For most of this century scholarly investigation of the influence of philosophy, particularly cosmology, on trinitarian doctrine in the fourth century has been functionally equivalent to the search for the origins of fourth century trinitarian heterodoxy. On the one hand, many traditional accounts of the controversies accepted the old polemically-motivated characterization of anti-Nicenes as virtual Pagan wolves in Christian sheepskins; on the other hand, many modern accounts of the development of doctrine have used the newer but no less polemically motivated thesis of "the problematic of hellenization" to enlarge the category of heterodoxy to include basically everyone in the fourth century except, perhaps, Athanasius. Even those scholars who offered fresh reconsiderations of anti-Nicenes like Arius, such as Maurice Wiles in his ground-breaking "In Defence of Arius,"\(^2\) nonetheless sought to defend Arius by bracketing off the influence of hellenistic cosmology. This tactic is well dramatized in the later work by Robert Gregg and Dennis Groh, where one major source of Christian cosmological speculation for both anti- and pro-Nicenes (but especially for anti-Nicenes), namely Eusebius of Caesarea, simply does not appear.\(^3\) As we move through a scholarly synthesis (in the Hegelian sense) of the earlier opposing positions on the corrupting influence of philosophy, we now

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\(^1\) An earlier draft of this article was presented as a paper at the Midwest Patristic Seminar, University of Chicago, February, 1993.


\(^3\) *Early Arianism A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981). For a more developed and sympathetic discussion of the significance of Eusebius' cosmology in his theology and for the theology of the fourth century, see L. Rebecca Lyman's recent *Christology and Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 82-123. My approach differs from Lyman's by working from the specific or technical senses of power (*dynamis*).
find, for example, Rowan Williams⁴ and Maurice Wiles⁵ agreeing in recent publications (written at almost the same time) that cosmological interests indeed shaped the thought of all sides and provided much of the language by which all Christians of the fourth century conceived and expressed their own doctrines.

What I will say here about the role of alternative causal language in the competing trinitarian theologies of Eunomius of Cyzicus and Gregory of Nyssa goes a bit further than this recent happy synthesis. I will argue that we can understand fundamental differences between the trinitarian doctrines of Gregory and Eunomius through a recognition of their different accounts of transcendent causality. In particular I will argue that Gregory and Eunomius develop their own distinctive theologies by drawing upon alternative transcendental causalities already available in school platonism. By “transcendental causalities” I mean specific accounts of the character of causality associated with the first or highest member of a transcendent hierarchy. A significant example of what I mean by “transcendental causality” is the account of the Good in the Republic 508-509. Although scholarly attention tends to settle on the famous statement that the Good is beyond being, the passage itself is a treatise on how, exactly, the Good is a cause. The statement that the Good is beyond being is couched in the conclusion that the Good is not lacking in power or dignity, two attributes which refer to medical and political aetiologies introduced earlier in the dialogue. The point of Plato’s argument in Republic 508-509 is that the Good is not beyond being a cause, even if it is beyond “οὐσία.” The very causalities suggested by δόμωμι and πρεσβεία are the two kinds of causalities that will come into play in the differences between Gregory and Eunomius. On the one hand, Eunomius’ account of divine productivity is expressed in moral or political language like ἐξουσία, βουλή, and πρόσταση; potentially overdetermined language like δόμωμι or ἐνέργεια (hereafter transliterated by dynamis or energeia) are used only in the moral or political sense. Gregory’s account of divine productivity is, on the other hand, expressed in the language of connatural union, with terms like συμφωνέως or φυσική ἰδιότης, which are both considered to be interchangeable with dynamis. Is then the first existent productive by nature or may productive causality