

De Musica* as the Guide to Understanding Augustine's Trinitarian Numerology in the *De Trinitate

Ellen R. Scully

Seton Hall University

Introduction

Although numerology was an important theological and philosophical framework to the fathers, there are few serious treatments of its use.¹ In particular, Augustine's trinitarian use of Pythagorean numerology has not been adequately recognized.²

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1. One very helpful, but unfortunately unpublished, treatment of Patristic numerology is Ivan Bodrožić, *La Numerologia in Sant'Agostino*, Tesi di Dottorato in Teologia e Scienze Patristiche (Istituto Patristico «Augustinianum»: Rome, 2000). A good introduction to the philosophical background of Christian patristic numerology is: Dominic O'Meara, "The Music of Philosophy in Late Antiquity," in *Philosophy and the Sciences in Antiquity*, ed. R. W. Sharples (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 131–147. Joel Kalvesmaki's book, *The Theology of Arithmetic: Number Symbolism in Platonism and Early Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013), contains an analysis of the use of philosophical numerology in the Greek (both philosophical and Christian) tradition.
 2. Kalvesmaki (n.1) traces out the trajectory of numerology from the first century BCE to the mid-third century CE. In summary, Neo-Pythagoreanism arrived on the philosophical scene in the first century BCE. This Neo-Pythagorean metaphysical number speculation influenced the middle Platonists and, through them, several Christian groups, including Valentinian gnostics. This type of Christian numerology arose in the mid-second century and lasted through the mid-third century. Kalvesmaki argues that in the mid-third century, the connection of numerology with unorthodox, essentially polytheistic systems led to the rise of an orthodox theology of numbers in which numerology was viewed as appropriate in exegesis but not in metaphysical trinitarian speculation. Kalvesmaki concludes, "Mathematics rarely features in the later Fathers' trinitarian theology, and where it does it is left as an undeveloped simile" (172). It is true that Augustine, as a later father, does not make abundant or obvious use of trinitarian numerology; nevertheless, this

In *De Trinitate* (*trin.*) 13, Augustine summarizes the work he completed in the previous books of *trin.* He explains that his explicit purpose in *trin.* 4 was to answer the question of “why . . . Christ was sent in the fullness of time by the Father.”³ There are two different sides to the question of why Christ was sent by the Father. The first is soteriological in that it addresses the reason why the salvation of men requires that God become incarnate. The second side is trinitarian in that it addresses why it was particularly the Son, not the Father or the Holy Spirit, who was sent in the Incarnation.

Augustine declares that both sides of the question of why Christ was sent must be answered “on account of those people who say that he who sent and he who was sent cannot be equal in nature,” in other words, to refute the subordinationism of his Latin Homoian polemical partners.⁴ The result is that Augustine’s answer is profoundly shaped by his engagement with the Latin Homoians.

Augustine addresses both sides of this question through Pythagorean numerology. In *trin.*, he answers the basic soteriological question while refuting Homoian subordinationism by explaining that, in the Incarnation, Christ is able to save humanity through a medicinal relationship of harmony, in which the single Christ saves the double or twofold nature of humanity, body and soul. However, within *trin.* 4 Augustine does not answer the more complicated trinitarian side of the question, namely, the issue of why the Son in particular is sent.⁵ Augustine’s neglect of this important trinitarian question is glaring.

However, there is a reason behind this neglect. Augustine does not offer an explanation for why the Son is the trinitarian person sent to become incarnate in *trin.* 4 because of the limitations imposed on him by the anti-Homoian polemic that drives *trin.*⁶ Augustine recognizes that the Homoians associate incarnation with

article will argue that Augustine applies and even encourages a metaphysical use of Pythagorean numerology.

3. *Trin.* 13.25 (CCSL 50A: 418.21–23): “ibi scilicet ut ostenderem cur et quomodo Christus in plenitudine temporis a patre sit missus.” All English translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
4. *Trin.* 13.25 (CCSL 50A: 418.23–24): “propter eos qui dicunt eum qui misit et eum qui missus est aequales natura esse non posse.”
5. Although Augustine does not answer the question of why it was the Son who was sent in *trin.* 4 (the book that, at least in part, is intended to answer this very question), in *trin.* 15.20, Augustine offers the argument that the Son—not the Father or Holy Spirit or Trinity—became incarnate so that, as the human word imitates the Word, humans might come to live without lies in word, work, or thought.
6. Michel Barnes was the first to argue that *trin.* must be understood as a work of anti-Homoian polemic. He has been followed by Lewis Ayres, Kari Kloos, and Keith Johnson. See Part II of this article for a more detailed discussion.

inferiority. If he says that the Incarnation is proper to the Son, the Homoian logic will reach the conclusion that inferiority is also proper to the Son.

