

A Patristic Theory of Proper Names

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Few questions in philosophy of language since Frege and Russell have attracted as much attention as the analysis of proper names and definite descriptions. The ancient preoccupation with naming was also intense but looks rather different to us today. Greek philosophers from at least the time of Plato and Aristotle were interested in the origin of names, adopting positions of naming by nature or by convention. In Hellenistic philosophy, the traditional concerns continued. But there was also special consideration of proper names, which were clearly distinguished from common names.

Later still, the philosophical tradition set up the Patristic debate on names in trinitarian discourse, which took place in the latter stages of the Arian controversy. In the fourth-century Greek theologian Basil of Caesarea is found a discussion of the signification of proper names, which appears to pick up some points from earlier ideas about language. He undertakes an analysis of proper names in response to his theological opponents. I will argue that Basil presents a theory which in some respects anticipates modern description theories. Basil has an idea of the role of cognition in a theory of naming.

I

I will start by making some remarks on naming in the Hellenistic period, first taking up the Stoics.¹ The Stoics influenced much of the later grammatical and philosophical material on the subject of names. The most reliable report for what the Stoics think about names is pre-

¹ Recent work on Stoic proper names includes: Jacques Brunschwig, "Remarks on the Stoic Theory of the Proper Noun", *Papers in Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 39–56. Michael Frede, "The Stoic Notion of a Grammatical Case", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 39 (1994): 13–24; "The Stoic Notion of a *Lekton*", *Language, Companions to Ancient Thought* 3, ed. Stephen Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 109–128.

served in Diogenes Laertius' account of Stoic dialectic, where is found a 'nutshell' theory of how names signify. Apart from this, there is not much good testimony to go by. This report appears in the Stoic account of their canonical five parts of speech, where the Stoics talk about expressions as distinguished from what is signified.

The testimony (Diogenes Laertius 7.58) comes in two flavors, each of which represents a separate part of speech:

Ἔστι δὲ προσηγορία μὲν κατὰ τὸν Διογένην μέρος λόγου σημαῖνον κοινήν ποιότητα, οἷον Ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος· ὄνομα δὲ ἐστὶ μέρος λόγου δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα, οἷον Διογένης, Σωκράτης.

The appellative is, according to Diogenes, a part of speech which signifies a common quality, for example 'man', 'horse'; while a proper name is a part of speech indicating a particular quality, for example 'Diogenes', 'Socrates'.

On the one hand they have the proper name (ὄνομα), while on the other hand they have the common name or appellative (προσηγορία). The designation of the proper name which 'indicates' is not a qualified individual but a particular quality (ἰδία ποιότης).² The appellative 'sig-

² The translation of δηλοῦν here as 'indicating' rather than 'signifying' requires some justification. Scholars have argued for both renderings; although I favor 'indicating', this preference does not of course affect what I want to draw out of the Stoics here. In favor of this view, Catherine Atherton, *The Stoics on Ambiguity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 302f. raises the possibility that the relation between proper names and individuals is distinguished by a technical sense of this term (δηλοῦν) as opposed to signifying (σημαίνειν). Atherton points out that the evidence shows that in other texts, not individuals but significations are 'indicated', as in the Stoic definition of ambiguity also in Diogenes Laertius (7.62). More telling in my opinion are the points adduced by Stephen Menn, "The Stoic Theory of Categories", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 215–247 at 215f. note 2, who argues convincingly for the importance of key ideas in Plato (*Timaeus* 49A6–50C) in the Stoic account of substance and quality. This important observation supports the translation 'to indicate' or 'to denote' on account of the clear link between use of demonstrative pronouns and the term δηλοῦν (ὅσα δεικνύντες τῷ ῥήματι τῷ τῶδε καὶ τοῦτο προσχρώμενοι δηλοῦν ἡγούμεθα τι). On the other hand, Atherton points out that both the Stoic definition of appellative and of verb involve the same verb which is not δηλοῦν but σημαίνειν. Atherton suggests that different Stoics might employ different semantic terminology for the same purpose; she recommends caution in reading too much into such terminological differences. Richard Gaskin, "The Stoics on Cases, Predicates and the Unity of the Proposition", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (Supplement) 68 (1997): 91–108 at 101 note 28 contends that Sext. Emp. *Math.* 8.12 advocates the synonymy of the two terms in Stoic theory. "Sextus' assertion at *AM* 8.11f. that linguistic items do not signify (*sêmeinein*) things in the world is [...] utterly

nifies' not a kind but a common quality (κοινή ποιότης). The examples of the proper name are the proper names 'Diogenes', 'Socrates' and for the common name the kind-expressions 'man', 'horse'.

I take it that this definition of proper names gives the designation, what is 'indicated' by the name, as a special kind of property which individuals such as Diogenes or Socrates have. Beyond this, I will only point out that by standard Stoic metaphysics, qualities are corporeal and hence the denotations of Stoic proper names are corporeal entities too. I will now move on to the grammarians who to some extent were influenced by the Stoics.

II

Many of the grammarians also treat proper names. For our purposes, the Imperial period grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus is the most interesting. In many of the grammarians, the semantic terminology changes away from Stoic usage, so that there is talk of the signification (σημαίνον) of proper names. To judge by the influential grammarian Dionysius Thrax, the signification of proper names is considered not a quality but a substance (οὐσία).³ It looks like particulars are meant as the substances.

The signification of particulars is found in both of the passages in which Dionysius Thrax says something about proper names. First, in his section 'On the Noun' he defines the noun (ὄνομα) as follows.

μέρος λόγου πτωτικόν, σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα σημαῖνον, σῶμα μὲν οἶον λίθος, πρᾶγμα δὲ οἶον παιδεία, κοινῶς τε καὶ ἰδίως λεγόμενον, κοινῶς μὲν οἶον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος, ἰδίως δὲ οἶον Σωκράτης.⁴

general. Probably the Stoics did not have a precise term for what I am calling the denoting relation." Thus Gaskin would claim that the Stoics (or some Stoics) do not mark off the denoting relation between language and individuals from the signifying relation between language and what is said.

