16-17, he says:

But when [there is need of a defence] concerning himself, he flew to the Father,
showing the equality-of-honour by two means, by calling him Father uniquely, and
by doing the same things as Him.

The contrast that introduces this statement is with the circumstance in Matthew 12, where
Jesus defends his disciples for Sabbath-breaking by a different means. Thus the situation
here differs from that one, in that it is Jesus himself who is under attack. His defence is a
flight to or taking refuge in the Father, and by two methods. The first highlights the unique
relationship between the Christ as the only-begotten Son of the Father, in comparison to
the received relationship of sonship, adoption, which believers obtain through Christ. This
Chrysostom expresses with his use of the word ἰδιαζόντως, signifying that idiomatic or
peculiar characteristic of the Logos in his relationship to his Father

195 οὗτος δὲ ἀμέτρητον ἔχει καὶ ὀλόκληρον πᾶσαν τὴν ἐνέργειαν In Iohannem 30.2 PG 59.174.
196 Ὡτε δὲ περί ἑαυτοῦ, ἐπὶ τὸν Πατέρα κατέφυγεν, ἐκατέρωθεν τὸ ὀμότιμον δεικνύς, τῷ τε Πατέρα εἶπεν
ἰδιαζόντως, καὶ τῷ τὰ αὐτὰ πράττειν ἑκεῖνον. In Iohannem 38.2 PG 59.214
The second means of defence reads very much as an entry into the language of inseparable operations. At first glance, one might suppose that it admits only that the Christ is equal in status or dignity with the Father, a second God if you will. Indeed, Chrysostom’s line of argument depends, at least for a time, upon only equality of dignity. He states, ‘If he were not the genuine Son and of the same essence, the defence would be worse than the accusation.’ This is followed by a brief illustration of a Viceroy (τίς ὑπαρχός) altering royal laws on the basis of the King’s prior doing of the same. Only equality of dignity or honour will suffice to clear the charge. One who performs the prerogatives of God who is less than God only increases their guilt. Note that, although the illustration proceeds along the equality of dignity, the proviso contains both the adjective ‘genuine’ (γνήσιος), which at least by this stage is a loaded ontological term referring back to the unique relationship of the only-begotten eternal Son to the Father, as well as ‘of the same essence’ (τῆς αὐτῆς οὐσίας) which is enough to sustain Chrysostom against any suspicion that by equality of honour he leaves open the possibility of ditheism. Nothing could be further from his thought. Rather, simplicity works along with inseparable operations to conclude that one who is equal in dignity with God, and does the same things as God, must be one with God, because God is one and simple. Thus Jesus’ self-defence is a provocative assertion of both his equality and union with God the Father.

In considering the flow of argumentation in this homily, it is worth looking at how Chrysostom handles verse 18. He notes that ‘those not willing to receive these things with right-comprehension say that Christ did not make himself equal to God, but that the Jews

197 Εἰ δὲ μὴ γνήσιος ἦν Υἱός καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς οὐσίας, ἢ ἀπολογία κατηγορίας μείζων ἐστίν. In Iohannem 38.2 PG 59.214.
conjectured this." Chrysostom’s absent opponents is predictable: it is all a misunderstanding. Jesus did not claim equality, but they wrongly suspected that he did, and therefore (the line of logic runs), Jesus is not equal to the Father but we too wrongly understand him on this point.

Chrysostom’s response is instructive. Firstly, he notes a chain of true and real facts: the Jews persecuted him, for this [the Sabbath incident of John 5], he did in fact break the Sabbath, and he did call God his Father, which all adds up to a claim to be equal to God.

Secondly, Chrysostom notes the exactness of expression:

For “My father works, and I work,” is of one declaring himself equal to God. For he did not show any difference in these words. For he did not say, “He works, but I minister”; but, “Just as He works, in the same manner I also.” And this demonstrates strong equality.

This quotation illustrates another typical feature of Chrysostom’s reasoning, in two facets. Chrysostom regularly points to the exactness of an expression, by stating what Christ ‘did not say’, by means of contrast. This is commonly paired with the declaration that if Christ had wanted to avoid the misunderstanding being charged, he would certainly have done so. Thus, here, the pairing of ἐργαζεῖται with ἐργάζομαι supports Chrysostom’s claim that Jesus himself is asserting equality with God, since it would have been trivially easy to correct the Jews of the assumption of equality, if in fact that was not what Jesus had intended.

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198 οἱ μὴ βουλόμενοι μετ’ εὐγνωμοσύνης ταῦτα δέχεσθαι, φασίν, ὅτι οὐ ό Χριστὸς ἐποίει ἑαυτὸν Ἰσον τῷ Θεῷ, ἀλλ’ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τοῦτό ὑπώπτευσον. In iohannem 38.3 PG 59.215.

199 Τὸ γὰρ, Ὅ Πατὴρ μου ἐργάζεται, κἀγὼ ἐργάζομαι, Ἰσον ἑαυτὸν δεικνύοντος τῷ Θεῷ. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν, Ἐκείνος μὲν ἐργάζεται, ἐγὼ δὲ ὑπουργὸν ἀλλ’, Ὀσπερ ἐκείνος ἐργάζεται, ὅπως καὶ ἐγώ. Καὶ ισότητα πολλὴν ἐπεδείξατο. In iohannem 38.3 PG 59.215.
Chrysostom goes further, and says that even if Jesus had not corrected such a misunderstanding, John the Evangelist certainly would have (as he clarifies in John 2:19). The exactness of expression here rests upon the inseparability of operations, since they are in fact the same works that Father and Son alike perform.

Just as John 5 continues with Jesus’ extensive discourse on the relation of the Father and Son in works, so Chrysostom continues to comment with the application of inseparability of operations. Verse 19 gives the antilocutors the chance to diminish the Son, as taking away his equality with God. Yet Chrysostom gives careful attention to what this expression could mean. Since elsewhere Christ acts with remarkable power, it must mean:

The expression “he can do nothing from himself” is nothing other than that he does nothing contrary to the Father, nothing strange, nothing alien, which especially belongs to one demonstrating equality and strong concordance.\(^{200}\)

This ‘inability’ or weakness Chrysostom links to God’s inability or impossibility to do what is contrary to his nature, citing Hebrews 6:18 and 2 Timothy 2:12-13, so that this deficiency is in fact a demonstration of immense power. A little later on Chrysostom says:

For you say that this expression removes his power, and his befitting authority, and shows this strength to be weak; but I say that it shows his equality, and invariation, and this reveals that all occurs as of one will and authority and strength.\(^{201}\)

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\(^{200}\) Οὐδὲν οὖν ἄλλο ἐστί τὸ Ἰησοῦν ὃ ἐστὶν ἀναγνωριζόμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς, οὐδὲν ἀλλότριον, οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν, ὃ μᾶλλον τὴν ἐνσώματον ἑνδεικνυόμενον καὶ τὴν πολλῆς συμφωνίαν ἐστὶ. In Iohannem 38.4 PG 59.216.

\(^{201}\) Σὺ μὲν γὰρ φῆς τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἀναγνωρίζει τὸ ἴδιον καὶ τὴν προσήκουσαν αὐθεντικὴν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὴν δυνάμειν αὐθεντικὴν δεικνύοντα: ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὅτι τὴν ἐνσώματον καὶ τὸ ἀπαρράλλακτον καὶ τὸ ὡσανεὶ ἐκ μιᾶς γνώμης καὶ ἔξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως γινόμενον ἐμφαίνει τοῦτο. In Iohannem 38.4 PG 59.217.
‘Invariation’ (ἀπαπάλλακτον) we will return to later in thinking about terminology, but it is certainly part of Chrysostom’s vocabulary of divine unity. It is the last expression of this passage which bears directly upon inseparable operations, that ‘all occurs’, or is done, is ‘as of one will and authority and strength’. If indeed all that the Christ does is the same that the Father does, and those things are done of one Will, and Authority, and Strength, whose Will, Authority, and Strength will it be, except God alone as Father and [eternal] Son.

John 5 is obviously a long and key passage in Trinitarian thought and debate, but it is not the only place that Chrysostom refers to the doctrine of inseparable operations. In homily 54, commenting on John 8:36, he says:

Do you see the consubstantiality with the Father, and how he shows that he has the very same power as Him?

He links the Son’s authority or power to make them ‘truly free’, to consubstantiality (τὸ ὀμοούσιον). A citation from Romans 8:33-34 shows the logic, “It is God who justifies. Who is it that condemns?” For Chrysostom, the slavery he has in mind is slavery to sin, and only the one free from sin has the power to free from sin. Romans 8 supports the contention that God alone has that power, while in John 8:36 Christ himself declares that as the Son he has the same power. The two, having the same power that belongs to God alone, are thus consubstantial. The choice of terminology here is by no means chance.

A further example is found in homily 56, addressing John 9:4. The text in the UBS4 reads:

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201 Εἶδες τὸ ὀμοούσιον τὸ πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα, καὶ πῶς δείκνυσι τὴν αὐτὴν ἐχοντα αὐτὸν ἐξουσίαν ἐκείνης; In Iohannem 54.2 PG 59.298.
But Chrysostom has a variant:

"Εμε δεὶ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με" 204

To which he adds the following:

This is, “it is necessary that I manifest myself, and do those things able to show me to be doing the same things as the Father”, not like things, but the same, which pertains to very great invariance, and which is spoken in the case of those varying not even a little. Who then will face him finally, seeing him capable of the same things as the Father? 205

He then explains the healing of the blind man involves not only the restoration of material eye-matter, but enlivening it to see in a way that matches the ensouling and enervating of the body with life. The argument from the healing then runs, that as God gives life to the members of the body, so too here the Christ gives life to the member of the body, the eyes, that they might see, and so performs a work that is not only similar to the Father’s works, but is properly the prerogative of God alone. This fulfils the necessity of the Christ’s works being manifestly the same, not merely similar, to the Father’s, ‘which pertains to very great

204 In Iohannem 56.2 PG 59.308.

205 Τίροὖν ἄνσιβλέψει λοιπὸν, ὡς αὐτὸν τὰ αὐτὰ δυνάμενον τῷ Πατρὶ ποιοῦντα, οὐ τοιαῦτα, ἀλλὰ τὰ αὐτὰ, ὃ μειζόνος ἐστὶν ἀπαραλλαγίας, καὶ ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν οὐδὲ κατὰ μικρὸν διεστηκότων λέγεται. Τις οὖν ἀντιβλέψει λοιπόν, ὡς αὐτὸν τὰ αὐτά δυνάμενον τῷ Πατρὶ; In Iohannem 56.2 PG 59.308.
invariance’, a turn of phrase that Chrysostom uses for the unity of the Godhead. Again, we see the doctrine of inseparable operations undergirding Chrysostom’s account of unity in God.

A further example comes in homily 61.

“What then? If through the power of the Father no-one snatches them away, are you not strong, but weak in respect of guarding?” In no way. And so that you might learn that “The Father who gave them to me” is said on their account, so that they might not again call him anti-God: he said, “No-one snatches them from my hand”, and going on he showed his hand and the Father’s to be one. For if this were not the case, it would have been logical to say, “The Father, who gave [them] to me, is greater than all, and no-one is able to snatch them from my hand”. But he did not speak thus, but instead, “out of my Father’s hand”. Then, so that you might not think that he is weak, but through the power of the Father the sheep are in surety, he added, “I and the Father are One”. It is as if he said, “I said that no-one snatches them, not on account of the Father, as though I guarded the sheep as a weakling. For “I and the Father are One”, speaking here according to his power; for his entire discourse was concerning this point. For if the Power is the same, it is clear that the Essence is also.”

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206 οὖςαν here used of the identity of the ‘hand’, not in an absolute sense.
207 Τί οὖν; εἰ διὰ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐδεὶς ἀρπάζει, σοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἰσχύεις, ἀλλ’ ἀσθενής εἰ πρὸς τὴν φυλακήν; Οὐδαμῶς. Καὶ ἴνα μάθης ὅτι τὸ, ὁ Πατὴρ, ὁς ἐδωκὼς μοι, δι’ ἐκείσον εἶρηται, ἵνα μὴ πάλιν αὐτὸν ἀντίθεν εἶπων εἰπὼν, ἃτι ὁ οὐδεὶς ἀρπάζει αὐτὰ ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς μου, προϊόν ἔδειξε τὴν αὐτοῦ χείρα καὶ τὸν Πατέρα μῖαν οὖςαν. Εἰ γὰρ μὴ τούτῳ, ἀκόλουθον ἦν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι ὁ Πατήρ, ὁς ἐδωκὼς μοι, μείζων πάντων ἐστι, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται ἀρπάζειν αὐτὰ ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς μου. Ἀλλ’ οὐκ εἶπεν οὕτως, ἀλλ’ ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς μου. Εἶτα, ἴνα μὴ νομίσῃς, ὅτι αὐτὸς μὲν ἐστὶν ἀσθενής, διὰ δὲ τὴν τοῦ Πατρὸς δύναμιν ἐν αὐσαφείᾳ τὰ πρόβατα ἐστίν, ἐπήγαγεν ἃγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἐν ἐσμέν ὄσανεν ἔλεγεν, ὡσεὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν, ὅτι διὰ τὸν Πατέρα οὐδεὶς αὐτὰ ἀρπάζει, ὡς αὐτός ἄσθενων τηρήσῃ τὰ πρόβατα. Ἐγὼ γὰρ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἐν ἐσμέν κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν ἐνταῦθα λέγων· καὶ γὰρ σεβαστὸς ἢν ὁ λόγος ἄπασ αὐτῷ. Εἰ δὲ ἡ δύναμις ἢ αὐτή, εὐδηλον ὅτι καὶ ἡ οὐσία. In Iohannem 61.2 PG 59.338.
The text under consideration is the critical passage of John 10:27-30. The extract starts off with Chrysostom’s imaginary interlocutor objecting to the fact that it is the power of the Father who maintains the believers’ surety. Doesn’t this imply that the Christ is weak, that he must rely upon the God the Father’s power to safeguard them? Chrysostom understands the language of ‘The Father who gave them to me’ as a condescension to their limited theological insight, as everywhere Jesus’ comments that seem to represent some inferiority to the Father, are framed by an apologetic concern: to persuade Jesus’ Jewish opponents that he is not opposed to God in any way. Yet the collocation of verse 28 ‘out of my hand’, and verse 29 ‘out of the Father’s hand’ is evidence to Chrysostom that Jesus is aligning the Father’s work with his own. Note the technique again, in providing what the Christ would have said, if he had meant something different: verse 28 would have referred instead to the Son’s hand, thus removing any reference to the Father’s hand, and implying that the Father’s power kept believers within the Son’s grasp and surety. Instead, Jesus makes the explicit identification between his hand and the Father’s hand, sealing it with verse 30. This removes all notion of the Son’s inferiority in respect to power. Chrysostom’s final statement in this section is very revealing, ‘speaking here according to his power; for his entire discourse was concerning this point.’ That is to say, Jesus’ discourse revolves around the distinction and identity of the Power of God, because it is only concerning the power that such a conversation could even arise. The language of the Father’s hand and the Son’s hand must be about power and operations, not about essence, due to the nature of the figure being employed. So when he comes to the final and climactic clause, “I and the Father are One” Chrysostom appears to back away from interpreting the unity of the Godhead as being the primary referent, but rather the unity according to works, which necessarily entails the unity of being.
A similar point is raised in homily 64.1, which reflects on why Jesus utters the prayer in John 11:41-42. Chrysostom again reverts to the argument that if Christ were inferior, he certainly would have corrected any supposition that he was equal, but he does rather the opposite, and affirms the equality. Chrysostom in that passage cites a string of verses, John 10:37, 10:30, 14:9, 5:21, 5:23, 5:19, 11:25, 8:12, before ending with 10:33 and the comment, ‘from the equality of the works he establishes the matter.’\(^\text{208}\)

From the above it should be clear that the doctrine of inseparable operations provides a part of Chrysostom’s theological schema, and so also fulfils a hermeneutical role in his interpretation and thus preaching of John’s Gospel. At key points, not least 10:30, Chrysostom resorts to the doctrine to understand the text, where at other points such as in the discussion of John 5 and 8, the doctrine upholds the Christ’s proof of his claim to divinity, and given the fourth century context not only ‘divinity’, but a divinity that is very unity with the Father.