As a result of the limitations imposed on him by Homoian logic, Augustine offers several subtle indications that direct the reader of *trin.* 4 to look to his *De Musica* (*mus.*) for an answer to the question of why the Incarnation is proper to the Son. In *trin.* 4, Augustine uses musical language⁷ and examples⁸ to explain the universal relationship of the single to the double, and alludes to another place in his corpus where he has given a “long lecture” on the subject. Following a trajectory of scholarship that connects *trin.* 4 with *mus.*, I will argue that the “long lecture” mentioned in *trin.* 4.4, where Augustine explains the musical relationships of numbers, is his *mus.*⁹ Augustine intends that his soteriological use of the numerological analogy of the single and the double in *trin.* should be complemented by his explanation of the relationship of the numbers One and Two in *mus.* In *mus.*, Augustine uses Pythagorean numerology to conclude that the number Two is the beginning of all things composite, namely, the beginning of everything created.

Augustine encourages a trinitarian reading of *mus.* that connects the Son with the number Two. This connection explains that the Son is the trinitarian person most apt for the Incarnation because he is the beginning of all things composite and because the divine/human incarnate person is composition par excellence. Augustine’s full trinitarian teaching, therefore, reaches beyond the boundaries of *trin.* because *trin.* is engaged in a particular polemical battle that shapes and limits what Augustine can say about the Trinity.

The first part of this article will outline the Pythagorean background to Augustine’s use of numerology in a trinitarian context. Part II will discuss his use of Pythagorean numerology in *trin.* to offer a soteriological answer to the question of why Christ was sent. Part III will look at Augustine’s stricter use of Pythagorean numerology in *mus.* to provide the answer, lacking in *trin.*, as to why the Incarnation is proper to the trinitarian person of the Son.

7. This musical language, as will be discussed at greater length in Part III of this article, includes *harmonia*, *congruentia*, *concinere*, and the neologism *coaptatio*, first used by Hilary. For a study of this language in Augustine’s thought, see Jean-Michel Fontainier, *La beauté selon saint Augustin* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1998), 44–47.

8. In *trin.* 4.4, Augustine says that the relationship of the single to the double can be demonstrated to the ear through the use of a monochord.

9. This scholarly trajectory includes Gerard Rémy and Isabelle Bochet. See Part III of this article for a more detailed discussion of the connection between *trin.* and *mus.*

Part I: The Philosophical Background of Augustine's Trinitarian Numerology

Pythagorean Numerology

In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle explains that the Pythagoreans differed from the other pre-Socratics and led the way to the Platonic theory of the Forms by positing number rather than something such as air or fire as the basic building block of the universe.¹⁰ Aristotle summarizes the Pythagoreans:

Since of these principles numbers are by nature the first, and in numbers they seemed to see many resemblances to the things that exist and come into being, more than in fire and earth and water . . . since, then, all other things seemed in their whole nature to be modeled on numbers, and numbers seemed to be the first things in the whole of nature, they supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number.¹¹

For the Pythagoreans, ultimate reality is intelligible but not material. Yet the true grace of the Pythagorean system is that number, immaterial in and of itself, can interact and interrelate with the material world.¹² Numbers are capable of having physical representation, or, better yet, numbers can serve as the ordering principles of material reality. The number two finds physical representation in the line, the number three in the triangle, and the number four in the tetrahedron.

10. See the brief summary offered by S. K. Heninger, Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1974), 71–85. Kalvesmaki (n.1) drives home the point that “Pythagoreanism” is the construction of neo-Pythagoreans, beginning with Nigidius Figulus (d. 45 BCE). Neither Pythagoras nor his immediate followers left any writings. For a more detailed study of the distinctive teachings of individual (neo-) Pythagoreans, see Dominic O’Meara, *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

11. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 985b.23–986a.3.