³ In fact, in some grammatical texts which otherwise follow Dionysius Thrax closely, the signification of a substance is present for proper names but missing for common names. For example, there is evidence of this in Pap. Yale 1.25, col. I.6–9 (Wouters, 49). As David Sedley and Bob Sharples pointed out to me, uses of the term 'substance' by the grammarians in a sense which involves individuals such as Socrates are likely to be Aristotelian. Of course, 'substance' for the Stoics seems standardly to have been used for matter and not for particulars.

⁴ Dionys. Thr., *Ars Gramm.* 12 (Uhlig, 24.1–6)

[The noun is] an inflected part of speech, signifying a body or a thing, a body for example ‘stone’, and a thing for example ‘learning’; commonly and properly said, commonly for example ‘man’, ‘horse’, properly for example ‘Socrates’.

As in the Stoic definitions, there are two types of name, the common name and the proper name.⁵ But this is not where the terminology of substances comes into the picture. Further into Dionysius’ discussion of nouns, in his catalogue of all the kinds of names, the first two items listed are the proper (κύριον) and the appellative (προσηγορικόν) names.⁶ The proper name signifies a ‘particular substance’ (ἰδία οὐσία) while the appellative signifies a ‘common substance’ (κοινή οὐσία). Most of the examples here are identical to his examples when he first defines the noun in the other text. But of course here in the names catalogue he omits the signification of a body or a thing (σῶμα, πρᾶγμα) and just has substances as the significations. From his examples, it would appear that Dionysius understands ‘particular substance’ in the sense of an object such as the individual Socrates. So, under the influence of Dionysius, many grammarians held things or substances to be the significations of names.⁷

⁵ However, Dionysius presents here as an example the word ‘learning’. Did the Stoics in the background of Dionysius think that nouns signify such entities? For the Stoics, is learning a quality which particulars have? Perhaps this is the case. The Stoics hold that each particular species of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) is a quality which an individual has in such a way that he or she knows something by having a quality present in him or her. There is helpful discussion of knowledge and qualities in Menn, “The Stoic Theory of Categories”, 220; 230. Cf. Simplicius, *In Cat.* 212.12–213.1 (Kalbfleisch) = LS 28N = FDS 852, where there is a Stoic threefold definition of ‘qualified’ (ποιόν). In the Simplicius text, only the third sense of ‘qualified’ is the one for which a quality corresponds to the way in which the qualified individual is qualified, and note the example used: the quality of being grammatical corresponds to the way in which the qualified individual (the grammarian) is qualified. In this sense, the Stoics say that the quality matches the qualified. Someone knows something by having some bit of knowledge, for instance Socrates’ knowledge of arithmetic. This arithmetical knowledge in Socrates makes him arithmetical and thus Socrates knows something, he has knowledge. Perhaps the Stoics think of ‘learning’ or ‘culture’ (παιδεία) in a similar way.

⁶ Dionys. Thr., *Ars Gramm.* 12 (Uhlig, 33.6–34.2).

⁷ Despite the influence of the treatise attributed to Dionysius Thrax, some grammarians still followed the Stoics. Two texts from the Dionysian scholiasts say that proper names as well as appellatives signify a ‘quality’ (ποιότης): Sch. Marc. in Dionys. Thr. (*ex Heliodoro*) 357.22–26 (Hilgard) = FDS 567; Sch. Vat. in Dionys. Thr. (*ex Stephano*) 214.33–215.3 (Hilgard) = FDS 568. The two passages are almost identical, so they are probably both drawing on the same material; in both the context is a presentation and critical review of the Stoic classification of proper names and appellatives as separate parts of speech. It is interesting that

The most important case of Stoic influence on the treatment of names is represented by some passages in the *On Syntax* of Apollonius Dyscolus. In several passages Apollonius affirms that the signification of proper names (κύριον ὄνομα) is the ‘particular quality’ of objects.⁸ Apollonius says more about the meaning of names than the other surviving grammatical texts. I will look at his notion of the ‘character’ associated with names, focusing on one passage.

Ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων θέσις ἐπενοήθη εἰς ποιότητος κοινὰς ἢ ἰδίας, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, Πλάτων, καὶ ἐπεὶ οὕτε σὺν δεῖξει τὰ τοιαῦτα οὕτε ἀναφορᾶ, πάμπολλος ἢ ἐπὶ τούτων θέσις ἐγένετο, ἰν’ ἐκάστου τὸ χαρακτηριστικὸν ἀπονεύμῃ τὴν ἐκάστου <τῶν ὑποκειμένων> ποιότητα. (οὐ μετρίως γ’ οὖν τὰς ποιότητας ἐπιταράττουσιν αἱ συνεμπεσοῦσαι θέσεις ἐν τε προσηγορικοῖς καὶ κυρίοις ὀνόμασιν, δι’ ὃ καὶ ἐστέρητο τὸ διὰ τῶν ὀνομάτων νοούμενον πρόσωπον τοῦ ὀρισμοῦ.) καὶ ἔνεκα τοῦ τοιοῦτου ἰδιάσασα ἢ εὐθεῖα καθ’ ἕκαστον χαρακτῆρα, ἀπήτει τὰς πλαγίας ἀνηκούσας πρὸς τὸ ἴδιον τῆς εὐθείας. ἐντεῦθεν οὖν ἀναγκαίως καὶ τὰ γένη παραείσάζεται, ἵνα μετὰ τῆς ποιότητος τοῦ χαρακτῆρος συνδιαστείλῃ τὸ γένος.⁹

the scholiasts in question, who have qualities as the significations, are commenting on the very passages of Dionysius Thrax which rework the Stoic significations of particular and common qualities into particular and common substances. And they certainly don’t seem to think that they are contradicting Dionysius.