### 3.4 Post-Constantinople Nicene Terminology

In this section I list and consider the presence of terminology that might be considered pro-Nicene, or Pro-Constantinople in light of the creed of 381.

[τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ] τὸν μονογενῆ

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\(^{208}\) ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἐργῶν ἵστησις αὐτὸ ἔστησε. In Iohannem 64.1 PG 59.356.
The term ‘only-begotten’ is fraught with a particular problem in considering homilies on John’s Gospel, given the Evangelist’s own use of the term in 1:14\(^{209}\), 1:18\(^{210}\), 3:16\(^{211}\), and 3:18\(^{212}\). It cannot thus be considered unusual to find the language of the only-begotten Son in Chrysostom’s homilies. Nonetheless, the phrase occurs in the following contexts:

Homily 2:

Because the former was manifest to all, even if not as Father, but as God; but the Only-Begotten was unknown\(^{213}\)

For since he was about to teach that this Logos is the only-begotten Son of God, so that no one might suppose the generation to be passible, giving the appellation of the Logos, he removes every wicked supposition, showing that the Son is of him [i.e. the Father], and this impassibly.\(^{214}\)

These two quotations from homily 2, which is still very introductory and has yet to move beyond John 1:1, fit into a context where Chrysostom’s language about the Trinity is not conditioned solely by John’s use of μονογενής, but informed by a broader understanding of the term. This is seen in the first quotation above, which explains why the Evangelist is beginning with a discussion of the Son, since the former (God the Father) was known, the Evangelist proceeds immediately in his discourse to speak of the Son.

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209 ...καὶ ἔθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός... Jn 1:14
210 Ὁ θεόν οὐδεὶς έώρακεν πώποτε μονογενής θεός ὁ ὄν εἰς τὸν κόσμον τοῦ πατρός ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. Jn 1:18
211 οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεός τὸν κόσμον, ὡστε τὸν ὑιὸν τὸν μονογενὴν ἔδωκεν. Jn 3:16
212 διαὶ μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ δόμομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. Jn 3:18
213 Ὁτι ἐκεῖνος μὲν δῆλος ἀπασιν ἦν, εἰ καὶ μὴ ὡς Πατήρ, ἄλλ᾽ ὡς Θεὸςʹ ὁ δὲ Μονογενής ἤγνοεῖτο In Iohannem 2.4 PG 59.32.
214 Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ μέλλει διδάσκειν, ὅτι οὕτος ὁ Λόγος μονογενής ἐστιν Υἱός τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα μὴ παθητήν υπολάβῃ τις τὴν γέννησιν, προλαβὼν τῇ τοῦ λόγου προσηγορίᾳ, πάσαν ἀναιρεῖ τὴν πονηρὰν ὑποψίαν, τὸ τέ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὸν Υἱόν εἶναι δηλῶν, καὶ τὸ ἀπαθῶς. In Iohannem 2.4 PG 59.34.
The second quotation also demonstrates how Chrysostom is guided by a pre-existing framework. The initial appellation of the Logos is a pre-emptive theological move by the Evangelist to reject possible notions of generation, even before he introduces the language of generation with the term μονογενής.

The term also appears in homily 3.2, 3.4.\(^ {215} \)

Then in homily 4.1 we get the following:

> So that you might not, hearing “The Logos was in the beginning”, think that he was eternal, but suppose the life of the Father to be older by some interval and greater age, and give some beginning to the Only-Begotten, he adds “He was in the beginning with God”, thus eternal, as the Father himself; for he was not at any time bereft of the Logos, but always God was with God, however in their proper Person.\(^ {216} \)

Chrysostom is painstakingly careful to read the three clauses of John 1:1 alongside each other, as well as John 1:2. In each case he argues that the Evangelist established a point, and clarifies it and adds to it with the additional clauses, thus pre-emptively offering an apology against future Trinitarian heresies. Thus the paralleling of ‘in the beginning’ in the case firstly of the Logos, then of God, defuses any possible suggestion that the Logos was beyond-time begotten, yet still with some kind of interval between his generation and the unbegottenness of the Father.

The term appears a couple more times in 4.2, nowhere more delightfully than towards the end of the section, where Chrysostom admits that such reasonings are difficult for the

\(^ {215} \) PG 59.39, PG 59.42.

\(^ {216} \) Ἡνα γὰρ μὴ, ἀκοῦσας ὅτι Ἰν ἄρχη ἦν ὁ Λόγος, ἄδιδν μὲν νομίσῃς, πρεσβυτέραν δὲ διαστήματι τίνι τοῦ Πατρὸς τὴν ζωὴν ὑποπτεύως καὶ αἴωνι πλείονι, καὶ τῷ Μονογενεῖ δῶς ἄρχην, ἐπῆγαγε τὸ, ὅτι Ἰν ἄρχη πρὸς τὸν Θεόν ἦν, οὕτως ἄδιος, ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ Πατὴρ οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἔρημος οὐδέποτε τοῦ Λόγου, ἀλλ’ ἀεὶ Θεός πρὸς Θεόν ἦν, ἐν ὑπερτάσει μέντοι ἴδια. In iohannem 4.2 PG 59.47.
majority of his audience to follow, but then cites Isaiah 43:10, and forces the dilemma upon his invisible opponents: to deny that the Son has any existence or being, or else to embrace the orthodox doctrine.\(^{217}\)

In homily 6 it appears as part of the concluding doxology\(^{218}\), in homily 7 as part of the expression, ‘they fell from the sound faith concerning the Only-Begotten’\(^{219}\), twice in homily 8, once in homily 10 as ‘the only-begotten Son of God’\(^{220}\), then numerous times in homily 12, which treats John 1:14 explicitly. Again in homily 14\(^ {221}\), then 15 which treats John 1:18.

Outside the strictly textual uses in homily 15 are these words:

So that you might not suppose him to be one of those sons who became so by grace, on account of the commonality of the name, he first attaches the article, separating him from those sons according to grace. But if this does not please you, but you yet look below\(^ {222}\), hear a name more absolute than this, “Only-Begotten”\(^ {223}\).

In the flow of John 1, the adoption of believers as sons is an important concept, given the Evangelist’s broader presentation of sonship. Chrysostom picks this up in his treatment of

\(^{217}\) Ἐμπροσθέν μου οὐκ ἐγένετο άλλος θεός, καὶ μετ’ ἐμὲ οὐκ έστιν; [Isa 43:10 LXX] Εἰ γὰρ νεώτερος τοῦ Πατρός ὁ Υἱός, πᾶς φησι, Μετ’ ἐμὲ οὐκ έστιν; Ἄρα οὖν ἀναιρήσετε καὶ αὐτού τοῦ Μονογενοῦς τὴν οὐσίαν; Ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἢ τούτο τοιμάζῃ, ἢ μίαν παραδεξασθαι τὴν θεότητα ἐν ίδιᾳ ὑποστάσει Πατρός καὶ Υἱοῦ. In iohannem 4.2 PG 59.48.

\(^{218}\) ὥ ἄ δόξα ἁμα τῶ μονογενεῖ Υἱῶ iohannem 6.3 PG 59.62.

\(^{219}\) καὶ τῆς όγιοῦς περὶ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ἔξεπεν πίστεως iohannem 7.1 PG 59.63.

\(^{220}\) ὁ δὲ μονογενής τοῦ θεοῦ Πάις, in iohannem 10.2 PG 59.76. Interesting that Chrysostom uses παῖς here rather than οἶος.

\(^{221}\) PG 59.95. I have not listed the numerous references in homily 12 and 15, as the majority occur in citation of the treated text.

\(^{222}\) i.e., have an earthly conception of him.

\(^{223}\) Ἰνα τοῖς μὴ διὰ τὴν τοῦ ονόματος κοινωνίαν ἔνα τινα τῶν χάριτι γενομένων υἱών εἶναι νομίσῃς αὐτόν, πρῶτον μὲν πρόσκειται τὸ ἄρθρον διαφοράν αὐτόν τῶν κατὰ χάριν. Εἰ δὲ μη τοῦτο ἄρκει οἱ, ἀλλ’ έτι κάτω κύπτεις, τοῦτο κυριωτέρον ἄκουε όνομα τό, Μονογενής. In iohannem 15.2 PG 59.100.
John 1:18, articulating in accordance with his Christology in the context of his century’s debates, that there are two types of sonship, that by nature and that by grace (the grace of adoption). So, at this point he clarifies how the Christ is the son of God, not by grace or a grace, but rather by nature, which is indicated firstly by the article, indicating his unique relation as Son of God, and further strengthened by μονογενής. The point about the article is repeated in homily 18.

From the early sermons, use of the term drops off, appearing once in 17, 18, 24, twice in 26 (where the distinction between kinds of sonship is again revisited in the context of John 3:6), four times in 27 (commenting on John 3:16), 46, 69, 79.

τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα

A sentence that bears some similarity to this creedal phrase occurs in homily 7, almost immediately preceding the quotation cited in the above section:

We say that the Father is without-beginning, nor has he been begotten; the Son without-beginning, begotten of the Father.

Here we see clear distinction between the Father and the Son, in the terms ἀναρχὸν to describe both as being without origin or beginning, yet distinct in terms of generation, here with the verbal terms μὴ γέγεννησθαι and γεγεννημένον. Elsewhere we will see the language of γεννητός καὶ ἀγέννητος.

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224 I am not unaware over debate concerning the meaning of the term in John’s gospel. The fathers are inclined to read it as ‘only-begotten’, not ‘one of a γένος’.
226 λέγομεν δὲ τὸν μὲν Πατέρα πρὸς τὸ ἀναρχὸν εἶναι, μὴ γέγεννησθαι; τὸν δὲ Υἱὸν ἀναρχὸν εἶναι, γεγεννημένον δὲ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς In Iohannem 7.4 PG 59.64.
‘[only]-Begotten of the Father’ occurs several times in the citing and discussion of John 1:18, which I leave aside as being textually grounded.

Although generation-related terms appear in a small number of other contexts, the only really interesting one comes in homily 39, on John 5:23-30.

All that the Father is, the Son also is the same, being begotten, and remaining a Son in respect of existence.  

Here Chrysostom equates πάντα... ὡσα... ταῦτα to show the essential unity of Father and Son, while preserving the distinction in two regards, (a) the Son is begotten, leaving implicit at this point that the Father is unbegotten, and (b) the Son remains a son, losing nor altering nothing of his Sonship in being all that the Father is.

πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων

There is little in the way of allusion to this phrase of the creed, except perhaps the following in homily 4:

It is clear that they were created before all visible things. Thus also hearing concerning the Only-Begotten, that “He was in the beginning”, conceive that he is before all intellectual conceptions and before the ages.

Here in his early account of John 1, Chrysostom calls in Genesis 1:1 to give account for the creation of all things, and then, given John 1:3, in conjunction with verses 1-2, that the

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228 Ηε is referring to the heavens and the earth, from Genesis 1:1, created ‘in the beginning’.  
229 Εἶδηλον ὅτι τὸ πρὸ πάντων γενέσθαι αὐτά τῶν ὀρατῶν. Οὕτω καὶ περὶ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ἄκουσών, ὅτι ἔν ἀρχῇ ἦν, πρὸ πάντων αὐτὸν νοεί τῶν νοητῶν καὶ πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων. In Iohannem 4.1 PG 59.47.
Son’s ‘in the beginning’ status places him before not only all visible (and created) things but also prior to all conceptions and ‘the ages’, echoing the creed, if only faintly.

φῶς ἐκ φωτός

I find no clear evidence of language that approaches this creedal phrase in the homilies on John. However, Chrysostom does allude to it in his homily on Hebrews 1.3 in connexion to John 8:12:

But that which he says, ‘radiance of the glory’, calling the Son: and that well-said, hear the Christ saying concerning himself, ‘I am the Light of the World’. Therefore he says ‘radiance’, so to show that even here it was thus spoken; it plainly means then, ‘Light of Light’. 230

And yet in his comments on John 8:12f, Chrysostom does not raise this understanding at all.

θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ

In considering the presence of language that might reflect ‘true God of true God’, I excluded references that revolved around John 1:9231 and 4:42232. However, when we consider John 17:3233, Chrysostom’s concerns, while not directed by the creed, are more telling. On 17:3 he comments, ‘He says, ‘only true God’, with a distinction from those that are not gods. For he was about to send them to the Gentiles.’234 That is ‘only’ is used here to distinguish between the true God and the false gods, the idols, which Chrysostom further buttresses with

230 Ἀλλ’ ὀπερ ἔφη, ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης εἰρήκε τῶν Υἱῶν· καὶ ὅτι καλῶς, ἂκουε τοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγοντος περὶ αὐτοῦ, Ἐγὼ εἰμί τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου. Διὰ τούτου δὲ ἀπαύγασμα εἶπεν αὐτός, ἵνα δείξῃ ὅτι κἀκεῖ ὁ οὐτός εἰρήται δῆλον δὲ, ὡς φῶς ἐκ φωτός. In epistulam ad Hebraeos 2.2 PG 63.22.
231 Ἡν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν....
232 ...ἀὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτος ἐστίν ἄληθως ὁ σωτήρ τοῦ κόσμου.
233 ἀὕτη δὲ ἐστιν ἡ αἰωνίως ἡμῆν ἡ γενωσκομαι σῶς τῶν μόνων ἀληθινῶν θεοίν καὶ ὁ ἀπεστείλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.
234 Μόνον ἀληθινῶν θεοίν, πρὸς ἀντίδιστολὴν τῶν οὐκ ὄντων θεῶν φησί. Καὶ γὰρ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη αὐτοῖς πέμπειν ἐμελέλεν. In Iohannem 80.2 PG 59.435.
reference to the imminent Gentile mission, in which context that would be abundantly clear. It is not, Chrysostom avers, in order to drive a wedge between Father and Son, but is treating of the Godhead in unity. His grammatical example then derives from 1 Corinthians 9:6\footnote{ἡ μόνος ἔγὼ καὶ Βαρνάβας οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι;}, where ‘only’ is not exclusive of Barnabas, but inclusive of him and exclusive of others.

Apart from this usage, there are no further significant treatments of ‘true God from true God’, certainly not with any creedal-language specificity.

\textit{γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα}

I find no clear evidence of language that approaches this creedal phrase.