12. Aristotle distinguishes between Pythagorean number theory and that of Plato chiefly by saying that while Plato places number in the immaterial realm of the Forms, the Pythagoreans make no distinction between materiality and number (see *Metaphysics* 987b.28; 1080b.18). There is debate as to whether Aristotle’s presentation of the Pythagoreans on this point is accurate: Walter Burkhardt (*Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, trans. Edwin Minar [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972]) and Kalvesmaki (*Theology of Arithmetic*, 16 [n.1]) believe that it is; Eduard Zeller believes that it is not (*A History of Greek Philosophy: From the Earliest Period to the Time of Socrates*, trans. S. F. Alleyne [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881], 407–419). What can be said for sure is that the neo-Pythagoreans, perhaps due to syncretism with Platonism, are fully aware of the immaterial potential of numbers. Numbers can have material existence but they are not of themselves material. For example, Michael Psellus (*On Phys. Numb.* 4–8) distinguishes between intelligible, mathematical, and physical number.

For our purposes, we will focus on the Pythagorean understanding of the numbers One and Two. One is the Monad or Unity; it is not actually a number (because it cannot find a physical representation: a point has no material existence) but is instead the principle behind all numbers. For example, the anonymous *Life of Pythagoras* as preserved by Photius explains that the Monad is both prior to and source of everything else:

The Pythagoreans considered the Monad as the origin (ἀρχὴν) of all things just as a point is the beginning of a line, a line of a surface, and a surface of a solid, which constitutes a body. A point implies a preceding Monad, so that it is really the principle of bodies, and all of them arise from the Monad.¹³

The number Two, the Dyad, represents duality and the beginning of multiplicity. When the Monad passes from the realm of abstraction to the material realm it must become extended (because the point does not actually exist in space). This extension of the Monad makes it divisible: in this way the Monad begets the Dyad. The monad represents the unity of the conceptual world, whereas the Dyad presents the divisibility of the material world.

The Dyad is, according to the Pythagoreans, unlimited. However, this limitlessness does not have a strict connection to either a positive or negative moral connotation.¹⁴ The unlimited multiplicity of the Dyad can be both the beginning of strife and the possibility of order, that is, the relation of one thing to another. The Dyad, as the possibility of relation, produces all other numbers, i.e., everything else that exists.

13. *Life of Pythagoras* 7 (Henry Codex 249 439a.19–23): Ὅτι τὴν μονάδα πάντων ἀρχὴν ἔλεγον οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι, ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν σημεῖον ἀρχὴν ἔλεγον γραμμῆς, τὴν δὲ πιπέδου, τὸ δὲ τοῦ τριχῆ διαστατοῦ ἦτοί σώματος. Τοῦ δὲ σημείου προεπινοεῖται ἡ μονάς, ὥστε ἀρχὴ τῶν σωμάτων ἡ μονάς· ὥστε τὰ σώματα πάντα ἐκ τῆς μονάδος γεγένηται. Codex, page, and line numbers from René Henry, *Photius. Bibliothèque*, 8 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959–1977). Translation from *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library: An Anthology of Ancient Writings which Relate to Pythagoras and Pythagorean Philosophy*, trans. Kenneth Guthrie (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1987), 138. See also the account given by the second-century Platonist Theon of Smyra in *On Mathematics Useful for the Understanding of Plato* 66: “Unity is the principle of all things and the most dominant of all that is: all things emanate from it and it emanates from nothing. It is indivisible and it is everything in power. It is immutable and never departs from its own nature through multiplication ($1 \times 1 = 1$). Everything that is intelligible and not yet created exists in it; the nature of ideas, God himself, the soul, the beautiful and the good, and every intelligible essence, such as beauty itself, justice itself, equality itself, for we conceive each of these things as being one and as existing in itself.” Translation from *The Pythagorean Sourcebook*, 31.

14. This is unlike the Christian conception of God’s infinity or limitlessness, which has a profoundly positive moral value.