⁸ Ap. Dys., *Synt.* 66.11–12; 142.1 ff.; 155.3–5; 159.7; 352.5–6 (Uhlig). However in one report of Apollonius and Herodian on cases, Sch. Lond. in Dionys. Thr. (*ex Heliodoro*) 546.5–14 (Hilgard) = FDS 780, substances are the signification not of names but of cases, “for [the nominative case] signifies the substance of the thing” (ὀρθῶς γὰρ σημαίνει τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ πράγματος). A similar idea is found in some manuscripts of Ammonius, *In Int.* ad 43.19 (Busse) = FDS 776, so it is likely that other grammarians hold this position too. To support their claim that the nominative is also properly a case, Apollonius and Herodian introduce a doctrine of the ‘generic name’. The idea is that the generic name includes every instance of the name. The cases ‘fall under’ the generic names, and the cases are word-forms (λέξις ὀνόματος) used in discourse. Hence they are instantiations in use of the abstract entities of generic names; the abstract name is applied to form the particular case. Frede, “The Stoic Notion of a Grammatical Case”, 24 thinks that this explanation is an answer to the question of what declined word-forms are cases of, what the terminology of ‘cases’ means; he suggests that the explanation is derived from the Stoics. However, it seems clear to me that this talk of generic names and the cases associated with them reflects ancient discussions of names and other linguistic or semantic entities which are quite removed from what I choose to discuss in this paper. This material on cases is briefly treated by Atherton, *The Stoics on Ambiguity*, 282 note 51, who cites for comparison Sch. Lond. in Dionys. Thr. 547.18f.; Georg. Choer., *Prol. Sch. in Theodos.* 109.24f.

⁹ Ap. Dys., *Synt.* 142.1–143.3 (Uhlig). The cornered brackets enclose words that are conjectured by Uhlig, probably on the basis of standard forms of expression in Apollonius, e.g. *Synt.* 155.3–5 (Uhlig) (ἢ ἰδία ποιότητος τοῦ ὑποκειμένου).

The imposition of names has been conceived in terms of common or particular qualities, as for instance [the names] ‘man’, ‘Plato’; and since [names] of such sort are neither by pointing nor by anaphora, the imposition [of names] upon these things becomes highly important, to the end that the character of each [name] applies the quality of each <of the subjects>. (Of course the homonymous naming in the appellatives and proper names plays considerable havoc with the qualities, on account of which the person conceived by means of the names is deprived of determinacy.) And for this reason the nominative [case of the name], having identified [the nominatum] according to its individual character, brings in its train the oblique cases which belong to the declensional pattern signalled by the nominative. Hence necessarily the genders are also introduced, in order that with the quality, the gender of the character is distinguished.

Apollonius here discusses the naming of things with proper names in terms of the particular qualities which things have. But it is not easy to determine what sort of theory we are dealing with, and I can only give a rough sketch of what I think is going on in the passage.¹⁰

In the *On Syntax* passage, proper names are applied to *nominata*¹¹ on account of the ‘character’ (χαρακτήρ) of the name which ‘applies the

¹⁰ The text even lacks the usual semantic terminology of signifying (σημαίνειν), although this is found in another Apollonian text on proper names contrasted with other expressions, *Pron.* 27.9f. (Schneider). This latter text is very problematic and interesting for comparison, but must await fuller discussion elsewhere. In the *On Pronouns*, Apollonius says that the quality of an object is involved in the signification: pronouns signify substance (οὐσία) while proper names signify substance with quality (οὐσία μετὰ ποιότητος). This talk of ‘substance’ must be of what is subject to qualities, what underlies them. (Cf. the text discussed in footnote 15, *Synt.* 143.9–144.4, on the semantics of pronouns in contrast to proper names.) A pronoun such as the deictic pronoun ‘this man’ (οὗτος) signifies a substance, namely the man pointed at, while ‘Socrates’ signifies a substance *qualified* by some property possessed by the substance.

¹¹ Apollonius often speaks of the nominatum as that which is a *subject* to qualities, that which ‘underlies’ (ὑποκείμενον). The frequency with which the word ‘underlying’ appears in similar contexts in the *On Syntax* presumably motivated Uhlig to supply it with cornered brackets in the text of Apollonius cited above, and I have retained this material in the brackets. This term also crops up in an Apollonian definition of names which is attested by a Dionysian scholiast, Sch. in Dionys. Thr. 524.8–12 (Hilgard), ὄνομά ἐστι μέρος λόγου πτωτικὸν ἐκάστου τῶν ὑποκειμένων σωμάτων ἢ πραγμάτων κοινὴν ἢ ἰδίαν ποιότητα ἀπονέμου, “the name is an inflected part of speech which applies a common or an individual quality of each of the underlying bodies or things”. Schneider points out in his fragments collection from the lost Apollonian treatise *On Names* that a definition of names ascribed to the later figures Romanus and Philoponus is actually that of Apollonius and his son Herodian. This definition appears in the Byzantine grammarian Choeroboscus, *Prol. Sch. in Theodos.* 106.3–10 (Hilgard) = FDS 563.

quality'.¹² But the 'character' seems in the hands of Apollonius to often be closely associated with word-forms. Only in this passage from the *On Syntax* does Apollonius talk specifically on proper names while using the terminology of 'character'. Other uses of the term by Apollonius have to do with the morphological characteristics of expressions. For example, Apollonius uses 'character' for letters of the Greek alphabet (*Synt.* 41.1), or forms and inflections of words, as in the singular or the plural (*Synt.* 31.4f.; 146.7; 315.20).¹³

Now what does the 'character' have to do with the signification of proper names? At issue in the text is the conception of the link between name and what is named. Naming is clearly distinguished in the first few lines of text from demonstrations and anaphora. The difference is that in the case of names, what is signified by a name involves a quality. Apollonius says, more strictly than I translated above, that naming 'has been conceived into the common and particular qualities'. It sounds as if Apollonius has in mind original name-givers, perhaps skilled or expert namers of things, as we find in the *Cratylus* of Plato;¹⁴ this seems to explain why the 'imposition' is apparently not as crucial in the cases of demonstrative and anaphoric reference as it is for names.

Seeing that uses of 'character' in Apollonius tend to bring in different aspects of the lexical or formal properties of written expressions, it seems that the quality must be built into the form of the name in some way. And the contrast with demonstrations, also found in the *Pron.* text just mentioned, suggests that the quality has to do with the descriptive meaning of names. 'Pointing' (δείξις) at objects in communication does

¹² In what follows, I am greatly indebted to conversations with David Sedley about the significance of ancient etymology to naming in the grammatical tradition.

¹³ This reflects the standard range of uses of the term in the grammarians, cf. Ap. Dys., *Conj.* 247.30f. (Schneider) = FDS 584 and references in the Dionysian scholiasts collected by Atherton, *The Stoics on Ambiguity*, 226 note 9, in which the term χαρακτήρ is used for the written characters or letters as opposed to vocal elements (στοιχεῖα, ἐκφωνήσεις). In a Dionysian scholium, Sch. in Dionys. Thr. 527.22f. (Hilgard), the 'character' of words has to do with the uniqueness of an expression (καθ' ἐκάστην φωνὴν ἰδιάζων ὁ χαρακτήρ).