\textit{ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί}

ὁμοούσιος is not a major terminological key in the early periods of the post-Nicaea debates.\footnote{Ayres, Nicaea and its Legacy, 90-97. It was a term that certainly excluded Arius, but it was open to interpretation, so much so that Eusebius of Caesarea could endorse it in a certain way, as well as skirting modalist and even gnostic interpretation of the same term. Its pre-Nicene heritage left is problematic as a term with materialistic associations.} Yet, later in that period\footnote{Ibid., 96; 140-4.}, from the 360s onwards, it begins to gain in prominence, partly by its usage and championing by Athanasius in his later writings and agitations. Its presence in the creed of 381 is a mark of its ‘triumph’, as a technical term, and so it deserves some careful attention to how it is used in Chrysostom’s homilies, particularly as it is an extra-biblical term, unlike some of the rather Johannine language encountered so far.
It is somewhat surprising then that ὁμοούσιος doesn’t turn up before homily 52, on John 7:45-8:19. In the discussion concerning appropriate witnesses and verse 17, Chrysostom says:

Do you see that he said this for no different purpose, other than to show himself consubstantial, and through himself again to show that he was not lacking another’s testimony; and to show that he had no inferiority to the Father?²³⁸

That it comes so late in the sequence of homilies is surprising; that Chrysostom makes so little of the phrase, perhaps indicating that he had nothing to gain by an explicit appeal to creedal language at all.

A second use of the term comes in homily 52, commenting on John 8:36, which we examined in section 3.3.

In homily 69 the term reappears:

What then? Is God a body? By no means. For he speaks of the ‘sight’ that is of the mind here, and thence shows the consubstantiality.²³⁹

He is commenting briefly but directly on John 12:45, ‘he who sees me, sees him who sent me’. The logic is tight: since God is not a body, not corporeal at all (John 4:24), sight cannot be interpreted to mean physical, sensible perception. Rather, it speaks to mental apprehension, and so to ‘see’ the Son is truly to ‘see’ the Father. This, inexorably for Chrysostom, is a demonstration of their consubstantiality, τὸ ὁμοούσιον. And yet again, the

²³⁸ Ὅρας ὅτι δὲ ὁδὲν ἔτερον τοῦτο εἴρηκεν, ἢ ἤνα δείξῃ ὁμοούσιον ἑαυτόν, καὶ δὲ ἐάν τοῦ πάλιν δείξῃ οὗ δεόμενον αὐτὸν ἄλλης μαρτυρίας καὶ δείξῃ ὁδὲν ἔλαττον ἔχοντα τοῦ Πατρὸς; In Iohannem 52.3 PG 59.290.
²³⁹ Τί οὖν; σωμάτι ἢ Θεός; ὁδικά. Θεωρίαν γὰρ τὴν τοῦ νοῦ φησιν ἐνταῦθα, καὶ ἐντεύθεν τὸ ὁμοούσιον δῆλων. In Iohannem 69.1 PG 59.378.
term is present but without any fanfare, self-reflection, or formalised language. It suggests that perhaps within Chrysostom’s circles, ὁμοούσιος is uncontroversial enough to be used regularly at will, or irregularly, without becoming a litmus test for orthodoxy.

Both the term and the same concept recur in homily 74, on John 14:9, predictably. A second occurrence is later in 74:

You must not, hearing ‘Father’ and ‘Son’, seek something else for the establishing of the relationship according to essence. For if this does not content you for the proving of co-honour and consubstantiality, learn it even from the works. ²⁴⁰

The comment comes on John 14:11. That 14:11 is not primarily about equality of works is established, for Chrysostom, by the reference in ν14b to believing through the works themselves. Certainly elsewhere he treats of inseparable operations, but here it is Christ himself establishing the unity, the consubstantiality, through his words, and Chrysostom does not shy from the word ὁμοούσιον.

ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός

Only one passage clearly echoes the deleted ‘from the ousía of the Father’ clause from the Nicene creed of 325. It comes in homily 26:

For I also am begotten of God, but not of his essence. ²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Ἔδει μὲν ὡμᾶς ἀκούοντας Πατέρα καὶ Υἱόν, μηδὲν ἔτερον ζητεῖν εἰς παράστασιν τῆς κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν συγγενείας. Ἐὰν δὲ ὡμᾶν οὐκ ἀρκεῖ τούτο πρὸς τὸ δεῖξαι τὸ ὁμότιμον καὶ ὁμοούσιον, κἂν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων μάθετε. In Iohannem 74.2 PG 59.402.

²⁴¹ In Iohannem 74.2 PG 59.402.
The passage has already been briefly mentioned for its usage of μονογενής in discussion of the two types of sonship, by grace and by nature. In the midst of that discussion, Chrysostom says this, which by its negation suggests that ἐκ τῆς ούσιας τοῦ πατρός is a phrase proper only to the Son, not to the sons. However, given its absence from the rest of the homilies, it is unlikely to be more than a oblique allusion to Nicaea at best.

ἀπαράλλακτος

The first instance of the word comes in homily 15, treating John 1:18:

On this account, which I said, the Evangelist mentions the bosom, making all things clear to us by this one word, that great is the affinity and unity of the essence, that the Knowledge is precisely similar, because the Power is the same. For the Father would have nothing of different substance in his bosom....

In this case, ἀπαράλλακτος functions to parallel and complement ἴσος, συγγένεια, and ἑνότης, as indicative of unity, similarity, and lack of dissimilarity. Indeed, to assert absolute similarity will necessarily implicate absence of dissimilarity, and it is this negation that ἀπαράλλακτος upholds with its alpha-privative.

The second occurrence comes in homily 38, where commenting on 5:19 ‘The Son can do nothing of his own accord’, Chrysostom comments that the use of the negative phrasing is

242 Διὰ τούτο, ὅπερ ἔφη, καὶ ὁ Εὐαγγελιστὴς τοῦ κόλπου μέμνηται, πάντα διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς ρήματος τοῦτοῦ ἡμῖν ἐμφαίνων, ὅτι πολλῇ τῆς ούσιας ἤ συγγένεια καὶ ἑνότης, ὅτι ἀπαράλλακτος ἡ γνώσις, ὅτι Ἰση ἡ ἐξουσία. Οὐ γὰρ τὸν ἐτεροῦσιν ἐν τοῖς κόλποις ἃν ἔσχεν ὁ Πατὴρ.... In Iohannem 15.2 PG 59.99.
“So that here also he shows again the invariability and strictness of the equality.” The usage is very similar, and the context also. The text under discussion is one that bears on the question of similarity and identity, and Chrysostom uses ἀπαράλλακτος to indicate the lack of any distinction or division. The word occurs twice more in the near context of this sermon.

A further three occurrences are found in homily 39, following on in the important John 5 discourse. The first of these is in comment on 5:26, as Chrysostom asks, "So you see how the invariability, the distinction in one point alone, he declares, that the one is Father, the other Son?" Having just seen how ἀπαράλλακτος works to establish absolute likeness and equality, we now see the complement, that ἀπαράλλακτος does not destroy the distinction of persons in the Trinity. Chrysostom at this point hangs the distinction between Father and Son upon the single word ἐδωκε, reflecting the derivative or begotten nature of the Son, and the unbegotten nature of the Father, and yet, "it shows all other things to be equal and unvarying." The further use of ἀπαράλλακτος here reinforces its usage as a term for absolute identity, even while Chrysostom is introducing and upholding the Father-Son distinction in persons. This distinction will be seen more clearly in his use of ὑπόστασις below.

Finally, ἀπαράλλακτος is used four more times, once each in homily 53, 69, 74, and 82, each time with a similar point, sameness of essence without any degree of separation or distinction.

243 Ἰνα καντεύθεν δείξῃ πάλιν τό ἀπαράλλακτον καὶ τήν ἀκρίβειαν τῆς ισότητος. In Iohannem 38.4 PG 59.216.
244 Ὡρᾷς πῶς τό ἀπαράλλακτον, καὶ ἕνι μόνῳ τήν διαφορὰν ἐμφαίνον, τῷ τόν μὲν Πατέρα εἶναι, τόν δὲ Γιόν; In Iohannem 39.3 PG 59.223.
245 τά δὲ ἄλλα πάντα ἴσα καὶ ἀπαράλλακτα δείκνυσιν. In Iohannem 39.3 PG 59.223.
246 Τό γὰρ, Ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ οὐδὲν, τό ἀπαράλλακτον τῆς οὐσίας δηλοί, καὶ τό οὐδὲν ἐκτὸς τῶν πατρικῶν νομίμων φθέγγεσθαι. In Iohannem 53.2 PG 59.293.
While ὑπόστασις emerges quite late in the 4th century as part of a terminology for speaking about the Person/Nature distinction in the Trinity, its usage by the Cappadocians especially, and in the post-381 context see its establishment as a standard term.250 How does Chrysostom use it?

The first occurrence is in homily 3, discussing John 1:1. Chrysostom:

For he does not say, “He was in God”, but “He was with God”, making clear to us his eternity, according to Person.251

Considering how precisely Chrysostom treats John 1:1, it is not surprising that the term is introduced here. For Chrysostom treats the first ἐν as indicative of absolute being, ‘in the beginning was the Word’, while the second ἐν signifies relative being, ‘and the Word was with God’. In light of such a distinction in meaning and according to his reading, the first establishes the Logos’s eternality, which belongs properly to God, while the second establishes the relation between Father and Logos. This sentence from Chrysostom furthers

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248 Ὅ Πατὴρ μου ἔως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται, κἀγὼ ἐργάζομαι ἐκεῖ μὲν τὸ ἀπαράλλακτον τῶν ἔργων, ἐνταῦθα δὲ τὸ ταύτων ἐνδεικνύμενος. In iohannem 74.2 PG 59.401.
249 Τὸ γὰρ, Καθὼς, ἐνταῦθα ὁ πάντων ἀπαράλλακτον ἀκριβείας In iohannem 82.1 PG 59.442.
250 Ayres, Nicaea and its Legacy, 25 (Origen); 47, 174-5 (Athanasius); 209-211 (Basil). Ayres rightly traces the development of the term, noting in Athanasius its early virtual absence, and certainly not as a technical term for the Persons; later Athanasius, in the Tome to the Antiochenes, begins to use it in rapprochement. Basil marks the real flourishing of the term in a technical sense, in Contra Eunomium 3.3, and in Epistles 52, 125, 236 (Especially this last one).
251 Ὅ γὰρ εἶπεν, Ἐν Θεῷ ἦν, ἄλλα, Πρὸς τὸν Θεόν ἦν, τὴν καθ’ ὑπόστασιν αὐτοῦ ἄδιαστη ἐμφαίνων ἡμῖν. In iohannem 3.3 PG 59.40.
that argument, removing the idea of unbegottenness from the second Person of the Trinity, as well as the concept that he was a Word ‘uttered or conceived’.

In homily 4.1, ὑπόστασις is used in the same passage cited above for μονογενής. It follows a passage that repeats the argument about John 1:1’s two initial clauses which we have just considered in homily 3. Chrysostom asserts their co-eternity, but adds:

\[\text{[F]or he [the Father] was not at any time bereft of the Logos, but always God was with God, however in their proper Person.}\]

Again, the term establishes the singular point of distinction between Father and Son, that the Father is the Father, and the Son remains the Son.

It then occurs again in homily 4, in the section also aforementioned, where Isaiah 43:10 is invoked to establish the Son’s only-begotten eternal existence. To this is added the rhetorical question:

\[\text{For it was necessary either to dare this [i.e., to take away the Son’s existence], or to receive the one Godhead in the proper Person of Father and Son.}\]

The coupling of ὑποστάσις with ἰδιος reveals something of its sense. For what else is it that demarcates the ὑποστάσεις other than their peculiar and proper characteristics? And so Chrysostom’s Trinitarian theology looks thoroughly late and developed: the Father and Son share all things, except that each remains as Father and as Son, characterised as persons.

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252 προφορικὸν ἢ ἐνδιάθετον.
253 οὗ γὰρ ἦν ἑρμηνεὺς ροίδεύτη τοῦ Λόγου, ἀλλ’ ἀεὶ Θεός πρὸς Θεόν ἦν, ἐν ὑποστάσει μέντοι ἰδία. In Iohannem 4.1 PG 59.47.
254 Ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἢ τοῦτο τολμᾶν, ἢ μίαν παραδέξασθαι τὴν θεότητα ἐν ἰδία ὑποστάσει Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱον In Iohannem 4.2 PG 59.48.
only in relation, for that is the only distinction that is admissible to the unity of the Godhead.

In homily 7 the two words again appear in connexion, in discussion of Hebrews 1:3

   For do not, since you have heard that he is Radiance, he says, suppose him to be deprived of his proper Person.  

In respect to Hebrews, Chrysostom detects a similar two-fold movement. ‘Radiance’ establishes that the Son is of the same Essence of the Father, and yet begotten where the Father is unbegotten, thus rejecting the idea that Father and Son are ‘brothers’ of a single source. Added to this that he is the ‘express image’ makes plain that the Son exists in his own Person.  

It is not until homily 49 that ύποστάσις reappears in Chrysostom’s terminology, discussing 8:17:

   For if the Person is different, but so do I talk and act, so that nothing different from the Father be supposed, but the same which the Father says or does.  

The lack of ἰδιος is almost surprising by this point, but once again Chrysostom is consistent in his vocabulary. ύποστάσις is a term that for him represents the distinction of Persons, while in all other respects maintaining the unity of Essence, which is here coupled with the doctrine of inseparable operations.

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255 The author of Hebrews, whom Chrysostom takes to be Paul.
256 Μη γὰρ, ἐπειδὴ ἡμαῖς, ἤκουσαν, τῆς ἰδιας αὐτῶν ἀπεστερῆσαι νομίσῃς ύποστάσεως, In Iohannem 7.2 PG 59.64.
257 Διὰ τούτῳ εἰπὼν αὐτῶν ἑπάγαγεν, ὅτι Καὶ χαρακτήρ ἐστὶ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἰδιαν ὑπόστασιν δηλωθῇ καὶ τῆς αὐτής ὄντα αὐτῶν οὐσίας, ἡς ἔστι καὶ χαρακτήρ In Iohannem 7.2 PG 59.64.
258 Εἰ γάρ καὶ ἡ ύπόστασις ἄλλη, ἄλλη οὖν καὶ λέγω καὶ πράττω, ως μὴ νοµίζεσθαι ἐτερὸς τί παρὰ τὸν Πατέρα, ἄλλα τὸ αὐτὸ ὅπερ ὁ Πατήρ εἶπεν ἡ ἔφραξεν. In Iohannem 49.2 PG 59.275.
Further uses occur in homilies 68, 74. In homily 75 the term is used to establish the Person of the Holy Spirit:

> For by saying ‘another’, showing the distinction of his Person; but by saying ‘Paraclete’, the affinity of Essence.

Also 78; a final use occurs in homily 87, where it is part of a quotation from Hebrews 11:1, and must be read in a substantial sense.

### 3.5 The utility and limitations of analogy

The first use of analogy I wish to examine comes in homily 5, which like the other opening homilies, both in virtue of its position and its text, bears directly upon Trinitarian concerns. Relatively late in the homily, commenting upon John 1:4, Chrysostom says:

> Just as then in the case of the spring that begets great depths, however much you remove, the spring is lessened in no degree; thus also in the case of the activity of the Only-begotten, however much you might believe to have been produced and made through it, itself becomes no less; rather, that I employ a more homely example, I will speak of the case of Light, which also he adds immediately, saying, “and the Life was the Light”. Just as then Light, however many myriads it shines, is lessened nothing with respect of its own luminescence; thus also God, both before

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259 ὅχ ώς συναλείφοντες τὰς ὑποστάσεις, ἀλλὰ μίαν ἀξίαν δηλοῦντες εἶναι, φησί. Καὶ γὰρ τά τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῦ Υἱοῦ, καὶ τά τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἡται in Ioannem 68.2 PG 59.376.

260 ἔπειθη γὰρ τούτῳ ἦστιν, ὅτε ἦστιν ὁ Πατήρ, μένων Υἱὸς, εἰκότως ἐν αὐτῷ δείκνυσι τὸν γεγεννηκότα. Εἶτα διαμένων τὰς ὑποστάσεις, φησίν: ὁ ἐμφανὸς ἐμὲ, ἑώρακεν τὸν Πατέρα, ἦν μὴ τίς ἐξή, ὅτι αὐτὸς Πατήρ, αὐτὸς Υἱός in Ioannem 74.1 PG 59.400-1.

