The titles on the manuscripts cited in the SC edition are nearly the same. In most instances this oration is designated as Περὶ Υἱοῦ λόγος α', "On the Son, Oration One" although twice it is also referred to as Βιβλίον Β', "Volume Two," and once Βιβλίον δεύτερον, "Second Volume." The various sequences of the five orations within the manuscript tradition suggest that this was the first discourse on the Son, since in a number of manuscripts it precedes Oration 30. Its listing as Βιβλίον Β' or Βιβλίον δεύτερον represents two variations: manuscripts S and P, in which Oration 28 follows Oration 31, and manuscript C, in which Oration 28 is not included. In both sequences Oration 29 is the second oration within the series.

29.1 In the Introduction (pp. 76-78) I have discussed the positions of Sinko (pp. 11-12 and 20-21) and Bernardi (pp. 182-185), who argue that the opening sentences of this oration refer to Oration 27. They may both be correct that this discourse was clumsily edited, but nothing in its second sentence demands that it originally followed Oration 27 rather than Oration 28. The first two statements of 29.1 have censorial aspects. Without the first sentence the opening section makes sense and contains no necessary reference to anything preceding. The observation about the ease of attacking another's position and the difficulty of establishing one's own is a commonplace that occurs as early as Demosthenes (Olynth. 1.7). Gregory promises to reverse the process by first giving reasons for his view and then arguing against those of his antagonists, but he does not follow that plan in any detailed way. He only states his position in section 2 and then attacks the later Arian doctrines in 3-16.

The comment about the Holy Spirit suggests topics that will be taken up specifically in Oration 31. The prior sentence stated the Theologian's summary of disagreements with his detractors. Supporting one's view in such debates requires a person both religious and intelligent, ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβοῦς καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντος. Thus the conflict with the Eunomians continues to be focused on the relationship of faith and reason, on piety and paideia. That theme lies just under the surface of this entire oration and is mentioned again in section 21.

Nazianzen's opponents had evidently circulated a type of elementary or "introductory treatise," λόγον ἐλασιγμικόν, that met the needs of the less educated, though Gregory found it deceptive. Gallay (p. 178, n.1) thinks first of the Thalia of Arius, a piece that was poetic and probably effective. Philostorgius (H.E. 2.2), the Neo-Arian historian, noted that
Arius had written poetry “for the mill, the sea, and the road” and then had set it to music. Vaggonie (p. 16) makes the attractive suggestion that section 28 of Eunomius’ Apology, which is a separate work, fits this description. It is an introductory summary. The Theologian’s rebuke of Eunomians for arguing in salons and on street corners (27.2) indicates that they had success in popularizing their ideas. Nazianzen may be referring to other specific works which circulated among such popular audiences; his phrasing of later Arian positions might recall them. Some of the statements are similar to Eunomian fragments that Vaggonie includes in his edition. Since we have Aetius’ technical Syntagmation and Eunomius’ more discursive apologies, we know later Arianism appealed to different types of audiences. The Theologian recognizes he has much to accomplish if he is to refute their efforts. Some of his own theological poetry reaches out to a wider public through a pleasing medium. In these orations he undertakes the task of arguing enthymematically before a general audience. Part of the audience has been educated in the nature of dialectic, knows its connection with rhetoric and thus sees that the orations demonstrate the learning of the speaker. Within that group both friend and foe will be more concerned with the logical moves. Another part of the audience, however, has not been educated in such matters and thus will be more susceptible to the massing of pictures and the appeals to popular “orthodox” piety, whether or not such attempts prove to be ultimately convincing. 29.2 The discussion of anarchy, polyarchy and monarchy or as Wickham translates them: “atheism, polytheism and monotheism,” calls to mind the full context of Hellenistic religions. As in 28.13-15 Gregory is ever aware that wrangling within Christendom weakens faith and gives paganism the victory by default. But he also emphasizes an agreement, found among the groups claiming to be Christians, that monarchy or monotheism is the basic principle.

The description of that monotheism, however, points up disagreements. For Gregory that monarchy is not limited to or circumscribed by one person. Unity can exist when there is “equality of nature, harmony of will, identity of action, and the convergence towards their source of what springs from unity,” φύσεως διμοτιμία συνίστησι, καὶ γνώμης σύμπνοια, καὶ ταυτότης κινήσεως, καὶ πρός τὸ ἐν τῶν ἑαυτοῦ σύννεφος. Although this is impossible for created nature, within the Godhead there can be “numerical distinction” without “division in being,” ἀριθμὸ διαφέρη, τῇ γὲ οὐσίᾳ μὴ τέμνεσθαι. Nazianzen assumes the Eunomians are troubled by the lack of unity in a Trinitarian conception that holds the Son to be equal in some significant way to the Father. They are concerned that a plurality of gods results, one which represents a return to polyarchy or polytheism. Eunomius (Apology 25) insists that the Spirit be counted as a