¹⁴ Catherine Atherton, "Apollonius Dyscolus and the Ambiguity of Ambiguity", *Classical Quarterly* 45 (1995): 441–473 at 464 cites an important methodological passage in Apollonius, *Synt.* 51.7–12 (Uhlig), which recommends the study of standard Greek usage, among other things, for discussing the 'imposition of names by the ancients'.

not involve descriptive meaning.¹⁵ Since there is no mention of any knowledge of meaning associated with names by speakers or hearers of names, I think it likely that Apollonius simply means that names are constituted in such a way as to describe their nominata; this description inherent in the name corresponds to the quality of the referent. The key semantic point would be that a quality corresponding to the descriptive meaning of the name is applied by the ‘character’ to the nominatum; no meaning which is not built into the name is associated with the name by speakers.

So by this account, the idea is not that names are abbreviated descriptions, but that names themselves incorporate descriptions by virtue of their ‘character’. This terminology, which elsewhere in Apollonius has to do with formal matters, suggests that the form of the expression is particularly important in the semantic issue of naming. Perhaps there is no clear distinction to be made between the formal and semantic properties of names. Apollonius stresses the importance for his understanding of names of the initial naming of things, the ‘imposition’ of names (θέσις). Accordingly, the theory in Apollonius might bring to bear the tradition of Stoic etymology, based on the *Cratylus* idea that names are descriptions.¹⁶ Etymology is one important ancient technique, well known to Apollonius, of explaining the meaning of names.¹⁷

Even if this account is essentially correct, we are still left with the problem of Apollonius’ example of a proper name, ‘Plato’. What for Apollonius is the descriptive meaning of ‘Plato’? It seems that names

¹⁵ In another passage which comes soon after the text translated above, *Synt.* 143.9–144.4 (Uhlig), there is a bit more information about the ‘character’ of names in contrast to the semantics of pronouns. I think at issue in this text is the lack of a descriptive element inherent in pronomial expressions in contrast to names. Apollonius says that personal pronouns pick out ‘underlying substances’ by means of their deictic reference. The following argument is obscure to me, but Apollonius ends by concluding that pronouns don’t have ‘the many characters’ (τοὺς πολλοὺς χαρακτῆρας) of names.

¹⁶ There are at least three ancient possibilities for obtaining descriptive content solely from proper names themselves: etymology, imitation by sound of referents, and analysis of component meanings. But there is a lack of information about what avenue or avenues Apollonius would use. I suspect that Apollonius goes into how descriptive meaning is built into names in detail in his lost treatise *On Names*.

¹⁷ A. A. Long, “Stoic Readings of Homer”, *Stoic Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 58–84 at 71–81. Ineke Sluiter, *Ancient Grammar in Context. Contributions to the Study of Ancient Linguistic Thought* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1990): 12–37 (especially 24–25); 56–59.

like ‘Plato’ have little meaning, if any. The parenthetical remark in the middle of the passage laments one particularly pressing difficulty for his theory, namely the common phenomenon of two individuals being given the same name. The idea seems to be that the qualities assigned by the ‘character’ of the name do not in every case play their semantic role properly in identifying a unique object. Fortunately, Apollonius says more about his approach to this sort of example in the following discussion of the homonymy problem which plagues proper names, *Synt.* 143.3–8.¹⁸ A name like ‘Plato’ does not have enough meaning on its own to be linked with a unique referent, hence a suitable epithet is applied to supply the description which does the job. The ‘Plato’ example would be handled by padding it, ‘wise Plato’, ‘good Plato’, or (perhaps more effectively) by a compound epithet, ‘Plato the philosopher’.¹⁹ The descriptive epithet would help to determine a unique referent.

III

Now we will consider our Patristic theory of names. Here we find the idea that the proper name designates the ‘character’ of an individual, but this traditional grammatical terminology does not reflect a theory in which proper names themselves have descriptions built into them. Rather, the burden shifts to the *thoughts* of the hearer when hearing uses of proper names. A proper name, according to this theory, means a cluster of descriptions which apply to an individual.

What is the theological motivation of the theory? In the latter stages of the Arian controversy, matters of language became disputed philosophical territory. The main theological opponent of Basil, Eunomius, has a philosophical account of names. Thus it was necessary to formulate a counter-account of naming. Not too much will be said here about

¹⁸ In the final sentence of the passage, the association of the ‘character’ with gender could help to show how besides (or as part of) the descriptive element, the ‘character’ involves gender among its morphological properties.

¹⁹ Atherton, “Apollonius Dyscolus and the Ambiguity of Ambiguity”, 447 discusses homonymy in Apollonius, which seems to be dominated by worries over proper names. In the most important text among several which she cites, *Synt.* 56.5–57.12 (Uhlig), the problem is said to be resolved only by the addition of an epithet to the proper name, for example disarming the homonymy of ‘Ajax’ with the supplemented names ‘Telamonian Ajax’ and ‘Ajax the great’. At *Synt.* 56.10–11 (Uhlig), Apollonius says that the epithet prevents the meaning of proper names from ‘extending’ to multiple referents (καὶ οὕτω τὰ κύρια ὑπεκλύεται τῆς εἰς πλείονα πρόσωπα συντεινούσης ἐννοίας).

Eunomius' theory of language and its philosophical antecedents, a topic which has proved attractive to Patristic scholarship;²⁰ but a few points from Eunomius will be discussed along the way. Let me now present the key text on naming.