261 Τῷ μὲν γὰρ εἰπεῖν, ἂλλυν, δείκνυσιν αὐτοῦ τῆς ὑποστάσεως τὴν διαφοράν· τῷ δὲ εἰπεῖν, Παράκλητον, τῆς οὐσίας τῆς συγγένειαν. In Ioannem 75.1 PG 59.403.

262 Πῶς γὰρ τὸ πανταχόον ὑμᾶς ὑποκύπτεις; ἂλλας δὲ, καὶ τῶν ὑποστάσεων τὸ διάφορον δείκνυσι. In Ioannem 78.3 PG 59.423.

263 ‘It’ refers to the activity of the Son, not the Son himself.
his working, and after the creating, remains likewise lacking-nothing, nothing
diminished, nor exhausted from the very great creation; but even if it were
necessary that ten thousand such worlds be made, even if limitless, he would
remain the same sufficient for all, not only for their production, but also for their
governance after their creation.\footnote{Καθάπερ οὖν ἐπὶ τῆς πηγῆς τῆς τικτούσης ἀβύσσους, ὃσον ἄν ἄφελης, οὐδὲν ἡλάττωσας τὴν πηγὴν οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ Μονογενοῦς, ὅσα ἄν πιστεύσῃς παρήχθαι δὴ αὐτῆς καὶ πεποίηθαι, οὐδὲν ἐλάττων αὐτὴ γέγονεν μᾶλλον δὲ, ἵν’ οἰκειοτέρω χρῆσωμαι παραδείγματι, τὸ τοῦ φωτὸς ἔρω, ὦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπήγαγεν εὐθέως, εἰπὼν Καὶ ἢ ξώῃ ἤν τὸ φῶς. Ὁσπερ οὖν τὸ φῶς, δοσάς ἄν φωτὶς μορίδας, οὐδὲν εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν ἐλαττώταται λαμπρότητα οὕτω καὶ ο Θεός, καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ἑργάσασθαι, καὶ μετὰ τὸ ποιῆσαι, ὡμίως ἀνελλιπῆς μένει, μηδὲν ἐλαττούμενος, μηδὲ ἀτονόν ἐκ τῆς δημιουργίας τῆς πολλῆς ἀλλὰ κἂν μυρίους δὲ γενέσθαι κόσμους τοιούτους, κἂν ἀπείρους, ὡς αὐτὸς μένει πάσιν ἀρκῶν, οὔ πρὸς τὸ παραγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὸ συγκρατῆσαι μετὰ τὴν δημιουργίαν αὐτοῦ. In iohannem 5.3 PG 59.57.}

This passage shows Chrysostom employing two stock analogies, the first of water and its
source, the second of light and its rays. The first analogy is rather contracted, in that it is
followed immediately by its application, whereas the second is both suggested by the very
context of the text preached upon, and expanded in its application.

Notice that this analogy is not deployed to illustrate or illuminate the Father and Son
relationship, which is what might be expected. It was certainly not untypical to employ the
light analogy in particular, as seen in the Creed of 381, ‘Light of Light’. Rather, the two
analogies are implemented to reveal something about the creation, that the act of creation
for God involved no lessening or diminution.

At first glance, then, it might seem that this analogy is inept – for a spring or fount is a
source of water, and giving forth the water of the deeps it loses no water; likewise and
more forcefully the light, giving off light, is not lessened in respect of light. Is Chrysostom
then suggesting some kind of emanation theory of creation? Nothing could be further from
his mind, as careful attention to the point of analogy will bear. An emanation theory of creation would tend rather to suggest that some diminution did take place, that light from light deprived the light-source of something of its original luminescence.

Notice also the shift in the application of the analogy between the two. After the first, water-based analogy Chrysostom refers it to the ἐνεργεία τοῦ Μονογενοῦς while after the second he enters into its referent with ὁ Θεὸς.... Thus Chrysostom in effect creates an implicit correlation between God, spoken without qualification, and the activity of the Son. Not to press the point overmuch, but it does invite one to understand that neither is the Godhead diminished in any way by the creation, nor the Godhead in its activity.

The passage that follows this is mentioned above in section 3.2, and the connection between the undiminished Godhead and the doctrine of simplicity with respect to uncompounded Being is obvious.

A long section dealing with analogies occurs in homily 14.1, which we will treat at some length. Chrysostom begins immediately after John 1:17:

And what is this, he says, “of his fullness we all have received?” for upon this point our discourse must treat for a time. He has, he says, the gift not by participation, but is very-font and very-root of all good things, is very-Life, and very-Light, and very-Truth; not holding in himself the abundance of goods, but overflowing it to all others, and after the overflowing remaining full; for in nothing is he lessened from
the supplying to others, but always streaming and sharing with all of these goods, he remains in the same perfection.\textsuperscript{265}

Chrysostom’s first point is to again reinforce the distinction between possession by nature, and possession by participation. In the case of the Logos, his possession, the fullness of grace and goodness, which is virtually tantamount to divinity, is his by nature, not participation. The whole economy of salvation for Chrysostom rests upon this distinction, that we become partakers and participants in the divine because we are not so by nature, but only the one who is divine not by participation can enable said participation.

The gift of fullness then, belongs to the Logos by nature, and so he is αὐτοπηγή and αὐτόριζα. The dual image of font and root both relate to the idea of source, and yet Chrysostom is not applying this figure absolutely, as if the Christ were the source of his own divinity in an independent manner. Rather, the source-figure is applied to the fullness of good things πάντων τῶν καλῶν. Chrysostom develops the logic in applying three more αὐτο- compounds with Life, Light, and Truth, all key statements within the Fourth gospel.

The second half of this opening paragraph begins to develop the analogy, and the idea of a spring or font is more dominant, with the language of overflowing (ὑπεπβλύζων). In three different ways Chrysostom reinforces the idea that this source, this spring, is not diminished by this provision of overflowing, but remains full, is in no respect lessened, and remains in the same perfection. Chrysostom goes on:

What I have, is participatory (for I received it from another), and something small of the entire, and as if a paltry drop to an unspeakable abyss and boundless sea; and

\textsuperscript{265} Καὶ τί ποτὲ ἔστι, φησί, τὸ, Ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν; Ἐπὶ γὰρ τοῦτο τέως ἀκτέων τὸν λόγον. Οὐ μεθεκτήν, φησίν, ἐχεῖ τὴν δωρεὰν, ἄλλ’ αὐτοπηγή καὶ αὐτόριζα ἐστὶ πάντων τῶν καλῶν, αὐτοζωή, καὶ αὐτοφαῖς, καὶ αὐτοαλήθεια; οὐκ ἐν ἔαυτῷ συνέχων τῶν ἁγίων τὸν πλόστον, ἄλλα καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἄλλους ἀπαντὰς ὑπερβλύζων αὐτόν, καὶ μετὰ τὸ ὑπερβλύσαι μένων πλήρης ἐν οὐδενὶ γὰρ ἐλαττούμενος ἐκ τῆς εἰς ἐέροις χορηγίας, ἄλλ’ ἀεὶ πηγάζων καὶ πᾶσι τούτων μεταδίδοσι τῶν καλῶν, ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς μὲνεὶ τελειότητος. \textit{In iohannem} 14.1 PG 59.91.
moreover not even this is able to set forth the contrast which we are trying to say. For if you take the drop from the sea, you have lessened the sea in this very thing, even if the lessening be unseen. But in the case of that font this cannot be said: but however much someone draws, he remains nothing diminished. Wherefore we must all the more turn to another model: for it is weak and not able to set forth what we seek, but better than the former guides us to the concept that now lies before us.

He remains in the general realm of spring/font-water analogies, but now moves from Christ’s overflowing abundance, to our participation in his abundance. Here Chrysostom develops an illustration or pattern to show something of what he is saying: that the believer’s possession is firstly participatory, precisely because it is shared (not innate); that compared to the whole, it is infinitesimally small. Then he breaks off the figure noting its fallibility. I consider this to be a distinctive, if not unique, aspect of pro-Nicene use of analogies: that though they are happy to deploy them, they are well aware of their limits, especially as analogies are used to speak of the Godhead. Here Chrysostom is showing usual acumen: his analogy is flawed at this precise point, because a paltry drop of water is still a something, such that its removal will indeed diminish the ocean, even if in the smallest degree. The analogy then gains something of its traction by contrast: the Logos is not diminished even in this slightest degree, by the sharing and participation of its abundance, which in this figure is beginning to appear as participation in the Divine. Chrysostom moves from this analogy, granting its weakness, to another which he will also flag as ‘weak’, but more fitted to his purpose.

266 Ὅδε ἐγὼ φέρω, μεθεκτόν τέ ἐστι (παρ’ ἐτέρου γὰρ ἠλαβον αὐτό), καὶ μικρὸν τι τοῦ παντός, καὶ οἴονεὶ σταγόνων εὐτελῆς πρὸς ἄρρυσσιν ἄφατον καὶ πέλαγος ἀπειρον μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦτο τὸ παράδειγμα παραστήσαι δόναται ὅπερ ἐπιχειροῦμεν εἰπεῖν. Σταγόνα μὲν γὰρ ἀπὸ πελάγους ἀν ἔξελθης, αὐτῷ τούτῳ τὸ πέλαγος ἡλάτωσας, εἰ καὶ ἀφάνις ἢ ἐλάτωσοι. Ἑπὶ δὲ τῆς πιθῆς ἐκείνης οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτο εἰπεῖν ἅλλ’ δόσιν ἀν τις ἀρύσηται, μένει μηδὲν ἐλαττομένη. Διὸ χρῆ μᾶλιστα ἐὰν ἐτέρου ὑποδειγμα ἐλλεῖν ἀδενές μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸ καὶ οὐ δυνάμενον ὅπερ ἰητούμεν παραστήσαι, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦ πρωτέρου χειραγωγοῦν ἡμᾶς πρὸς τὴν ἐννοιαν τὴν προκειμένην ἡμῖν νόμῳ. In lohammem 14.1 PG 59.91.
Let us hypothesise there is a font of fire, then from that fire ten-thousand lamps are kindled, and twice so many, and thrice, and many times; does not the fire remain in the same fullness after the distribution to so many from its operation? It is apparent to all. Now if in the case of corporeal things, being divisible, being lessened by removal, one has been found of such kind that even after sharing with others from itself, it is harmed nothing, much more in the case of that incorporeal and unmixed power will this eventuate. For if there that which is imparted is essence and body, and is divided, and is undivided, much more will it be when the discourse is concerning an operation, and an operation of an incorporeal essence, reasonably it suffers nothing of this kind.  

It is unsurprising that Chrysostom moves from a water-based analogy to a fire one. These are common enough figures within the fourth century for this kind of theologising. Here, however, the somewhat insubstantial nature of fire permits a precision of analogy that water did not allow. So instead of the spring or water, we have a spring, a font, of fire. Instead of the drop, we have the kindling of manifold torches. And Chrysostom’s point is obvious enough that he simply declares its obviousness: the fire is undiminished by the kindling of others.

Keeping in mind what Chrysostom said earlier, that this pattern too would be weak, one must not push it too far. Even so, Chrysostom does not suggest that the fire analogy reveals to us something about the way in which the Logos is overflowingly abundant yet remains undiminished, but proceeds with an a fortiori argument a minore ad maius: If this true case...  

267 Ὕποθωμεθα γὰρ εἶναι πυρὸς πηγὴν, εἶτε ἀπὸ τῆς πηγῆς ἐκείνης μυρίων ἀνάπτεσθαι λύχνους, καὶ δις τοιούτους, καὶ τρίς, καὶ πολλάκις ἄρα οὐκ ἔπι τῆς αὐτῆς μένει πληρότητος τὸ πῦρ καὶ μετὰ τὸ μεταδοθεῖν τοιούτους τῆς ἐνεργείας τῆς αὐτοῦ; Πανεῖ ποι δηλὸν ἔστιν. Εἰ δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν ουμάτων, τῶν μεριστῶν, τῶν ἑλατουμένων ὑπὸ τῆς ἀφαιρέσεως, εὑρέθη τί τοιοῦτον ὁ καὶ μετὰ τὸ παρασχεῖν ἐπέρεις τὰ παρ’ ἐαυτοῦ οὐδὲν παραβλάπτεται, πολλὶ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τῆς αὐσωμάτου καὶ ἀκηράτου δυνάμεως ἐκείνης τοῦτο συμβῆσεται. Εἰ γὰρ ἑνὸς οὐσία ἔστι τὸ μεταλαμβανόμενον καὶ σῶμα, καὶ μερίζεται, καὶ οὐ μερίζεται, πολλὶ μᾶλλον ὅταν περὶ ἐνεργείας ὁ λόγος ἢ, καὶ ἐνεργείας τῆς ἐξ αὐσωμάτου οὐσίας, οὐδὲν εἰκός τοιοῦτον παθεῖν. In Iohannem 14.1 59.91-2.
has been found true among material objects, how much more likely is it to be true with respect to the immaterial God? One may quibble about the strength of Chrysostom’s example, but it is not so much his evidentiary basis, as an illustration of this ἐννοια found in John 1:17, which Chrysostom is struggling to make intelligible in a theologically orthodox manner to his audience.

With respect to the shape of this last argument, a similar analogy is found back in homily 4:

For tell me, does the radiance of the sun come out of the nature of the sun, or elsewhere? It is altogether necessary to confess, except one be incapacitated in their senses, that it is from the nature. But though the radiance of the sun is of its nature, we cannot say that it is later by any temporality than the solar nature, since the sun has never appeared apart from its radiance. But if in the case of these visible and sensible bodies there appears, one that is of something, and it is not later than that which it is of, why do you disbelieve in the case of the invisible and ineffable nature? Now this is the same thing in the same manner, but as fitting to that Essence.²⁶⁸

This analogy is picking up the language of Hebrews 1:3, and again we see the typical use of a light/fire analogy. This time the argument is not about diminution, but temporality, so that when one considers the sun, its rays or radiance are separated from it by no division either of subtraction (as in the previous analogies) or of temporal separation. The limit of the analogy is subtly suggested in the final sentence, a recognition that the same is true in the case of the Godhead, but in a way that is befitting to the Godhead. Chrysostom regularly

²⁶⁸ Εἴπε γὰρ μοι, Τὸ ἀπάνθαμα τοῦ ἡλίου ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐκπῆδα τῆς τοῦ ἡλίου φώσεως, ἢ ἅλλοθέν ποθεν; Ἄναγκη πᾶσα ὁμολογήσαι τὸν μὴ καὶ τὰς αἰσθήσεις πεπηρμένον, ὅτι ἐξ αὐτῆς. Ἄλλα ἤμως καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ὅτι τοῦ ἡλίου τὸ ἀπάνθαμα, οὐκ ἂν ποτὲ ὠστέρον εἶναι φαίνειν τῆς ἡλιακῆς φώσεως, ἐπεκδὴ μὴδὲ χωρὶς ἀπανθάματος ἡλίου ἐφάνη ποτὲ. Εἰ δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν σωμάτων τούτων τῶν ὄρατων καὶ αἰσθητῶν, καὶ ἐκ τινὸς ὅτι, καὶ ύπαρχεῖ ὁστέρον ἐξ οὗ ἐστὶν ἐφάνη τι δὲν, τι ἀπίστος ἐπί τῆς ἀφατοῦ καὶ ἀοράτου φύσεως; Τὸ αὐτὸ δὴ τούτο ἐστὶν οὔτως, ὡς ἐκείνη τῇ οὖσια πρέπον ἢν. In iohannem 4.2 PG 59.48.
shows such restraint, including the rider that such analogies be understood as precisely limited by their material referents. And yet the same comparative argument also appears: if this is the case in a material referent, how much more so should it be possible and logical in the case of the divine.