Augustine's Use of Pythagorean Numerology

The Pythagorean theory of the Monad and the Dyad enjoyed cultural currency in Augustine's North Africa and was often fused with other philosophical systems. Neo-Pythagoreans such as Numenius helped to extend Pythagorean number theory more deeply into Platonism, an extension that was taken up by Plotinus¹⁵ such that the Pythagorean conception of the Monad and Dyad is often called Plotinian. In *Confessions* (*conf.*) 4, Augustine recalls his own early attempt to explain, in his lost work *De pulchro et apto*, his Manichean dualism through the Pythagorean/Plotinian language of the Monad and the Dyad.¹⁶

Since in virtue I loved peace but in vice I hated discord, I noted that there was unity in the one and division in the other. The rational mind, the nature of truth, and the nature of the highest good seemed to me to be in that unity. I foolishly thought that in the division of irrational life there was some kind of substance and nature of the highest evil which was not only a substance but actual life, but nevertheless did not come from you, my God, from whom are all things. And not knowing what I was talking about, I called the first a monad, as if it were a mind without any sex and I called the second a dyad, like anger in deeds and lust in shameful acts.¹⁷

Augustine's articulation of Manichean dualism with Pythagorean language results in a materialist and therefore subordinationist first use of Pythagorean numerology. Augustine's Manichean use differs from pure Pythagorean numerology in two significant ways. First, Augustine posits an overly strict demarcation between immaterial and material. Second, he assigns moral values to this demarcation such that immaterial corresponds with the good and material with evil. For Augustine the Monad is immaterial and therefore good, whereas the Dyad is material and therefore evil. Strictly speaking, in the Pythagorean system both the Monad and the Dyad are abstract and immaterial. Although the Dyad can exist physically as the line (whereas the Monad cannot exist materially without extending into the

15. See, for example, *Ennead* 5.1.5.

16. For a discussion of Pythagorean influence on Augustine, see Aimé Solignac, "Doxographies et manuels dans la formation philosophique de saint Augustin," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 1 (1958): 113–148, esp. 129–137.

17. *Conf.* 4.24 (CCSL 27: 52.10–53.19): "Et cum in uirtute pacem amarem, in uitiositate autem odissem discordiam, in illa unitatem, in ista quandam diuisionem notabam, in que illa unitate mens rationalis et natura ueritatis ac summi boni mihi esse uidebatur, in ista uero diuisione inrationalis uitae nescio quam substantiam et naturam summi mali, quae non solum esset substantia, sed omnino uita esset et tamen abs te non esset, deus meus, ex quo sunt omnia, miser opinabar. Et illam monadem appellabam tamquam sine ullo sexu mentem, hanc uero dyadem, iram in facinoribus, libidinem in flagitiis, nesciens quid loquerer."

Dyad), nevertheless the Dyad as the number Two is also, like the Monad, a strictly intelligible, non-material reality. Furthermore, since the multiplicity inherent in the Dyad can be the source both of strife and relation, the Dyad itself is morally neutral.

Pythagorean numerology can be understood in a materialist way only when the “number” part of the numerology is lost. For Augustine, Monad and Dyad became titles that were tied to concepts—unity and division respectively—rather than numbers. Whereas Pythagorean numbers are intelligible and non-material realities before they ever extend into the physical realm, for Augustine, division is innately tied to substance. The Dyad is a material concept for Augustine because he has disconnected the title “Dyad” from the number Two and connected it instead to divisible substance.

When Augustine repudiates the materialism and subordinationism of Manichaeism, he realizes that this does not necessarily also require him to reject Pythagorean numerology. He recognizes that it was his use of Pythagorean numerology that was problematic, not the numerology itself. In fact, a greater attention to the numbers themselves is adequate protection from materialistic subordination.

Mus. is Augustine’s post-conversion return to Pythagorean numerology. In *mus.* 1, he speaks not of Monad and Dyad but of the numbers One and Two.

But here the second beginning is from the first, so that the first is from none, but indeed the second is from the first. For one and one are two, and so they are both beginnings in such a way that all numbers are really from One. But because they come about through combination and addition, and the origin of combination and division is properly attributed to the number Two, therefore we find that it is this first beginning from which (*a quo*), but this second beginning through which (*per quod*), all numbers come to be.¹⁸

Here in *mus.*, Augustine is pursuing the question of the creation of the world through the science of numbers. He is enough of a Pythagorean to understand the beginning of all numbers as the beginning of all things, but it is precisely the focus on numbers that allows him to pursue this question in the intelligible rather than material realm. The relationship of the numbers One and Two allows Augustine to articulate how all things can have only one beginning or source, and yet, at the same time, two beginnings.