Καίτοι τίς ἂν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ σωφρονῶν πρόσθοιτο, ὅτι ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα ἔστι διάφορα, τούτων παρηλλάχθαι καὶ τὰς οὐσίας ἀνάγκη; Πέτρου γὰρ καὶ Παύλου καὶ ἀπαξαπλῶς ἀνθρώπων πάντων προσηγορίαὶ μὲν διάφοροι, οὐσία δὲ πάντων μία. Διόπερ ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις οἱ αὐτοὶ ἀλλήλοις ἔσμεν· τοῖς δὲ ἰδιώμασι μόνοις τοῖς περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρουμένοις ἕτερος ἑτέρου διενόχασμεν. Ὅθεν καὶ αἱ προσηγορίαὶ οὐχὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν εἰσι σημαντικά, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰδιοτήτων, αἱ τὸν καθ' ἕνα χαρακτηρίζουσιν. Ὅταν οὖν ἀκούσωμεν Πέτρον, οὐ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ νοοῦμεν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος (οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον, ὅπερ οὐδαμῶς σημαίνει τὸ ὄνομα), ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰδιωμάτων ἃ περὶ αὐτὸν θεωρεῖται τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐντυπούμεθα. Εὐθύς γὰρ ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης νοοῦμεν τὸν τοῦ Ἰωνᾶ, τὸν ἐκ τῆς Βηθσαϊδᾶ, τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἀνδρέου, τὸν ἀπὸ ἀλιέων εἰς τὴν διακονίαν τῆς ἀποστολῆς προσκληθέντα, τὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ὑπεροχὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας δεξάμενον· ὧν οὐδὲν ἔστιν οὐσία, ἢ ὡς ὑπόστασις νοουμένη. Ὡστε τὸ ὄνομα τὸν χαρακτήρα μὲν ἡμῖν ἀφορίζει τὸν Πέτρον, αὐτὴν δὲ οὐδαμοῦ παρίστησι τὴν οὐσίαν. Πάλιν ἀκούσαντες Παῦλον, ἑτέρων ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομὴν ἔννοήσαμεν· τὸν Ταρσέα, τὸν Ἑβραῖον, τὸν κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖον, τὸν μαθητὴν Γαμαλιήλ, τὸν κατὰ ζῆλον διώκτην τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν ἐκ τῆς φοβερᾶς ὀπτασίας εἰς τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν ἐναχθέντα, τὸν ἀπόστολον τῶν ἔθνων, ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα ἐκ μιᾶς φωνῆς τῆς Παῦλος περιορίζεται. Καίτοι γε, εἴπερ ἀληθὲς ἦν, ὅτι ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα διενήνοχεν, ἐναντίως ἔχουσιν αἱ οὐσίαι, ἐχρῆν δὴ πού καὶ Παῦλον καὶ Πέτρον καὶ ἀπαξαπλῶς ἀνθρώπους ἅπαντας ἑτεροουσίους ἀλλήλοις εἶναι. Ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦτο οὐδεὶς οὕτως ἀμαθὴς καὶ τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως ἀνεπίσκεπτος ὥστ' ἂν εἰπεῖν προαχθῆναι (Ἐκ πηλοῦ γὰρ, φησί, διήρπισαι σύ, ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ οὐδὲν ἕτερον τοῦ λόγου ἢ τὸ ὁμοούσιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἀποσημαίνοντος), ψευδὴς ὁ τῆς διαφορᾶς τῶν ὀνομάτων τὸ τῆς οὐσίας διάφορον ἐπεσθαι σοφιζόμενος. Οὐ γὰρ τοῖς ὀνόμασι ἢ τῶν πραγμάτων φύσις ἀκολουθεῖ, ἀλλ' ὕστερα τῶν πραγμάτων εὑρηται τὰ ὀνόματα.²¹

²⁰ Karl-Heinz Uthemann, "Die Sprache der Theologie nach Eunomius von Cyzicus", *ZKG* 104 (1993): 143–175; Marina Silvia Troiano, "I Cappadoci e la questione dell' origine dei nomi nella polemica contro Eunomio", *Vetera Christianorum* 17 (1980): 313–346. Behind the work of Uthemann and Troiano is the adventurous contribution of Jean Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néoplatonicienne du Cratyle", *Revue des Études Grecques* 69 (1956): 412–432. Daniélou advanced the view that Eunomius was influenced by the Neoplatonic tradition of commentary on the *Cratylus*, as pursued by the followers of Iamblichus contemporary with Eunomius, who were the forerunners of Proclus (author of an extant *Cratylus* commentary).

²¹ Basil, *Eun.* 2.4, 1–42 (SC 305: 18–22)

And yet who with their wits about them could subscribe to this account, that necessarily for things of which the names are different, the substances of these things are different? Of course the names of Peter and Paul and of absolutely all [other] men are different, but the substance of all [men] is the same. For this reason in most respects we are the same as one another, but each of us differs from the others solely by virtue of the characteristics which are observed concerning each individual. Hence the names [of particular men] are not actually signifiers of substances, but of the properties which characterize the individual. So then when we hear 'Peter', we do not from the name think of his substance (by 'substance' I mean now the material substrate, which the name in no way signifies), but we are imprinted with the notion of the characteristics which are observed concerning him. For immediately from this utterance we think of the [son] of Jonah, the man from Bethsaida, the brother of Andrew, the man called forth from the fishermen into the service of the apostolate, the man pre-eminent through faith who received upon himself the edifice of the church; none of which [i. e. these characteristics] is substance, which is conceived as *hypostasis*. So the name marks out for us the character of Peter, but in no way stands for the substance itself. And again when we hear 'Paul', we think of a concurrence of different characteristics: the man of Tarsus, the Hebrew, the Pharisee according to law, the disciple of Gamaliel, the zealous persecutor of the churches of God, the man induced from the fearful vision into deeper insight, the apostle of the Gentiles. For all these [characteristics] are circumscribed from the single utterance of 'Paul'. However, if [Eunomius' theory] was true, that things for which the names differ also have opposite substances, it would have to be the case that Paul, Peter, and absolutely all [other] men are substances foreign in nature to one another. But since nobody is so untutored and ignorant of the common nature so as to be induced to say this (the [scriptural] statement "from clay, he says, you are fashioned, as also I [am]" [Job 33.6] signifies nothing other than the consubstantiality of all men), the man who claims sophistically that the difference of substance follows the difference of the names speaks falsely. For the nature of things is not based on the names, but the names are invented posterior to the [existence of] the things.

The naming theory is supposed to explain why names don't mean, are not 'semantic' (σημαντικὰ) of, substances. But I don't think he would deny that personal designations such as 'Peter' and 'Paul' are used to refer to particular men. As will be seen, Basil's theory is not explicit enough as a theory of how reference to an object is achieved in uses of proper names. It deals with naming as a theory of the meaning of proper names, mixing in ideas from a metaphysical theory of individuation.