A more original analogy comes in homily 39, discussing John 5:23. I quote at length:

And you, saying he has not the same authority and power as the one who has begotten him, what can you say, when you hear him uttering [words], with which he shows his equal power and authority and glory to the Father? On what account does he demand the same honour, being greatly inferior, as you assert? And neither does he stop here, speaking in this manner, but also goes on saying, “the one not honouring the Son, does not honour the Father that sent him.” Do you see how the honour of the Son is intertwined with the honour of the Father? “And why is that?” someone says. For this also we see in regards to the Apostles; “For the one receiving you,” he says, ”receives me.” But in that passage, since he appropriates the concerns of his servants to his own, on that account he so speaks; but in this passage, since the Being and the glory are one. Besides he does not say in the Apostles‘ case, “that they might honour.” But rightly he said, “The one not honouring the Son, does not honour the Father.” For if there are two kings and the one is insulted, the other is co-insulted also, and especially when the insulted one is a son. For he is insulted when even a soldier is abused: not similarly, but as through a mediator. But here it is not so, but as through himself. Because he anticipates

269 σῷ γεγεννηκόσι.
270 Mt 10:40. Jesus speaking.
271 I.e., in the case of the soldier, the insult comes indirectly, as a representative of the king’s authority suffers. When it is the son, it is personal, since the son is not an extrinsic representative, but an intrinsic one.
this he said, “so that they might honour the Son, as they honour the Father”, so that, when he says, “The one not honouring the Son, does not honour the Father”, you might understand the honour to be the same. For not simply, “The one not honouring,” but “the one not honouring thus as I said” he says, “does not honour the Father”. 272 273

The analogy of the two kings is first introduced by Chrysostom’s not uncommon practice of bringing in a parallel passage to his concern, in this case Matthew 10:40. In a manner somewhat similar to another a minore ad maius argument, Chrysostom is establishing the way in which the treatment of one party is entangled with the treatment of another. The John 5:23 verse by itself serves as a refutation of those who wish to diminish the Son’s co-honour with the Father, but Chrysostom explores why. In the Matthew passage, it is rather an extrinsic association between Jesus and his disciples, which finds its parallel case in the analogy when he speaks of the King being insulted when even one of his soldiers is mistreated. In such a case the insult is indirect, but transferable because the soldier acts representatively of the king’s authority.

And yet the heart of the analogy is the case of two kings. What occasions Chrysostom’s imagining of two kings is hard to establish, though the reign of dual kings is not unknown

272 I.e., the two statements interpret each other; ‘as I said’ relates to ‘as the Son, so the Father’.

273 Ὅμεις δὲ οἱ λέγοντες μὴ ἔχειν αὐτόν τὴν αὐτήν ἐξουσίαν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῷ γεγενημένῳ, τί ἂν εἴπητε ὅταν ἀκούσῃς αὐτοῦ φθειρομένου, δι’ ὅν ἰσον δείκνυε σὺν τὴν πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα καὶ δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν καὶ δόξαν; Τίνος δὲ ἐνεκές καὶ τὴν αὐτήν τιμήν ἀπαιτεῖ, σφόδρα καταδεικτερὸς ὢν, ὡς φατε; Καὶ οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα ἱσταται, οὕτως εἰσίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπάγει λέγων ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν Υἱόν, οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν Πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν. Ὁρᾶς πῶς συμπέπλεκται ἡ τιμὴ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τῇ τιμῇ τοῦ Πατρός; Καὶ τί τοῦτο, φησί; Τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἔστω ἵδειν ὁ γὰρ δεχόμενος, φησίν, ὑμᾶς, ἐμὲ δέχεται. Ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖ μὲν, ἐπειδή τὰ τῶν δουλῶν ὁμοίωται τῶν θεοῦ, διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως εἶπεν ἐνταῦθα δὲ, ἐπειδή μία ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἡ δόξα. Ἀλλως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ ἔρισθαι, ἵνα τιμῶσι. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ δύο βασιλέων ἄντων ὁ εἰς ὠβρίζοιτο, συνυβρίζεται καὶ ὁ ἔτερος, καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν ὁ ὠβριζόμενος νῦν ἢ. Ὃβριζεται μὲν γὰρ καὶ ὁ πλείους παροινηθέντος ἀλλ’ οὖν ὁμοίως, ἀλλ’ ὡς διὰ μειοῦσιν. Ἐνταῦθα δὲ οὐχ οὕτως, ἀλλ’ ὡς δι’ ἑαυτοῦ. Διὰ τοῦτο προλαμβάνει εἶπεν, ἵνα τιμῶσι τὸν Υἱόν, καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν Πατέρα· ἵνα, ὅταν εἴπῃ, ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν Υἱόν, οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν Πατέρα, τὴν αὐτὴν ἐννοήσεως τιμήν. Οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς, ὁ μὴ τιμῶν, ἀλλ’, ὁ μὴ τιμῶν οὕτως ὡς εἶπον, φησίν, οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν Πατέρα. In Ioannem 39.2 PG 59.222.
in the ancient world and that may have suggested it to him.\textsuperscript{274} It may initially strike us as odd that the insulting of one king is an insult to the other, but further reflection establishes the point of the analogy: mistreating the king is not only a personal matter, but an insult to kingship itself, an attack on the institution and the status of king, which is immediately ‘transferable’. This is heightened by the relation of the kings as Father and Son, so that the affinity of their being is also increased, and thus the unity of their honour.

Finally, Chrysostom seals the acumen of his analogy with reference to the exactitude of Jesus’ words. He seizes upon the word καθώς in Jesus’ discourse, and contrasts it with the lack of such a word. Without it, we might understand it in the sense of the Matthean passage, as a mediated and indirect equating of honour and insult. But the comparative adverb assimilates the honour due to the Father and Son, so that we might conceptualise the same honour τὴν αὐτὴν ἐννοήσης τιμὴν. Once again it is worth noting that this analogy touches upon the equality of honour, which is an argument that bears upon the unity of the Godhead, but the analogy itself is not designed to illustrate that unity or the nature of the Essence, but rather to demonstrate how the intertwining of honour ‘works’, much like the previous analogy, with reference to an earthly situation in order to establish the divine one.

3.6 The Incomprehensibility of God

It will come as no surprise to find incomprehensibility treated along with John 1:18, as in homily 15:

\textsuperscript{274} Sparta, at the least; the practice of dual consuls at Rome perhaps also bears some relation.
How therefore does John say, “No one has ever seen God”? He does so, making clear that all these [visions] were of condescension, not a sight of the unclothed essence itself. For if they had seen the nature, they would not have seen it in differing manner. For it is a thing simple and formless, and incomposite, and infinite, it sits not, nor stands, nor walks. For all these things are of bodies. But how it is, He alone knows. And this by a certain prophet, God and Father revealing has said, “I have”, he says, “multiplied visions, and by the hands of the prophets been likened”[275],[276] this is, “I condescended, I revealed not this which I was.” For since his Son was about to be revealed to us through truly-flesh, from long ago he trained people in advance to see the essence of God, as it was possible for them to see. For that which God is, not only the prophets, but neither angels nor arch-angels saw; but if you ask them, you will hear them answering nothing concerning the essence....[277]

This passage follows a recitation of Old Testament appearances of God, which begs the question of how the Evangelist can make his statement. Chrysostom correlates the two facts by the simple assertion that the Old Testament saints did not see the essence of God. His description of the simplicity and incorporeal nature of God gives the account for why they could not see God. The quotation from Hosea 12 further confirms Chrysostom’s account of what is happening in Old Testament theophanies – God by condescension

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275 I.e. ‘made likenesses of myself’.
Hosea 12:10.
277 Πῶς οὖν ὁ Ἰωάννης εἶπε, Θεόν οοδεὶς ἐώρακε πῶποτε; Δηλών ὅτι πάντα ἐκείνα συγκαταβάσεως ἦν, οὐκ αὐτῆς τῆς οὐσίας γομνῆς ὑφής. Εἰ γὰρ αὐτὴν ἐώρων τὴν φύσιν, οὐκ ἂν διαφόρως αὐτήν ἐθέλησαντο. Ἀπλὴ γὰρ τις καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος αὐτή, καὶ ἀσφαλὴς, καὶ ἀπερίγραπτος, οὐ κάθητο, οὐδὲ ἔστηκεν, οὐδὲ περιπάτεται. Ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα σωμάτων. Πῶς δὲ ἔστιν, αὐτὸς ὑδε μόνος. Καὶ τοῦτο διὰ προφήτου τινὸς ο Θεός καὶ Πατὴρ ἐμφανῶν ἔλεγεν Ἐγώ ἁράσεις, φησί, ἐπιλήθω, καὶ ἐν χεροὶ προφητῶν ὕμνοικαὶ τοιοῦτοι, Ἀγαθετήθην, οὐ τοῦτο ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς ἐμφανίζων. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐμελέλει αὐτοῦ ὁ Γιὸς δι’ ἀληθινῆς σαρκὸς φανερώθη ἡμῖν, ἀνώθεν αὐτοὺς προεγόμναζεν ὅραν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν, ὡς αὐτοὺς δυνατὸν ἦν ἰδεῖν. Ἐπεὶ αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ ἔστιν ὁ Θεός, οὐ μόνον προφητεῖ, ἄλλ’ οὐδὲ ἄγγελοι εἶδον, οὔτε ἀρχαγγελοι· ἄλλ’ ἔα σωτηρίας αὐτοῦ, ἀκούση περὶ μὲν τῆς οὐσίας οὐδὲν ἀποκρινομένους In Iohannem 15.1 PG 59.98.
represents himself to the prophets, revealing himself but not ‘what He is’. Nonetheless, Chrysostom also sees Old Testament theophanies as part of a salvation-historical pedagogy, boldly declaring that God was training them to see ‘the essence of God’, yet he immediately qualifies this with ὡς αὐτοίς δυνατόν ἦν ἰδεῖν, which adds a constriction to the type or kind of vision of the essence which could be possible. In this way Chrysostom upholds the uniqueness of the incarnation, that it is truly God, the one essence, who has become visible and flesh and man, so that we beheld God in a unique way not known before, and yet still in a manner conditioned by mortal and material reality. At this point he begins to refer again to the Old Testament for support, citing passages that support his claim that in the Old Testament scriptures the prophets and even the angels declare nothing about the essence of God, but only his power and operations.

A little further on from this comes a second important passage, in 15.2. Chrysostom concludes from a preceding section that before the incarnation the Son was invisible in regards to Essence even to angels, but in the incarnation became visible to them. He then raises the question of Matthew 18:10 and answers it with Matthew 5:8. Don’t the angels see the face of God? Matthew 5 suggests to Chrysostom that this is sight used for intellectual apprehension. So he says:

[...] he means the sight according to intellect, that [which is] possible for us, and the intellectual conceptualisation that is concerning God; thus also is it said concerning the angels, that because of their pure and vigilant nature they do nothing else, other than to image God always. On this account also he says again, “No one

278 Ὅρατε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἐνός τῶν μικρῶν τούτων· λέγω γὰρ ὡς ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς.
279 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεόν δύονται.
280 I.e. to form the mental picture/image of something.
281 Christ.
knows the Father, except the Son.”  

282 What then? Are we all in ignorance? Not so; but no one knows in the same way as the Son [knows]. Just as therefore many saw him according to the sight permitted to them, no one beheld the essence; so also now we all know God, but no one knows the essence which is what he is, except alone the one begotten of him. For ‘knowledge’ here means the precise beholding and comprehension, even such [comprehension] as great as the Father has concerning the Son. “For just as the Father knows me, I also know the Father.”  

283 284

It is interesting to note the vocabulary used here, which finds precise usage in other contemporary works, such as ἐννοια, κατάληψις, and θεωρία. Chrysostom’s understanding of incomprehensibility conditions how he understands ‘sight’, so that it is firstly a (quite natural) figure for ‘intellectual understanding’. He again qualifies it immediately with τὴν ἡμῖν δυνατήν, so that just as in the case of analogies one is regularly reminded that it applies in a way befitting the subject matter, the Godhead, so too knowledge of God applies in a way fitting the knowing-subject. Why then do the angels have this continual knowledge of God? Chrysostom attributes this to their pure and undefiled nature, suggestive of criteria seven which we will come to. It is a subtle exhortation for his own congregation to pursue purity and vigilance. He then introduces Matthew 10:27 to make apparent the gulf between our knowledge of God and the Son’s knowledge of God. We can have some knowledge of God, but it will not be absolute comprehension and vision of his...

282 Matthew 10:27.
283 John 10:15.
284...τὴν κατὰ διάνοιαν ὅψιν φησί, τὴν ἡμῖν δυνατήν, καὶ τὴν ἐννοιαν τὴν περὶ Θεοῦ οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰπεῖν ἑστιν, ὁτι διὰ τὴν καθαρὰν ἀυτῶν καὶ ἁγίων φῶς ὅπως οὐδὲν ἔτερον, ἀλλ’ ἢ τὸν Θεὸν ἀεὶ φανταζομαι. Διὰ τούτο καὶ αὐτὸς πάλιν φησίν, ὁδείς γινώσκει τὸν Πατέρα, εἰ μὴ ὁ Υἱός. Τί οὖν; πάντες ἐν ἁγίωι ἐσμέν; Μή γένοιτο ἀλλ’ οὕτως ὁδείς οἴδεν ὡς ὁ Υἱός. Ἐσσερ όν εἰδὼν αὐτὸν οἱ πολλοὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐγχωροῦσαν αὐτοῖς δύνην, τὴν δὲ οὕσαν ὁδείς ἐδεάσατο οὕτω καὶ τὸν ὁμοίως πάντες μὲν τὸν Θεόν, τὴν δὲ οὕσιν ὁδείς οἴδεν δὲ τί ποτὲ ἑστιν, εἰ μὴ μόνον ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐξ αὐτοῦ. Γνώσων γὰρ ἐν τῷ θεῷ καὶ τὸν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ Θεοῦ, τοιαύτην δὴν ὁ Πατὴρ ἔχει περὶ τοῦ Πατερὸς. Ἀρχών γὰρ γινώσκει μὲν ὁ Πατὴρ, κατὰ γινώσκω τὸν Πατέρα. In Johannem 15.2 PG 59.99.
essence, for this belongs to the Son alone, as further reinforced by John 10:15. The use of the two verses to bookend this short section works perfectly to present the symmetry of the Father’s knowledge of the Son and the Son’s knowledge of the Father, which is grounded in the unity of the Godhead, contrasted with the true yet limited nature of our own theology.

A second passage that predictably bears upon this question is in homily 74, treating John 14:8-9. Again Chrysostom aligns ‘sight’ with ‘knowledge’, ‘And if anyone should say that sight here means knowledge, I do not oppose this.’ And yet, Chrysostom treats the sight language as significant, suggesting that Jesus by using the language of sight is, in effect, saying, ‘He who sees my Essence, sees also that of the Father’. Once again Chrysostom exhibits a certain boldness in suggesting that what is under discussion is a seeing or apprehension of the essence of God. And yet what Chrysostom points to, is not any direct beholding of God’s essence, but a knowledge attested by Christ’s ministry:

Enjoying such teaching, seeing miracles with power, and all which properly belongs to the Godhead, and that which the Father alone works, sins forgiven, secrets lead out into the open, Death retreating, creation made from the earth, and “have you not know me?”