18. *Mus.* 1.12.21 (PL 32: 1096.12–20): “nunc autem hoc alterum principium de illo primo est, ut illud a nullo sit, hoc uero ab illo: unum enim et unum duo sunt, et principia ita sunt ambo, ut omnes numeri quidem ab uno sint; sed quia per complicationem atque adiunctionem quamdam fiunt, origo autem complicationis et adiunctionis duali numero recte tribuitur. fit ut illud primum principium a quo numeri omnes; hoc autem alterum per quod numeri omnes, esse inueniantur.”

Although the Pythagorean numerology of *mus. 1* is rich in trinitarian implications, Augustine's explicit focus is on numbers, not the Trinity. However, as we shall see in Part III, when Augustine returns to a discussion of the numbers One and Two in *trin. 4*, he points the reader back to this earlier treatise on music. The implication is clear: Pythagorean numerology is still useful in a trinitarian discussion.

Part II: Augustine's Association of Christ with the Single in *De Trinitate 4*

The Anti-Homoian Polemical Context of the De Trinitate Books 1–5

The work of Michel Barnes has redefined the polemical context of the first five books of *trin.*¹⁹ Against the two separate scholarly trends of denying a polemical context to *trin.* and claiming that Augustine is arguing against Eunomius's Greek Anomean theology, Barnes convincingly demonstrates that Augustine is dialoguing with polemical partners from his own backyard, namely, Latin Homoian theologians.²⁰ Barnes shows that Augustine is actively engaged in undermining and restructuring the key terms of Homoian argumentation (such as "true God," *uerus deus*), Homoian interpretations of Scripture (such as Jn. 17:3 and 1 Jn. 5:20), and the Homoian subordination of the Son based on his visibility.²¹

19. According to Barnes, Augustine is arguing against "a third generation of anti-Nicene theology, and a second generation of Latin Homoian theology" ("Exegesis and Polemic in Augustine's *De Trinitate I*," *AugStud* 30 [1999]: 48). The most prominent of these Latin Homoians, in Augustine's sphere, was Palladius. See also Michel Barnes, "The Arians of Book V, and the Genre of *De Trinitate*," *JTS* 44 (1993): 185–194; "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400," *Modern Theology* 19:3 (2003): 329–355; "De Trinitate VI and VII: Augustine and the Limits of Nicene Orthodoxy," *AugStud* 38 (2007): 189–202.

20. There is now an entire trajectory of scholarship following Barnes in recognizing the anti-Homoian polemic of *trin.* For example, in his recent book on Augustine's trinitarian theology, Lewis Ayres begins his chapter on christology by saying: "An article published by Michel Barnes in 2003 ("The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity" [n. 19]) is the point of departure for my account," (*Augustine and the Trinity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], 143). Others in this trajectory include Kari Kloos ("Seeing the Invisible God: Augustine's Reconfiguration of Theophany Narrative Exegesis," *AugStud* 36:2 [2005]: 397–420; *Christ, Creation, and the Vision of God: Augustine's Transformation of Early Christian Theophany Interpretation* [Leiden; Boston: Brill Academic, 2010], 133–136) and Keith Johnson (*Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism: An Augustinian Assessment* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011], 58–64).

21. Kari Kloos, in "Seeing the Invisible God" (n. 20), follows Michel Barnes both in recognizing the importance of Homoian polemics in *trin.* and in framing those polemics in terms of the question of the visibility of the Son.

Augustine became aware of both the theological and political dangers of Homoianism even before his conversion. His time in Milan in the 380s coincided with the ascendancy of Homoian theology in that city, led by Palladius, who was directly refuted by Ambrose. Augustine came face to face with Homoianism as a result of the showdown between Ambrose and Justina, the Homoian mother of the Emperor. Justina required Milan to surrender two basilicas to the Homoians. Ambrose refused. Eventually, during Holy Week 386, imperial forces attempted to take Ambrose's basilica by force. Monica, Augustine's mother, joined Ambrose in resisting the Homoian imposition by barricading herself in the basilica.²² This experience in Milan led Augustine, throughout the rest of his career, to be very sensitive to the political and theological danger presented by the Homoians.