I will first make some remarks about the context of argument. The debate is over the meaning of names, but it is also about substances. In contrast to his opponent Basil, Eunomius thinks that names mean substances understood as individuals. Names different in meaning, at least

when properly assigned to substances, perfectly and exhaustively express different substances. On the other hand, Basil argues that names, or at least proper names, don't mean substances. (The notion of substance assumed at this point in the argument is of substances shared by individuals.) Proper names distinguish between individuals by signifying properties.

In the course of his argument, Basil takes up a notion (actually two notions) of substance, substance shared by individuals and substance underlying an individual, both of which are different from Eunomius.²² Eunomius considers all objects, whether incorporeal or corporeal, to be substances. His argument starts from the idea that the term 'Ingenerate' is the name which is proper to God, only 'Ingenerate' expresses what God is. Other terms are applied to God improperly. They are applied by human conjecture, by 'conception' (ἐπίνοια). In spite of its improper theological use, Eunomius talks about 'Father' as a name for God. But

²² Basil has yet another story when he goes into the epistemological and metaphysical issue of substances of individuals which are the essences of things, what things are behind appearances. The ultimate knowledge of what an object is must be denied to us. At *Eun.* 1.12, 30f. (SC 299: 214f.), Basil says that we don't have knowledge, by sense-perception or by revelation, of this even in the case of material things. He uses the example of the essence (οὐσία) of the earth, which in the *Genesis* account is described as unseen and unformed, *Eun.* 1.13, 13f. (SC 299: 216): "None of these [properties listed above] could be said by them to be essence, not even if an exhaustive [catalogue of properties] could be readily supplied" (ὧν οὐδὲν ἄν οὐσίαν εἴποιεν οὗτοι, οὐδὲ εἰ πάντα ῥαδίως λέγοιεν). Sense-perception tells us what properties an object such as the earth has. Yet none of these properties, nor even an exhaustive catalogue of properties, is informative as to what the essence of the earth is. Basil's argument goes, how can we know what the essence of God is when we can't even know what the essence of the earth is. So his reasoning leads him to a position which doesn't say that we can't know anything at all about individuals, since we *can* know how individuals are characterized, but emphatically rules out knowledge of the essences of individuals. The theory here is geared to confute Eunomius' fundamental metaphysical doctrine that the essence of God is perfectly knowable: God is the ingenerate. It also opposes Eunomius' supporting contentions at *Eun.* 1.13, 36f. (SC 299: 218) that knowledge of what the correct name of God is ('the Ingenerate'), as well as of what God's essence is, has been divinely revealed. Eunomius found Basil's view of the origin of names, that names are a product of the rational linguistic faculty of humans (ἐπίνοια) which serves to communicate in a clear and unconfused way the concept of things, offensive to the work of divine providence. This can be seen in later reports of Eunomius in Gregory of Nyssa; the relevant references are assembled in Troiano, "I Cappadoci e la questione dell' origine dei nomi", 320f. note 37. Eunomius thinks that names are divinely imposed, but only according to the nature of things.

since ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ express substances and the names ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ don’t have the same meaning, the substances are different.

As introduced above, in response to Eunomius Basil’s view is that proper names don’t express substances. He presents this argument in the case of human individuals. Proper names signify the qualities which individual men have, and these qualities distinguish men from each other. They distinguish individuals. Different names for objects which have a common substance do not all have the same meaning. Eunomius, according to his notion of substance and his theory of language, presumably would hold that different expressions which name the same substance are actually identical in meaning.

However, there remains a problem in Basil’s parenthetical remark about how by the word ‘substance’ the material substrate is meant, and how this underlying substance is not expressed by the name. I think that the best way to deal with this is to understand two senses of the term ‘substance’ employed here in a rather confused way. Elsewhere, Basil talks about a common ‘account (λόγος) of substance’ in terms of predicates univocally said of particulars. And in the beginning of the text cited, this would be a natural understanding of his idea of what men have in common. Paul and Peter are equally characterized by predicating rationality, mortality, etc. of them.²³ But in some respects, this story wants to avoid becoming too Aristotelian. Basil takes pains in his early writings such as the *Contra Eunomium* to avoid a notion of substance which recalls too much of the secondary substance of the *Categories*; substance must somehow be material.²⁴ Nor do his substances amount to something like the ‘subject’ familiar from the *Categories*. Accordingly, the citation of *Job* 33.6 about men formed from clay looks like an illustration of what is common to men not in a logical sense but in some sort of material sense. It is not a statement about defining characteristics.

Now we turn to the significance of this ancient theory in philosophy of language. In essence, Basil has a theory of naming which explains

²³ I treat this point in more detail in “Stoic and Aristotelian Notions of Substance in Basil of Caesarea”, *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998): 393–417 at 404–414.

²⁴ Of course, much of this sounds like good basic Aristotelianism. Two important ways Aristotle talks about substance (*Met.* 7) are in terms of the substance of something (*Met.* 7.4–12), *i. e.* the essence which is stated by a definition, and in terms of the notion of subject (*Met.* 7.3) which is taken up with reference to matter. From the standpoint of Patristics, I discuss this in Robertson, “Stoic and Aristotelian Notions”, 407f. The insistence in some passages on the materiality of substance is part of what motivated previous scholars to suppose that Basil has a Stoic philosophy of substance.

how proper names work in terms of the mediation of descriptive material; proper names do not simply mean individuals. The theory seems to be that names are used for individuals in that a name signifies properties, and in turn the properties distinguish or pick out an individual. The properties, not the names by themselves, are what ‘latches onto’ an object by applying to it. Basil argues that the descriptive meaning of proper names is supplied from the minds of hearers when they run across uses of proper names. And he doesn’t seem to have simply picked all of this up from the tradition: as far as I can see, there is not much evidence that the Stoics or later grammarians ever talk about the semantics of names in terms of what linguistically competent people know or think. But they certainly bring qualities of individuals into their accounts of naming, a prominent feature of the Patristic theory. Perhaps Stoic ideas about names and particular qualities filtered down to the fourth century in the form of logical, grammatical, or even philosophical schoolbook material.