There seems to be little other material directly bearing upon the criterion of incomprehensibility. Chrysostom lacks any technical development of distinctions in knowledge, but works with a background assumption that knowledge of God’s essence is,

285 Εἰ δὲ λέγοι τις δῆμον ἐνταῦθα τὴν γνώσιν, οὔτε τοῦτω ἀντιλέγω. In Ioannem 74.1 PG 59.401.
286 Ὁ τὴν ἐμὴν ὑπόστασιν εἶδως, οἷδε καὶ τὴν τοῦ Πατέρος. In Ioannem 74.1 PG 59.401.
287 Τοσούτης ἀπέλαυσας διδασκαλίας, εἶδες σημεῖα μετὰ ἀνθρώπων, καὶ πάντα ἀπερ θεότητος ἦν Ἰδια, καὶ ἃ ὁ Πατὴρ μόνον ἐργάζεται, ἁμαρτήματα λυόμενα, ἀποφήματα εἰς μέσον ἁγόμενα, θάνατον ἀναχωροῦντα, δημιουργίαν ἀπὸ γῆς γινομένην, Καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκάς με; In Ioannem 74.1 PG 59.401.
strictly speaking, impossible. He applies this doctrine of incomprehensibility to distinguish between the nature of the Old Testament theophanies and the revelatory nature of the Incarnation in John 1:18, and is bold enough to speak of seeing the essence of God in the incarnate Christ, while at the same time conditioning and qualifying such ‘sight’ by its proper limitation according to human nature and historical reality. So much so that in this last passage, the very things that are to attest to inquiring Philip that he does indeed know and has seen God, are the works of the Father through the Son.

3.7 Purification of the Soul

Naturally, this criterion is found almost immediately in the first homily, since it is in this one that Chrysostom is introducing the gospel, its author and scope, and entreatyng his audience to pay due attention not only in the present homily, but in the whole preaching series he is embarking on. He says:

Just as therefore if we saw someone from above out of the height of heaven stooping down suddenly\textsuperscript{288}, and promising to declare the things there with accuracy, we would all run to him. In the same way let us now dispose ourselves. For from there\textsuperscript{289} to us this man speaks. For he is not of this world, just as the Christ himself says, “You are not of this world”\textsuperscript{290}; and he has the Paraclete speaking in him, the one omnipresent, the one knowing the things of God accurately, even as the soul of men knows its own things: the Spirit of holiness, the ‘straight’ Spirit, the guiding one, the one leading into the heavens, the one making eyes different\textsuperscript{291}, the one preparing

\textsuperscript{288} Cf. Eusebius, Hist Eccl v.i.29.
\textsuperscript{289} I.e. heaven.
\textsuperscript{290} John 15.19.
\textsuperscript{291} I.e., to see differently, as explained in the next clause.
[them] to see the things to come as the things that are, the one giving [the power] even with the flesh to espy the things in the heavens.\textsuperscript{292}

The comparison is particularly apt, since a figure appearing from heaven and speaking of heavenly things is comparable to Christ himself, but here the author is John the Evangelist, and Chrysostom’s point is that the discourse of the gospel is no less true nor less about the very things of heaven. Therefore, as eager as one would be in the first situation, so ought his listeners be to hear from the Gospel of John. He further reinforces this, by a number of evidences that John in fact is not ‘of this world’ – the quote from 15:19 applied to John, as well as reference to the Spirit at work in John, followed by the catena of the Spirit’s praises and operation. It is no subtlety that the Spirit’s power and operation here involves gifting such spiritual sight to see and comprehend, that is to know, spiritual matters of God.

Chrysostom goes on:

Let us offer to him therefore much quiet through all our life; let no one dull, no one drowsy, no one dirty, entering in here remain; but let us remove ourselves to heaven. For there he utters these things to those who are citizens there. And if we remain on earth, we will profit nothing great from there. For the [words] of John are nothing to those not wishing to be set free from [this] swinish life, just as therefore neither are the things of this place anything to that man. For the thunder astounds our souls, having a sign-less sound; but the voice of this man disturbs none of the faithful, but even releases from disturbance and disorder. He astounds rather only the demons and those enslaved to them. So that we might know how it astounds

\textsuperscript{292} Ὡςπερ οὖν εἴ τινα ἀνώθεν ἐκ τῆς κορυφῆς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ διακύψαντα ἄθροόν εἴδομεν, καὶ ἐπαγγελλόμενον τὰ ἐκεῖ μετὰ ἀκριβείας ἔρειν, πάντες ἔν ἐπεδράμομεν ὅστω καὶ νῦν διαχειρόμεν. Ἐκεῖθεν γὰρ ἦμιν ὁ ἀνήρ ὁ ἄγιος διαλέγεται. Οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, καθὼς φησὶ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Χριστὸς. Ὡμείς οὖν εἴτε ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου καὶ τὸν Παράκλητον ἔχει φθεγγόμενον ἐν ἐαυτῷ τὸν πανταχοῦ παρόντα, τὸν οὗτος ἀκριβὺς εἰδὼτα τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς τὰ ἐαυτῆς οἴδεν ἢ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ψυχή τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀγιωσύνης, τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ εὐθεῖα, τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, τὸ χειραγωγοῦν εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, τὸ ποιοῦν ὁφθαλμοὺς ἑτέρους, τὸ παρασκευάζον τὰ μέλλοντα ὡς τὰ παρόντα ὡράν, τὸ καὶ μετὰ σαρκὸς τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς κατοπτεύειν παρέχον. \textit{In iohannem 1.4 PG 59.26–7}. 
them, let us offer much silence both externally and of the intellect; and the latter all the more, for what is the advantage of the mouth being stilled, when the soul is disturbed and holds much "storm"? 293

Here is another exhortation, of quiet attention to the word of John the Evangelist. Then follows a sense of locative transportation, for not only should no one enter the church who hasn’t fitted themselves for hearing such a message, but even those who enter will not remain ‘here’, but will be removed ‘to heaven’; just as John is ‘not of this world’, so his discourse is aimed at heavenly citizens. Chrysostom draws the figure of thunder: a disturbing sound which has no reference, being unintelligible. John’s voice might thunder, but it is not a voice of disturbance, rather one that brings order from disorder, and so is indeed full of reference, intelligible, but only for the faithful. Chrysostom then urges both an exterior and interior quiet, for not only must the body be fitted for the reception of the audible word, but all the more the soul quieted to receive heavenly doctrines. In this we see the dual-focus of purification applied to the hearing of scripture itself. Chrysostom continues:

I seek that calm, that from the intellect, that from the soul; since also it is that hearing 294 I require. Therefore let no desire of possessions trouble [us], nor love of fame, nor tyranny of anger, nor the remaining crowd of the other passions. For it is not possible for the ear, unless purified, to see the grandeur of the things spoken, as it needs to see [it], nor to know as it must the ineffable and awful [nature] of these

293 Πολλὴν τοῖνο̂ν παρέχωμεν τὴν ἥσυχίαν διὰ παντὸς αὐτῷ τοῦ βίου, μηδεὶς νοσθής, μηδεὶς ὑπνηλός, μηδεὶς ὑπακοής ἑναιῶν μενέτω, ἀλλὰ μεταστέσσαμεν ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐκεῖ γὰρ ταῦτα φθείρεται τοῖς ἐμπροτομεμένοις. Κἂν μείνωμεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὐδὲν κερδανούμεν ἐνεπόθην μέγα. Οὐδὲν γὰρ πρὸς τούς ὅμολομόνους ἀπαλαγήνῃ τοῦ χοιρόδους βίου τὰ ἱωάννου, ὡσπερ ὅπως οὐδὲ πρὸς ἐκεῖνον τὰ ἑναϊῶν. Ἡ μὲν ὁμοίως ὑπακοής καταπλήττεται τὰς ἡμετέρας ψυχὰς, ἄσωμον ἐχουσά τὴν ἥσυχήν ἢ δὲ τούτου φωνή θορυβῆται μὲν οὐδένα τῶν πιστῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνίησις δορώμου καὶ ταρακης καταπλήττεται δὲ δαιμόνιας μόνοις καὶ τοὺς ἐκεῖνοις δουλεύοντας. Ἡν τοῖς εἰδωμένοις δὲ ἱωάννους καταπλήττει, πολλὴν παρέχωμεν τὴν σιγήν καὶ τὴν εὐθείαν καὶ τὴν κατὰ διάνοιαν καὶ ταύτην μάλιστα, ἦ γὰρ διὰ τοῦ ῥήματος ἡμεροῦντος, ὅταν ἡ ψυχὴ δορυφοῖται καὶ πολλὴν ἔχῃ τὴν ζάλην; In lohamm 1.4 PG 59.26.

294 I.e. the hearing that is also of the intellect and soul (as opposed to an external attention).
mysteries, and all other virtue that is in these divine oracles. For if someone might not learn well a flute or cithara tune, unless in every way straining his mind, how sitting as a listener will he be able to hear mystical voices with a frivolous soul?295

The desire for intellectual, interior quiet is matched in Chrysostom’s exhortation by a call for hearing of the same sort: that John’s teaching be heard not merely bodily, but spiritually. Such a receptive intellectual disposition implies, axiomatically for Chrysostom, that the soul be free from troubles and passions, which is part of the recursive nature of the scriptures, that they both require this and are required in order to produce this model of the Christian life, which Chrysostom will call his audience to repeatedly in the moral exhortation that concludes virtually every sermon.

The key expression is Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ μὴ καθαρθείσαν τὴν ἀκοὴν ἰδεῖν τῶν λεγομένων τὸ ύψος, ὡς ἰδεῖν χρή. It may seem odd at first that Chrysostom so readily converts the sense of hearing to one of visual perception, but ‘to see’ has much more established connotations of apprehension and intellectual knowing. Nonetheless, the hearing must be purified, if it is to see these things. Chrysostom’s closing comparison fits well with the opening of the homily itself, with the pictures of people flocking to hear the latest celebrity of the arts perform.

A second example comes in homily 5, towards the end of the commentary and leading into the exhortation:

295 Ἐκεῖνην ἐγὼ ἦσσω τὴν ἰσχύαν, τὴν ἀπὸ διανοίας, τὴν ἀπὸ ψυχῆς ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῆς ἀκοῆς ἐκείνης δέομαι. Μηδεμία τούν ἐνοχλεῖτω χρηστότων ἐπιθύμια, μὴ δὲ ἀρχής ἐρως, μὴ θυμοῦ τυραννίς, μὴ τῶν ἄλλων παθῶν ὁ λοιπὸς δύλος. Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ μὴ καθαρθείσαν τὴν ἀκοὴν ἰδεῖν τῶν λεγομένων τὸ ύψος, ὡς ἰδεῖν χρή, οὐδὲ γνώναι ὡς δεῖ τῶν μυστηρίων τούτων τὸ φρικτὸν καὶ ἀπόρρητον, καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀπασαν ἀρετὴν τὴν ἐν τοῖς θείοις τούτους χρησιμοῖς. Εἰ γὰρ μέλος αὐλητικὸν καὶ κιθαρῳδίαν οὐκ ἂν τις μάθοι καλῶς, μὴ πάντη συντεῖνας τὸν νόον, τῶς μυστικῶν φωνῶν καθήμενος ἀκροατής ἑπακούσαι δυνήσεται ῥαθυμοῦσῃ ψυχῇ: In Iohannem 1.4 PG 59.27.
Just as to enjoy the sun’s ray one cannot, unless opening their eyes; thus also neither abundantly can one share this brilliance, unless greatly having expanded the eye of the soul, and made it in every way sharp-sighted. How does this occur? When we cleanse the soul of all passions. For sin is darkness, and a deep darkness; and this is plain from its being done unconsciously and secretly. For ‘everyone who does evil deeds, hates the light, and comes not to the light’ and ‘the things done in secret, it is shameful even to mention.’ Just as then in darkness, someone knows neither friend nor enemy, but is ignorant of all natures of things: thus also in sin.

The light analogy naturally suggests the sight one. And so the typical connection is made of light to eyesight, and darkness to sin to blindness. The answer to Chrysostom’s rhetorical question strikes to the heart of his theory of sanctification as apatheia. The two scriptural quotations further reinforce the figurative language, which Chrysostom then begins to develop in a more concrete illustration of the blindness that is caused by sin, namely the inability to distinguish between objects and their properties or natures. A little later he says:

And just as at night, wood, lead, iron, silver, gold, and precious stones, we see all alike, due to the absence of light that distinguishes them; thus also the one who has

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297 Ephesians 5:12.
298 Ἡσπερ οὐν ἡλιακῆς ἀκτίνος ἀπολαύειν ἡς χρῆ οὐκ ἔνι, μὴ διανοίγοντα τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς οὕτως οὐδὲ ταύτης μετασχεῖν τῆς λαμπρότητος δαφνίκος, μὴ σφόδρα ἀναπετάσαντα τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὅμα, καὶ ὀξυδερκῆς αὐτὸ πάντοθεν κατασκευάζαντα. Πῶς δὲ γίνεται τούτο; Ὁταν πάντων ἐκκαθάρωμεν τῶν παθῶν τὴν ψυχήν. Ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία σκότος ἔστι, καὶ σκότος βαθὺ καὶ δὴλον ἐκ τοῦ ἀσυνειδότως καὶ λανθανόντως πράσειν αὐτήν. Πᾶς γὰρ ὁ τὰ φαῦλα πράσειν, μισεῖ τὸ φῶς, καὶ οὕτω ἐρχέται πρὸς τὸ φῶς καὶ, Τὰ κρυφὴ γινόμενα, αἰσχρὸν ἔστι καὶ λέγειν. Καθάπερ οὖν ἐν σκότῳ, οὐ φιλοῦν, οὐκ έξηρὴν τις οἶδεν, ἀλλὰ πάσας ἀγνοεῖ τῶν πραγμάτων τὰς φύσεις οὕτω καὶ ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ. In iohannem 5.4 PG 59.58.
an unclean life, knows neither the excellence of prudence\(^{299}\) nor the beauty of [our] philosophy.\(^{300}\)

The sense of this passage, as opposed to the many moral and spiritual exhortations through the homilies, bears directly upon the theme of spiritual knowledge being related to moral reformation. Impurity of life is thus a kind of blindness, which leaves the spiritual faculty of perception unable to recognise or distinguish spiritual, not just earthly, realities, so that ‘the excellence of prudence’ is unrecognised. I take this to represent a fundamentally moral category of life, the virtue of self-restraint, especially sexual. It is complemented by ‘the beauty of our philosophy’, φιλοσοφία being a standard way for Chrysostom to talk about the Christian faith as a way of life and belief.

An opening similar to homily 1 is found in homily 47. Chrysostom declares:

> Whenever we converse concerning spiritual matters, let there be nothing of everyday life in our souls, nothing earthly; but let all such things retreat, all such things be exiled, and us all be entirely devoted to the hearing of the divine oracles. For if when a king comes into a city, all uproar is driven off, much more when the Spirit is conversing with us, must we listen with much quietness, with much awe.\(^{301}\)

Again the concern for Chrysostom is to secure attention and devotion at the start of his homily, due to the nature and subject matter of the one speaking, i.e. John the Evangelist.

\(^{299}\) Or ‘chastity’. σωφροσύνη typically bears this meaning in Late Antique Christian writings.