As Barnes has demonstrated, in the first four books of *trin.*, Augustine frames his understanding of human salvation as "seeing God" within his polemic against the Homoian subordinationist understanding of the Son.²³ The Homoian position is that the inferiority of the Son is proven by his visibility. Only the invisible God is the true God. In order to combat the Homoians, Augustine departs from the traditional Latin trinitarian theology—seen, for example, in Tertullian and Novatian—that argues that the Son is distinguished from the Father by the Son's visible nature.²⁴ Augustine agrees with the Homoian position that only the invisible God is the true God and so combats the subordinationism of the Homoians on a new front by arguing that the Son is no more visible than the Father. Augustine says that in the Incarnation, only the humanity of Christ is visible; the presence of Christ's invisible divinity can and should be believed, but this divinity is not seen and will not be seen until the end-time.²⁵ Although all humans since the Incarnation see

22. Augustine alludes to this event in *conf.* 9.7.15.

23. See Barnes, "The Visible Christ" (n. 19).

24. See, for example, Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14–15; Novatian, *De Fide* 31. See Kloos, "Seeing the Invisible God" (n. 20), 400–408, for presentations of this Latin tradition of the Son's visibility in the figures of Justin Martyr, Hilary, and Ambrose. See Barnes, "The Visible Christ" (n. 19), 336–342, for a description of the important role of Mt. 5:8 in shifting the Latin tradition away from regarding the Son as visible. Kloos and Barnes disagree on whether Hilary belongs with the older Latin tradition, which states that the Son is visible (Kloos, 404), or as the first of the new trajectory asserting the Son's invisibility (Barnes, 341).

25. Barnes, "The Visible Christ" (n.19), 335: "Is the Son, as divine the occasion of human faith? Augustine's answer to all these questions is *No*: the Son *is not* a revelation of the divine in any direct, available-to-the-senses, way; the Son *is not* divinity-insofar-as-it-may-be-perceived; the Son, as divine, *is not* the occasion of human faith (the Son, as human, is). The divinity of the Son is, until the eschaton, unseen and unseeable, although it can be symbolized or signified by some created artifact, just as the divinity of the Father and the Holy Spirit can be, and sometimes is."

the humanity of Christ, they do not see the Son of God. Against the Homoians, Augustine argues that both the Father and the Son possess true, invisible, divinity, and therefore what humans see in the Incarnation is not the Son's divinity but only his incarnate humanity.

*Vision-Centered Soteriology where "Single" Marks
Human Appropriation of Christ's Two Natures*

Augustine frames his answer to the soteriological side of the overarching question of *trin.* 4—why Christ was sent by the Father—within the Homoian interest in the category of vision and through a use of numerology that is loosely Pythagorean.²⁶ The Homoians assert that true divinity is invisible divinity and that since the Son is seen in the Incarnation, he does not have true divinity. Augustine agrees that true divinity is invisible divinity, so he argues in *trin.* that the divinity of the Son is *not* seen in the Incarnation. Within this polemical argument, Augustine outlines a vision-based soteriology that is centered on the numerological relationship of the single and the double. In this soteriology he associates the two natures of Christ with the single in *trin.* 4.4–6.

The logic of Augustine's soteriology presents the redemption of humanity as the work of the one Incarnation, which, however, is appropriated by humans in two steps: first, humans see the created humanity; later, at the eschaton, humans will be able to see the Son of God himself, that is, his divine nature.²⁷

He was seen as the one who was sent; but he was not seen as the one through whom all things were made . . . he offered the flesh which the Word was made in the fullness of time in order to be accepted by our faith; but he reserved the Word himself, through whom all things were made, for contemplation in eternity by the mind purged through faith.²⁸

26. Augustine's use of the relationship between the single and the double in *trin.* 4 is integrated into a larger schema of unity and multiplicity in which salvation is a reunification of what has become multiple and divided. See Isabelle Bochet, "The Hymn to the One in Augustine's *De Trinitate* IV," *AugStud* 38 (2007): 41–60 (esp. 48–49 on Plotinian and Porphyrian, i.e., Pythagorean, influence). This interest in unity and multiplicity reflects the Pythagorean distinction between the numbers One and Two: One is the number of unity and simplicity, whereas Two is the number of composition, which can turn either to relation or division.