Whatever its antecedents truly are, I think that we find here an ancient take on a description theory of names.²⁵ I will now quickly sketch the recent theories. All variants of the modern description theory of names take their starting point from the question of how proper names are used to refer successfully to objects. According to John Searle, a ‘classic’ description theorist, the description associated with a proper name does the work of securing reference. In his first attempt to present his theory, Searle argues that the use of proper names presupposes a set of characteristics – reference succeeds if and only if the object has some or all of these characteristics.²⁶ Searle qualifies his position by the looseness of the criteria for applying proper names. He doesn’t think, for example, that the set of characteristics constitutes a definition. Searle makes a distinction between definite descriptions and proper names based on the insight that the former refer by specifying what the object is while the latter don’t refer by describing objects. Even so, he claims that proper names are loosely associated with the characteristics of the objects to which they refer.

²⁵ Of course, Basil talks about properties and not descriptions in the text. But there is no problem in talking about properties and descriptions in a parallel way. In modern semantic theory, every property has a corresponding description, and any property can be formally correlated with a description.

²⁶ John Searle, “Proper Names”, *Mind* 67 (1958): 166–173. At least with respect to terms for kinds, Hilary Putnam, “The Analytic and the Synthetic”, *Mind Language and Reality*, Philosophical Papers, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975): 33–69 at 51 f., looks like a description theorist similar to Searle.

More recently, there have been several attacks and defenses of description theories. Saul Kripke's famous critique of description theories brings to bear the idea of the rigid designation of names, which has won wide acceptance.²⁷ Kripke argues that certain intuitions show that proper names are rigid designators, and that failing to account for this is a shortcoming shared by adherents of the description theory of names. Reference is not achieved by the satisfaction of a descriptive condition or conditions associated by speakers with proper names.²⁸ Once assigned to an individual, proper names refer to the same object in all possible worlds; if things were different than they are in the actual world, the proper name would still denote the same individual. An important idea for our purposes, Kripke argues that there is an important distinction between a theory of meaning for names and a theory of reference. Giving the meaning of a designator (a proper name or a description) is not the same thing as fixing the reference of a designator. A description may be used as a synonym of a designator, and a description may be used to fix the reference of a designator, but these two uses should be carefully distinguished.²⁹

²⁷ Saul A. Kripke, "Naming and Necessity", *Semantics of Natural Language*, eds. Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1972): 253–355. Kripke has not convinced quite everyone. Gregory McCulloch, *The Game of the Name* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989): 101–133 is one philosopher who opposes Kripke's influential arguments for the rigid designation of names, or at least the arguments based on modal considerations. There has even been a recent defense of a description theory by Mark D'Cruz, "A Theory of Ordinary Proper Names", *Mind* 109 (2000): 721–756. D'Cruz argues that proper names should be considered as no more than placeholders for an arbitrary definite description which holds true of some individual. This notion is argued to work just as well as the dominant theory nowadays, that proper names just mean the objects they stand for.

²⁸ I noted above the importance of explaining how reference succeeds in the modern debates. Kripke replaces the descriptivist account of reference with a 'causal chain' theory. Uses of names to refer succeed by virtue of connections between names and name-bearers as recognized in a linguistic community. Names are initially assigned to individuals in various ways (typically for personal names by parental naming ceremony), then the reference information is passed on from speaker to speaker in a reference-preserving chain. The chain of communication does the work of explaining successful reference, not any description satisfied by the bearer.

²⁹ To support these claims, Kripke looks at what happens when a description or descriptions is used to yield the reference of a name. If the name for an object is equivalent in meaning to (is a kind of shorthand for) the description or descriptions associated with the name by speakers, as in the case of a definition, the name is not a rigid designator. For if things were different, some other object might sat-

It is important to see that part of the issue in the debate is how different kinds of expressions (names and descriptions) provide access to the objects for ordinary speakers. Kripke thinks that uses of names, say, ‘Aristotle’, involve ‘direct access’ to the *nominata*; the objects themselves (Aristotle) are presented to the minds of speakers by uses of the name. On the other hand, descriptions such as ‘the philosopher from Stagira’ only provide access to the objects they describe indirectly, by means of the descriptive material which speakers understand in order to arrive at the relevant object.³⁰

Returning to Basil’s theory of names, we can see that for him, proper names *mean* a cluster of properties to the hearer, the ‘concurrence of different characteristics’; the cluster seems to play a mediating role in leading the hearer to an individual.³¹ When we hear the name ‘Paul’ we

isfy the description and thus the name would not refer to its (actual) referent. Kripke argues that this offends our intuitions about naming, in that proper names refer to the individual designated in the actual world in every possible world in which the individual exists. Even if the description associated with the name is merely used to fix the referent of the name in an initial baptism, the object picked out by the description in the actual world will be rigidly designated by the name. And if an object is characterized by one or more *essential* properties, reference is always secured in an initial baptism by some *contingent* mark of the object. So the proper name designates its (actual) referent whether the relevant individual in some possible world satisfies the reference-securing description or not.

³⁰ McCulloch, *The Game of the Name*, 126–130 points out that Kripke’s idea about the ‘direct access’ to objects does not, strictly speaking, involve modality: Kripke makes the additional point, aside from all the modal issues, that speakers understand how names and descriptions work in making propositions true and false differently. And this seems to be a point about the meaning of names, in that the *nominatum* is essential to the meaning of proper names while the object which satisfies a description is not essential to the meaning of descriptions.

³¹ There is talk in some later Greek philosophical texts of particular qualities as a ‘concurrence’ (συνδρομή) of qualities. However, Basil does not use the terminology of a unique particular quality of an individual, although he does bring in a cluster of characteristics (ιδιωμάτων συνδρομή) which plays a role in the mental events he is interested in. Some scholars have attributed this ‘concurrence of properties’ to the Stoics, a view that the peculiarity of an object consists in a unique complex of qualities, perhaps qualities which other objects have as well. Look for discussion of this in David Sedley, “The Stoic Criterion of Identity”, *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 255–275 at 261; 273 note 27. Sedley cites Porphyry, *In Cat.* 129.8–10 (Busse) = FDS 848; Dexippus, *In Cat.* 30.20–27 (Busse) = LS 28J = FDS 847; Simplicius, *In Cat.* 55.2–5 (Kalbfleisch) = FDS 848A; Simplicius, *In Cat.* 229.16–18 (Kalbfleisch) = FDS 848; Philoponus, *In An. Pr.* 167.17f. (Wallies) = FDS 995. Besides Porphyry, the report of the fourth-century Aristotelian commentator Dexippus provides the best information; the Stoic roots of all this I find rather murky.

think not simply of Paul but of some collection of properties which Paul has. This removes him a bit from Searle, in that for Searle the use of proper names *presupposes* a set of characteristics in the minds of speakers, while it puts Basil a bit more in line with traditional descriptivists like Russell, in that when we use proper names we are really using descriptions: in our thoughts, we are dealing with the descriptions that names are shorthand for.