\(^{300}\) Καὶ καθάπερ ἐν νυκτὶ, καὶ ἕξολον, καὶ μόλυβδον, καὶ σίδηρον, καὶ ἄργυρον, καὶ χρυσόν, καὶ λίθον τίμιον, πάντα ὁμίως ὁρῶμεν, τὸ διακρίνοντος αὐτὰ φωτὸς οὐ παρόντος οὕτω καὶ ὁ βίον ἄκαθαρτον ἔχων, οὐκ οὔδε τῆς σωφροσύνης τὴν ἀρετὴν, οὐ τῆς φιλοσοφίας τὸ κάλλος. In Iohannem 47.1 PG 59.261-3.
To do so necessarily entails a kind of purification, that is the setting aside of earthly affairs, which like the passions are a distraction for the soul. The royal analogy is not unique, either to Chrysostom or to this instance, but presses the same typical point: if true in the case of an earthly king, how much more so when the heavenly king, God, is involved. So too here, with reference to the Spirit. Purification from earthly concerns is both a moral and spiritual matter, as a prerequisite to theology, even the hearing of the words of scripture.

3.8 The Semiotics of Creation

It is, frankly, difficult to find traces of a concern for the semiotics of creation in Chrysostom’s homilies on John. Nonetheless, let us mine where there are traces, and see what may be seen.

In the fourth homily, Chrysostom reinforces the creator/Creation distinction in this manner:

which [to be Creator] especially his Father through the prophets everywhere says is cognitive of his essence. And continually the prophets whirl around this type of proof: and not this simply, but also contending for his glory over the idols. For they say, “Let the gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, perish”\textsuperscript{302} and again, “I by my hand stretched out the heavens”\textsuperscript{303} and showing it to be declarative of divinity, he places it everywhere.\textsuperscript{304}

\textsuperscript{302} Jeremiah 10:11.
\textsuperscript{303} Isaiah 44:24.
\textsuperscript{304} ὁ μάλιστα καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ αὐτοῦ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ἀπανταχοῦ τῆς οὐσίας τῆς αὐτοῦ γνωρισμάτων εἶναι φησί. Καὶ συνεχῶς τοῦτο τῆς ἀποδείξεως τὸ εἶδος περιστρέφουσιν οἱ προφῆται καὶ οὐχ ἄπλως, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῶν εἰδώλων ἀγωνιζόμενοι δόξαν. Θεοὶ γὰρ, φησίν, οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν οὐκ ἐποίησαν, ἀπολέσθωσαν.
The combination of John 1:3 with the two Old Testament quotations provides the grounds for Chrysostom to argue that creation is a prerogative of God alone, over against the idols. To be creator is to be God, which at the least reinforces the strong Creator/creation distinction, even if it yet says nothing about its semiotic-ordering. Chrysostom goes on:

But the Evangelist himself was not content with these words, but called him also “Life” and “Light”. If then he was always with the Father, if he himself created all things, if he himself brought all things to be and sustains them (for this he intimated by “Life”), if he illuminates all things: who is so foolish as to say, that the Evangelist through these things hurried to expound a lesser divinity, through which expressions especially are able to express equality and invariance? Let us not then confound the creation with the creator, lest we also hear that “they worshipped the creation rather than the Creator”.

The shift from the discussion of the Father’s unique role as Creator, over against the idols, and its Old Testament precedents, to the Son’s identification as ‘Life’ and ‘Light’, is Chrysostom’s recognition of the Evangelist’s prologue agenda of expressing the unity of the Father and Son and the divinity of the latter. The four-fold protasis encompasses eternal presence, the creating of all things (thus removing him from the realm of created things), the genesis and sustaining of all things (aligned with ‘Life’), and illumination of all things (cf. John 1.9; the ‘Light’). This all-encompassing panoply of prerogatives attributed to the

καὶ πάλιν Ἔγω τῇ χειρὶ μου ἔξετεινα τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ δεικνὺς θεότητος εἶναι δηλωτικῶν, πανταχοῦ αὐτὸ τίθειναι. In iohannem 4.3 PG 59.50.

Romans 1:25

Ἀὕτω δὲ ὁ εὐαγγελισθης οὐδὲ τούτως ἤρκεσθη τοῖς ἰδίωσιν, άλλα καὶ ζωῆς αὐτὸν ἐκάλεσε καὶ φῶς. Εἰ τούτων ἄξις μετὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἦν, εἰ πάντα αὐτὸς ἐδημιοῦργησε, εἰ πάντα αὐτὸς παρήγαγε καὶ συγκροτεί (τοῦτο γάρ διὰ τῆς ζωῆς ἰνικοῦτο), εἰ πάντα φωτίζει τίς οὕτως ἀνόητος, ως εἰπεῖν, τὸν εὐαγγελισθήνα διὰ τούτων ἐσπουδάκειν ἐλάττωσιν θεότητος εἰσηγήσασθαι, δὴ ἃν μᾶλιστα ισότητα καὶ ἀπαραλλαξίαν εὐδείξασθαι δυνατόν ἔστι Μὴ δὴ συνεχέσωμεν τὴν κτίσιν μετὰ τοῦ κτίσαντος, ἵνα μὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀκουόσιν, διὰ ἑσβάσθησαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα. In iohannem 4.3 PG 59.50.
Son gives Chrysostom all the ammunition he needs to ask τίς οὗτος ἄνόητος, ὡς εἶπεῖν.... Such expressions are clearly, for Chrysostom, all indicative of Divinity, and so express the Son’s equality with the Father, even his very unity, which is directly contrary to his opponents.

All this is relatively standard theological discourse, but its connection with the creation theme is what engages us here. That is what is seen in the last sentence of the quotation. Granted the equality and invariance of the Logos and the Father, we are not to confound Creator with creation, the fundamental failure to distinguish between disparate ontological entities, the most basic entities in pro-Nicene cosmology. The negative purpose clause reveals how great a confusion that would be: a form of idolatry as the apostle Paul speaks of in Romans 1. At stake in the Trinitarian debates is exactly this question/problem. If the Logos is not God, but creation, then to worship him is blasphemy.

A sense of the ordering of creation comes in homily 22, regarding the Wedding at Cana in John 2.

What then is the resolution of these sayings [regarding the hour has not yet come]? The Christ is not subject to the necessity of seasons, nor does he observe ‘hours’, he says, “My hour has not yet come; (for how can he [be thus subject], the maker of all seasons, and creator of the times and the ages?) but through the things said in this manner he wishes to make this plain, that he works all things with their fitting season, not doing all things together; since a certain confusion and disorder would arise thence, if he created each thing not at their fitting times, but confounded all together, his birth, and resurrection, and the judgment; see then: the creation must come into being, but not all at once; and man also with woman, but not these together. The race of humanity must be condemned to death, and the resurrection
eventuate, but a great distance between the two. The law needed to be given, but not grace at the same time, but each to be administered at the fitting times. Therefore the Christ is not subject to the necessity of the seasons, he who rather placed an ordering to the seasons, since he is their maker.\textsuperscript{307}

Again, there is no full-blown semioticisation of creation in this account. The creation is not rendered as having a significance that points to the Creator. Nonetheless, this passage both reinforces the fundamental Creator/creation distinction, and speaks to the ordering of the creation. The theme is particularly temporal, as occasioned by Chrysostom’s reflection on John 2:4, which he draws together with the other ‘hour’ passages (8:20, 7:30, 12:1).

Chrysostom’s logic flows in two directions: that the Christ is not subject to temporal constraints, and that the Christ subjects himself to temporal constraints. The former is theologically grounded in his identification of the Son as Creator (ὁ τῶν καρυῶν ποιητής, καὶ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν αἰώνων δημιουργός). Because the Son is Creator, he is not limited or restrained by the creation. This is, for pro-Nicene theological accounts of the Creator/creation distinction, axiomatic. The Creator is sovereignly free.

And yet even as he asserts this, he must wrestle with the text itself, which suggests a constraint upon the Christ’s actions imposed by temporal considerations. Two related concepts appear. The first is indicated by the repeated use of forms from προσήκω. Its participle frequently bears a semi-independent adjectival force of ‘befitting, proper,

\textsuperscript{307} Τίς ποτ’ οὖν ἔστι τῶν λεγομένων ἡ λύσι; Οὐκ ἀνάγκη καιρῶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὑποκείμενος, οὐδὲ ὠρας παρατηρήσει, Ἐλεγεν, Οὕτω ἦκε ἡ ὠρα μου (πῶς γάρ ὁ τῶν καιρῶν ποιητής, καὶ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν αἰώνων δημιουργός) ἀλλὰ διὰ τῶν ωτῶν εἰρημένων τούτω δηλώσαι βουλεῖται, οὐκ μᾶς ἄμετα καιροῦ τοῦ προφήτον ἐργάζεται, οὐχ ὡμοί πάντα ποιών ἐπεὶ σύμφωνας τις ἐμελλὲν ἔσοδαί καὶ ἄταξία ἐνέθεσθε, εἰ μὴ τοῖς προσήκουσι καιροῖς ἔκαστον ἐδημιουργεῖ, ἀλλ’ ὡμοί πάντα ἐρυθρίες, καὶ γέννησαν, καὶ ἄνάστασαν, καὶ κρίνειν. Ἐκόψει δὲ ἐδει γενέσθαι τὴν κτίσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ὡμοί πάσαν καὶ τὸν ἀνθρώπον δὲ μετὰ τῆς γυναικός, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ τούτους ὡμοί. Ἐδει διατείμαται καταδικάσθηναι τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τῆς ἄναστασίας γενέσθαι, ἀλλὰ πολὺ τὸ μέσον ἐκατέρως. Κρήνη δηθησάνται τὸν νόμον, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὡμοί καὶ τὴν χάριν, ἀλλ’ ἔκαστα καιροῖς τοῖς προσήκουσιν ὁικονομεῖται. Ὅσο τούν ὁ Χριστὸς ὑπέκειτο τῇ τῶν καιρῶν ἀνάγκη, δὲ καὶ τοῖς καιροῖς μάλιστα τάξιν ἐπέθηκεν, ἐπεὶ καὶ ποιητής αὐτῶν ἔστιν. In iohannem 22.1 PG 59.133-4.
meet’. Implicit, then, is that the creation has an ordering, and so things that occur are to occur in conformity to that ordering. There is a fitness or aptness to the order of creation. Christ’s decision regarding the timing of various actions is about making them fit that pre-existing order. This, in fact, does not conflict with the sovereignty thread, since the examples that Chrysostom cites are predominantly creating-ones, with the implication that Christ the Creator-Son could have ordered the cosmos differently, could in fact re-order it differently. So the patterning of the creation order is pre-existing to the events of John 2, but it is not autonomous and pre-existent in an ontological sense. The second related concept is that very ordering. He refrains from doing all things at once, to avoid σύγχυσις τίς and ἀταξία. Rather Christ is the one who τάξιν ἐπέθηκεν. The taxis of creation is Christ’s own doing, and so bears his imprint.

So in this second passage is seen the ordering of creation by the Christ, even as in the first passage we saw that the creating of the cosmos by Christ was a proof of his divinity and predicated upon a basic Creator/creation distinction.

Beyond this in exploring a semiotics of creation in Chrysostom, the homilies on John provide little to no data. There are a couple of reasons that might be suggested to explain this. Firstly, Chrysostom does not have the rhetorical freedom to do so in this genre. The homily, unlike say Nazianzus’ theological orations, is a much more constrained form both in terms of topic and length. The homilies as a rule are short, confined to textual commentary, with brief moral exhortation at the end. Perhaps in a more theological rather than expository context, Chrysostom would explore cosmology further. Secondly, apart from the theological/expository contrast, there is also the constraint of the text. John’s gospel has some important passages that would bear upon a doctrine of creation, notably

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John 1:3 (as examined), John 2 (as above, but also the wine motif), John 6 and the feeding of the five thousand, and John 21 and the fish. These passages do not major on creation themes though, and Chrysostom does not explore them in that vein. If one really wanted to examine the depth of Chrysostom’s pro-Nicene cosmology, one would have to look elsewhere.\textsuperscript{309}

Thus for this section I conclude that Chrysostom shows little to no evidence of a pro-Nicene cosmology in terms of a semiotics of creation. At best, his account of creation is coherent with such a cosmology, but it is underdeveloped in this particular corpus. There is a lack of positive evidence, but no contrary evidence on this criterion.

\textbf{3.9 (Anti-Eunomian) Polemics against Logic, Rhetoric, and Sophistry}

The first passage for examination comes from homily 63:

\begin{quote}
But that the Greeks employ arguments is nothing marvelous; but that those seeming to be believers, that these should be found to be natural\textsuperscript{310}, this is worthy of lamentation. On this account these also went astray, because some were saying that they knew God even as he knows himself, which not even one of the Greek-[philosophers] dared to assert; others saying that God is not able to beget in an impassible manner, and not acceding to him anything greater than men; others
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{309} No doubt a study of his work on Genesis would yield more material.

\textsuperscript{310} ψυχικός, versus πνευματικός, cf. 1 Cor 15:44-46.
saying that neither does an upright life avail anything, nor accurate polity. But there is not time to refute these [opinions] now.

The passage flows out of John 11:40, where Chrysostom seizes upon the phrase ὅσι ἐὰν πιστεύσῃς and extols the superiority of faith to arguments, λογισμοί. This leads him to an initial polemic against the likes of Plato and Pythagoras, and their philosophical descendants, and their ignorance concerning spiritual matters. Almost offhandedly, Chrysostom remarks that it is nothing to be amazed at, if philosophers use philosophy to arrive their ideas! The contrast between πίστις and λογισμός comes when Chrysostom turns his attention to those who ‘seem to be believers’, τούς δοκοῦντας εἶναι πιστούς. These figures, unnamed here, are relying upon philosophical argumentation rather than faith in their apprehension of divine mysteries, and so Chrysostom labels them τούτους εὐρίσκεσθαι ψυχικοὺς, which I take as an allusion to 1 Corinthians 15:44-46, the contrast between ψυχικός and πνευματικός being somewhat difficult to translate to English. The first group spoken of, is almost certainly a reference to Heterousians. Behr cites both Epiphanius and Socrates as examples of the popular perception that Aetius and Eunomius taught that one could know God as he knows himself, with perfect clarity. Because Eunomius ties knowledge and being so closely together, lest our knowledge of God be something we add to him, so that we must know him as he is if that knowledge is to be real knowledge, this characterisation is neither unfair nor untrue. However, the bare assertion

311 πολιτεία ἀκριβῆς; it is difficult to know exactly how to understand this phrase. Possibly with reference to Chrysostom’s broader christianisation of πολιτεία to refer to the heavenly company and citizenship that Christians have joined, and so as a reference to their way of life to complement βίος ὀρθός.
312 Ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν Ἑλληνικός λογισμός κεχρήσθαι θαυμαστόν οὐδὲν· τὸ δὲ τούς δοκοῦντας εἶναι πιστοὺς, τούτους εὐρίσκεσθαι ψυχικοὺς, τούτο ἐστι τὸ ἀπέργων ἅξιον. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἑπλανήθησαν, ὅτι οἱ μὲν οὕτως ἔλεγον εἰδίνει θεὸν ώς αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν οἶδεν, ὅπερ οὕτως οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοι ἐξάλησαν εἰπέν· οἱ δὲ ἔλεγον μὴ δύνασθαι τὸν θεὸν ἀπαθῶς γεννάν, μηδὲ συγχωροῦντες αὐτὸ πλέον τι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἥξειν· οἱ δὲ λέγοντες ὅτι οὐκ ὅπερ ἀπὸ τοῦ βίου ὀρθῶς οὐδὲν ὕψει, οὔτε πολιτεία ἀκριβῆς. Ἀλλ’ οὐ καὶ τοῦτο ταῦτα ἐλέγχειν νῦν. In Iohannem 63.3 PG 59.352.
of it here in Chrysostom is certainly designed to be unflattering; knowing God ‘even as he
knows himself’ sounds exceedingly arrogant, which Chrysostom brings out with ὅπερ
οὐδεὶς οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνων ἐτόλμησεν εἰπεῖν. The final sentence of the quotation reveals
something of why anti-Heterousian polemic is so thin on the ground in these homilies.
Since they are short, probably delivered early in the morning, and mainly expository,
Chrysostom seems disinclined, particularly in the later sermons which cover far more text,
to digress too lengthily upon systematic or polemic matters. Elsewhere his polemics are
sharp and dominant, as in his sermons On the Incomprehensibility of God, which attack the
Heterousians on exactly this point.