Now what sort of properties are listed for the meaning of ‘Peter’ and ‘Paul’ – do these properties when taken together constitute a unique combination of properties, each of which is nevertheless shared by other individuals? Do these qualities only characterize Peter and Paul, or do other men have them? One might wonder whether any property in the list is considered privileged in doing the job of marking out Peter. At least on the surface of the text, no property signified by ‘Peter’ is set apart as more important to distinguishing Peter than any other.

But on closer inspection, each list builds up to a property which is strikingly unique to the individual, given what is said about him in the New Testament. Moreover the *combination* of properties in the cases of Peter and Paul is (actually) unique, although most of the properties ascribed to them taken separately are (actually) shared with others. In the case of Paul, much fuss is made in his canonical correspondence about his unusual personal history and special, ‘late’ apostolic status which nobody else has. And the progression of the list of his properties seems to reflect this sense of uniqueness, capping it off with his famous claim to be the ‘apostle of the Gentiles’. Peter is pictured in a similarly unique way, for according to the biblical accounts he and he alone is the rock upon which the church is built.

The last two items in each cluster also would save Basil from the charge of blatant circularity if not from some other form of circularity. For in both catalogues of properties, every description save the final two contain proper names. In the last two items of the Peter catalogue, ‘the apostolate’ (τῆς ἀποστολῆς) doesn’t look like a proper name (though beware the easy slide to ‘the apostolate of Christ’), while ‘the church’ (τῆς ἐκκλησίας) might be considered a proper name (but is indeed liable in English and Patristic Greek to being equivalent in meaning to ‘the Church of Jesus Christ’). And the Paul catalogue contains the term ‘Gentiles’ (ἔθνων), although this seems equivalent to ‘non-Jews’.

It appears that Basil sets things up in these examples to characterize his men distinctively: a unique individual satisfies the properties. His readers could hardly miss the way in which the referent could be picked

out by one or more of the qualities which Peter or Paul has and nobody else has. Of course, even these favored descriptions for Peter or Paul, if we should understand them as what the names really mean, would not secure reference rigidly as Kripke would have it. One could think of alternative situations in which Peter and Paul would not satisfy any of the descriptions, and thus the names 'Peter' and 'Paul' would not apply to them but to other people or perhaps nobody at all.³²

Basil says that proper names mean a cluster of properties for the hearer, and these very properties mark out an individual from every other individual.³³ Not a class which has properties as members, just the properties. Basil does not appear to lay weight on a 'particular quality' which Peter or Paul might have in some special sense, by which Peter or Paul can be unerringly picked out. And this seems to be the case even though the referent could be identified in the actual world by one or more of the descriptions listed for Peter and Paul. However, he does talk about the 'character' of Peter or Paul marked out by their names. It is this inherited idea of the 'character' which does the work of marking an individual off from other individuals.

I have argued that the ideas from the *Contra Eunomium* are quite suggestive in some respects of modern description theories. One problem for Basil on names, besides the nest of difficulties involved in precisely what descriptions speakers or hearers might offer for the meaning of proper names, is the standard objection that description theories cannot account for perfectly good uses of proper names to refer to people even when no non-trivial description is associated by people with the name. The name is just passed on or overheard in conversation, but uses of it still apparently refer to an individual. I also think that Basil runs into some of the same problems of circularity that trouble the modern descriptivists. Notably, the peril of circularity is of concern to the description theorist Strawson, who tries hard to find a way to avoid

³² Modern descriptivists might consider that there is good support for a description theory of names in the special case of famous individuals for whom one description is particularly prominent in the minds of speakers, a description that only the referent actually satisfies. Take the description 'the man who broke Babe Ruth's home run record' to give the meaning and fix the reference of the designation 'Roger Maris'. With this you have something similar to the 'Paul' example, in that the single description 'apostle of the Gentiles' is an outstanding description which in the actual course of history only Paul satisfied. And even Kripke, "Naming and Necessity", 302 sets the names of famous people apart as a special case.

³³ He does not bother to explain whether the properties are corporeal or incorporeal. In antiquity only the Stoics, apparently, were keen on corporeal qualities.

the circularity of using terms which designate individuals within propositions which in turn fix the reference of terms which designate individuals.³⁴ The issue is also discussed by the non-descriptivist Kripke, who advocates a non-circularity condition for naming theories: the properties which correspond to a given name must not themselves involve the notion of reference in such a way that it is ultimately impossible to eliminate.³⁵

I have said in this paper that taking proper names to signify the ‘character’ of Peter or Paul may well reflect traditional ideas about the ‘character’ of names in the grammarians. And if my understanding of earlier ancient theories is correct, this later theory represents a conceptual move away from ancient versions of descriptivism which supply descriptive material not from minds of users of language, but from certain aspects of the names themselves. Basil presumably thinks that we use names to refer to objects, since ‘Paul’ is clearly the name of Paul; he says that when we hear ‘Paul’ we think of a cluster of properties which Paul has. It looks like he should have done a bit more to explain how Paul is referred to by our use of the name ‘Paul’. At any rate, I think Basil shows us how the ancient arguments over names are transposed into a new key in the Patristic debates.³⁶

³⁴ P. F. Strawson, *Individuals. An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (London: Methuen, 1959): 180f. Strawson (192f.) readily concedes that the statements upon which uses of proper names are often based contain expressions which designate particulars; there will thus be a regression. However, Strawson counts on heading off an infinite regression by eventually arriving at a certain type of expression which does not *contain a part* which designates a particular, even though the proposition *as a whole* designates a particular. The required type of sentence would take the form, for example, of “There is just one so-and-so there.” All this leads into his discussion (202f.) of ‘feature-placing’.

³⁵ Kripke, “Naming and Necessity”, 283–286; 292f.

³⁶ This paper has benefited in many ways from the responses of Richard Sorabji, David Sedley, Bob Sharples, Keith Hossack, Jan Opsomer, and Theo Ebert.