The only other passage in the homilies that seems to bear directly upon an anti-rhetoric
rhetoric is the opening of homily 1, which carries a comparison between the way people
flock to celebrity athletes, sophists, and musicians, and how they ought instead flock to
hear the voice of John the Evangelist speaking. Little can be made of this.

If an anti-sophistic rhetoric is relatively absent from Chrysostom’s homilies, does he
engage with Heterousian theology in some other form? It remains to consider, as an
example, an individual text and how it is read. Let us then examine John 14:28.

Eunomius makes explicit reference to this verse in two places. The first is in his Apology:

But after all, there is no one so ignorant or so zealous for impiety as to say that the
Son is equal to the Father! The Lord himself has expressly stated that ‘the Father
who sent me is greater than I.’ Nor is there anyone so rash as to try to yoke one
name to the other! Each name pulls in its own direction and the other has no
common meaning with it at all: if the one name is ‘Unbegotten’ it cannot be ‘Son’, and if ‘Son’ it cannot be ‘Unbegotten’.\(^{314}\)

The second is in the Fragments of Eunomius that are found quoted in Cyril of Alexandria’s *Thesaurus de Sancta et Consubstantiali Trinitate*:

There can be no greater or less with respect to essence. If the Son, then, says ‘the Father is greater than I’ he cannot be *homoousios* with him.\(^{315}\)

And:

The Saviour said, ‘The Father is greater than I’. If he spoke the truth the Father is greater, and if he is, the Son is unlike him and therefore not *homoousios*.\(^{316}\)

Eunomius’ argument is established on other grounds, particularly the exact equivalence of ‘Unbegotten’ to ‘God’ and ‘Father’, which leaves no room for the Son to be God as to essence. John 14:28 provides him with a distinct proof-text, the Son himself states simply that the Father is greater. The two fragments of Eunomius found cited in Cyril are further illuminating respecting this logic. For the first has a slightly combative edge: against attempts to discern rank or order within the Godhead, Eunomius will have none of it. There can be no distinction within something that has one essence, no ordering, so there cannot be greater and lesser. And if not greater and lesser in respect of essence, then the Son who says the father is greater, logically, cannot be *homoousios*. The second fragment is equally logical and emphatic: unless one is ‘so impious’ as to call the Christ a liar, then he cannot be *homoousios*, according to his own words.

\(^{314}\) Eunomius, ‘Liber Apologeticus’ 11.9-4 in *The Extant Works*, 47.

\(^{315}\) Eunomius, ‘Fragmenta’ Assertio xi 140B-C in *The Extant Works*, 183. Italics original.

\(^{316}\) Eunomius, ‘Fragmenta’ Assertio xi 144D in *The Extant Works*, 183. Italics original.
Now, when we come to consider Gregory of Nazianzus' Theological Orations, we find that it is decisively written in an anti-Eunomian cast. Oration 27 is full of polemic against the kind of sophistry and logic associated with Aetius and Eunomius. As for a treatment of John 14:28, we find it in Oration 30:

Take as third the expression, “greater;” as fourth, the phrase, “my God and your God.” Certainly, supposing the Father were called “greater” with no mention of the Son’s being “equal,” they might have a point here. But if it is clear that we find both, what strength does their case have? How can there be harmony between incompatible terms? It is impossible for the same thing to be, in a like respect, greater than and equal to the same thing. Is it not clear that the superiority belongs to the cause and the equality to the nature?317

Commenting on this passage, Norris suggests that one source for a list of passages to which Gregory might be responding in this oration would be Eunomius’ Apology.318 Gregory’s logic is as strong as any Eunomian argument. There would be real strength to the Heterousian position if the Scriptures only spoke of the Father’s being greater than the Son, but since elsewhere we have the language of equality (Phil 2:6 ἵκον), this is insufficient. Instead, one must inquire in what sense is the Son equal to the Father, and in what sense lesser. Any treatment of John 14:28 is going to necessitate partitive exegesis, which is exactly what Gregory offers, distinction in regards to cause, equality in regards to essence.

Chrysostom’s treatment of this verse is surprising:

And what sort of joy would this bring them? What kind of consolation? What then is this saying? They did not yet know about the resurrection, nor what sort of opinion

318 Norris, Faith gives fullness to reason, 166.
they ought to have about his glory; (for how, they who knew not that he would be raised?) they reckoned the Father to be great. He says therefore, ‘If you fear concerning me as of one incapable of self-defence, and are not of good courage that I will see you after the cross; but hearing that I depart to the Father, you ought to have rejoiced, because I go to one greater, and able to dissolve all dreads.’ ‘You have heard, that I said to you [...]’ Why does he bring this up? Because, ‘I am of such exceedingly good cheer,’ he says, ‘regarding the things occurring, as even to foretell them, so far am I from fearing them.’

He says almost nothing about the clause phrase ‘greater than I’. Rather the focus of his commentary is upon the joy the disciples ought to have at his departure, in light of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. And yet, his treatment of the phrase ‘greater than I’ reflects his ongoing exegetical principle of condescension. For he recognises that the disciples do not yet have either a right conception about the Resurrection, nor even about the Christ as his glory. Thus Jesus directs their attention to the Father, the one ‘greater than I’, at least in their current understanding, so that they might take solace from his going to God, since they already know and believe in God’s exceeding ability, even that he is able πάντα λύσαι τὰ δεινά.

And yet, a theological reading was not far off. Theodore of Mopsuestia’s comments on the same passage include the following:

319 Chrysostom elides part of John 14:28, ‘I go to the Father, and come again to you’ ὅτι ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα, καὶ ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς.
320 Καὶ ποιὰν τὸῦτο αὐτοῖς χαρὰν φέρειν ἐμελλεν; ποιὰν παραμυθιὰν; Τί οὖν ἐστι τὸ εἰρημένον; Οὐδὲπω ἦδεσαν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως, οὔτε οἷς ἔχρην περὶ αὐτοῦ δέξαν εἰδέν (πῶς γὰρ, οἳ μηδὲ δὴ ἀναστήτως εἰδότες;) τὸν δὲ Πατέρα μέγαν εἶναι ενόμιζον. Ἀλείποι οὖν, ὅτι Εἰ καὶ περὶ ἐμοὶ δεδοίκατε ὡς οὐκ ἁρκοῦντος ἐματοῦ προστίθαι, οὔτε θαρρεῖτε ὅτι μετὰ τὸν σταυρὸν πάλιν ὑμᾶς δύσματι ἀλλὰ ἄκουοντες ὅτι πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ἀπέρχομαι, ἐδεῖ καθήμενα λοιπόν, ὅτι πρὸς τὸν μείζονα ἀπειμα, καὶ δυνατὸν πάντα λύσα τὰ δεινὰ. Ἡμεῖς ἠκούσατε, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἶπον ὑμῖν. Εἰςτὶ τὸῦτο τέθηκεν; Ὅτι οὕτως ὁφόρα ἡμῶν, φησι, τοὺς γινομένους, ὡς καὶ προεπείν οὕτως οὐ δεδοίκα. In iohannem 75.4 PG 59.407-8.
How and in what sense does he say, *The Father is greater than I?...* Concerning the heretics who want to prove on the basis of this passage that the nature of the Father is greater than that of the Son, the context itself is sufficient to meet their objection and to show that he is referring here to the assumed man, because his death saddened the disciples, just as the dignity that would soon be his was a sufficient reason for their joy. In point of fact, the nature of God the Word did not suffer the torment of the cross, nor would it be affected by anything new after the passion that might fill the hearts of the disciples with consolation.\textsuperscript{321}

Chrysostom existed in a context where he could have made a theological comment on the passage with an anti-Heterousian bent, but he chose not to. That choice must be allowed to say something about Chrysostom’s preaching, if not his broader agenda.

The evidence then, with regards to anti-Eunomian sustained polemic against sophistry and logic is largely negative. Secondly, Chrysostom’s treatment of individual verses that were sites of debate, is not controlled by an anti-Heterousian agenda either, as evidenced by our examination of 14:28. This is not to say that the homilies are not regularly concerned with anti-Heterousian argumentation. That should be clear from earlier criteria. As well, a study of further passages sustains this, as in Hay’s comparative study of Chrysostom and Theodore, treating John 1:1, 1:14, 2:19, 5:17, 5:19, 10:30, and 14:10.\textsuperscript{322} Hay is careful to note that while Theodore and Chrysostom share a common Trinitarianism, they differ significantly on Christological matters and interpretation, so that their partitive exegesis is weighted in different directions (Theodore to the ‘assumed man’, Chrysostom to the eternal Son\textsuperscript{323}). A more sustained engagement with the initial sermons on the Prologue of John would reveal more elements of anti-Heterousian exegesis, as Hay’s study does, but

\textsuperscript{321} Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 128.
\textsuperscript{322} Camillus Hay, ‘Antiochene exegesis and Christology’ *ABR* 12 no 1-4 D (1964) 16.
\textsuperscript{323} *Ibid.*, 17.
these fit more properly under other criteria already dealt with at some length, especially partitive exegesis and doctrines of simplicity, inseparable operations, etc.. With respect to a specifically anti-Heterousian rhetoric throughout, it is simply absent. This strong negative example does not diminish the case for Chrysostom’s pro-Nicene theology, but restrains our appreciation of that theological agenda. He is by no means beholden to it, and his exposition of the text is not constrained by a need to interpret it for heightened theological significance. The text itself forms a control on his reading, more than his own context.
Chapter 4: Conclusions

I have sought in this study to examine the extent and impact of Chrysostom’s use of common pro-Nicene hermeneutical techniques in his homilies on John’s Gospel. We began with a survey of Chrysostom’s life and background, noting particularly his education under Libanios in classical rhetoric, and under Diodore of Tarsus which further solidified a rhetorical and/or Antiochene approach to the reading of scripture, in line with much that was common about patristic exegesis. We also examined the historical context of Chrysostom’s preaching of these sermons, in light of the theological debates of the fourth century, as well as contemporary academic discussions surrounding the interpretation and understanding of those debates.

With this foundation I formulated nine criteria to bring to a reading of Chrysostom’s homilies, clustered particularly around Ayres’ first strategy, of ways of speaking about unity and diversity in the Godhead, but not neglecting entirely his other two identified strategies, as well as incorporating Behr’s insight about the significant place of partitive exegesis as part of pro-Nicene readings of scripture.

With these criteria in mind, we then conducted a thorough, close reading of Chrysostom’s homilies. The evidence was mixed but positive.

In relation to (1) partitive exegesis, it was found to be a prevalent and dominant tool in Chrysostom’s handling of passages that bore upon questions of the relation of Christ’s divine and human nature, as well as the Son’s relation to the Father. This is particularly so in the earlier homilies, dominated with the Prologue material and engagements with rival Heterousian interpretations.
The doctrine of simplicity (2) was found in three striking examples, in which it played a decisive hermeneutical function, but it was also notably absent elsewhere.

The doctrine of inseparable operations (3) was found to be both significant and pervasive, a decisively key element in Chrysostom’s reading of the Gospel.

Regarding (4) pro-Nicene terminology, Chrysostom makes regular use of a number of phrases that could be related to the Creed of Constantinople 381, though his usage could be explained by those terms greater currency in the Trinitarian thinking of the period. Nonetheless, our examination of these terms supports the contention that Chrysostom’s use of them conforms to broader pro-Nicene patterns, as does his use of ἀπαράλλακτος and ὑπόστασις.

Chrysostom’s use of analogy (5) was restrained, with him often drawing attention to the limits of his analogies, and referring his audience to the specific point of analogy which an example was meant to bring forth. His analogies on Trinitarian relations tend to follow familiar figures of light and water. Overall this is consistent with a pro-Nicene outlook.

Despite his own sermon series On the Incomprehensibility of God, and its polemic against Heterousians, Chrysostom is rather reticent to deploy incomprehensibility (6) as a dominant feature of his exposition of the Gospel, yet it is certainly present. Again, in the absence of counter-evidence, this too supports the thesis that Chrysostom shares a pro-Nicene theological approach.

Being careful to recognise that which Ayres includes under his treatment of pro-Nicene approaches to purification and incorporation are not what I have treated under purification of the soul (7), Chrysostom does couple spiritual and secular purification and
purity, particularly in connection with exhortations for his hearers to heed not merely his words, but the words of the Gospel. This is weak evidence of pro-Nicene theology.

Creation themes (8) find little expression in the homilies on John, apart from the importance of securing the Creator/creation distinction, which is a pro-Nicene distinctive, but falls far short of a semiotics of creation; again, this is minimal to neutral on the question of the thesis.

Lastly, in regards to (9) anti-Eunomian polemics against logic, rhetoric, and sophistry, Chrysostom is remarkably silent in these homilies, with only one passage in particular bearing upon that theme. In conjunction with this, we conducted a comparative study of Chrysostom, Eunomius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia on the text of John 14:28. Despite the clear theological use and argument that the other three make of this text, Chrysostom is decidedly uninterested at this point in offering a theological rebuttal of Heterousian interpretation. This is moderate negative evidence to the polemical character of the homilies, balanced out if not totally negated by some of the polemical material to be found in the initial homilies on the Gospel’s prologue.

Overall then, I consider the evidence to be strong in favour of the proposition that Chrysostom is working with a fundamentally pro-Nicene theological culture, which is evidenced particularly in those techniques and elements that revolve around Ayres’ first strategy, concerning unity of the Godhead. Other elements, such as criteria 7-9, are weak to absent, which may be explained by both his homiletic context and/or the demands of the text of the Gospel of John places upon the expositor. The strength of the conclusion that Chrysostom is decisively ‘pro-Nicene’ is tempered by how wide-ranging and accurate Ayres’ assessment of pro-Nicenes really is, but this is a question that can only be answered
in turn by sustained readings of fourth century authors in light of the strategies that Ayres’ himself has proposed, which is what this study has sought to do. Chrysostom is, above all, concerned to exposit the text of the Scriptures, in line with rhetorical and exegetical practices he has been trained in, for the understanding of his audience, the reformation of their everyday lives in accordance with a Christian habitus, and the attainment of salvation for them. He does so with a mind shaped by and in pro-Nicene theological concerns, which underwrite his theological superstructure, and so control both how he reads certain texts, as well as the theological polemics he engages in. Yet he is not overwhelmed by it, as the final strong counter-evidence of John 14:28 shows. When given the option, he does not need to offer a theologising reading of the text in terms of current controversy, but is shaped instead by the movement of the text itself in his exposition.

On the basis of this study, Chrysostom is to be considered not merely Nicene in the orthodoxy of his (trinitarian) doctrine, but pro-Nicene in his theological outlook and hermeneutical method. Not only does this reshape how we view pro-Nicenes in the fourth century, it reshapes how we approach Chrysostom. As referred to in chapter one, much Chrysostom scholarship has been focused on social setting, rhetoric, and systematic theology without an integration of hermeneutical method. Here, at least, is the beginning of a case for respecting the strictly theological dimension that shapes his exegetical and expository practices.
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