27. See *trin.* 1.16–20 and 4.24–26.

28. *Trin.* 4.26 (CCSL 50: 195.35–37, 40–43): "Videbatur sicut missus *factus* erat; non uidebatur sicut *per eum omnia facta* erant. . . . carnem quod uerbum in plenitudine temporis factum erat suscipiendae nostrae fidei porrigebat; ipsum autem *uerbum per quod omnia facta* erant purgatae per fidem menti contemplandum in aeternitate seruabat."

Augustine correlates human redemption with knowledge of God and he identifies knowing God with seeing God.²⁹ Seeing the Word of God is the same thing as contemplating him. In this progressive christological eschatology, the two natures of Christ play a very important part in human redemption. The mechanism of salvation requires the presence of the divine, invisible nature within the human, visible nature in the person of Christ. The sight of Christ's humanity provides the opportunity for faith, and the sight of his divine nature is itself the content of redemption. Christ's two natures, which serve, respectively, as the means and the end of human redemption, allow humans to be redeemed.

Furthermore, Augustine correlates this movement in vision—from seeing the humanity of Christ to seeing his divinity—with the movement from faith to truth.³⁰ Human redemption is seeing God or, more particularly, seeing the truth of Christ's divinity, which is never seen in this life but exists only as the object of faith.³¹

Our faith will become truth when we come to that which is promised to us believers, and what we are promised is eternal life. . . . and truth has said: "now this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and him who you have sent, Jesus Christ." When our faith shall become truth by seeing, then eternity will hold our changed mortality.³²

What humans hold in faith now, namely, that the Son of God is working in and through the created humanity of Christ, they will know for truth when they finally see the Son of God in all his divine glory. Seeing God is knowing God; seeing the Son of God is seeing for the first time the truth of our faith, which itself is based

29. Barnes, "The Visible Christ" (n. 19), 343: "One of the distinctive features of Augustine's thought is the emphasis he places on the understanding that 'knowing' is a 'seeing', for while this understanding was certainly a philosophical commonplace Augustine makes it the foundation for much of his thought. To know is to see, either with the eyes of our corporeal senses, or with the eyes of mind in interior vision." William Babcock's dissertation, *The Christ of the Exchange: A Study in the Christology of Augustine's Ennarationes in Psalmos* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1971; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1972) also centers Augustine's christology within the categories of vision. However, for Babcock the humanity of Christ is a veil that hides his divinity. Therefore humans cannot see the divinity of Christ not primarily because the Son is invisible, but because his assumed humanity blocks our ability to see his divinity.

30. *Trin.* 4.24.

31. Barnes, "The Visible Christ" (n. 19), 342: "By the year 400 Augustine had come to understand that in this life we were incapable of a vision of God—that we were now incapable of direct knowledge of the truth. . . . Salvation came from faith—this is faith's 'utility.'"

32. *Trin.* 4.24 (CCSL 50: 192.26–34): "Fides nostra fiet ueritas cum ad id quod nobis credentibus promittitur uenerimus, promittitur autem nobis uita aeterna . . . dixit ergo ueritas: *Haec est autem uita aeterna ut cognoscant te unum uerum deum et quem misisti Iesum Christum*; cum fides nostra uidendo fiet ueritas, tunc mortalitatem nostram commutatam tenebit aeternitas."

upon our sight of Christ's humanity. Truth, like divinity, is not visible to humans until the eschaton.

Christ's human nature has a material and visible component, which his divine nature does not, that allows it to function as the single to humanity's double because it can act as both sacrament and example for humanity. In *trin.* 4.6, Augustine argues that it is specifically by being "clothed in mortal flesh" that Christ acts as a single to humanity's double, since "in that [flesh] alone he died and in that alone he rose again, and in that alone he harmonized with each part of us, since in that flesh he became the sacrament for the inner man and the example for the outer one."³³ It is not the person of Christ who serves as both sacrament and example but only his body, because both sacrament and example require visibility, and it is only the physicality of Christ's humanity that is visible to mortal humans.³⁴ Precisely because it is invisible, Christ's divinity cannot serve as either sacrament or example for humans.

The singleness of Christ in which Augustine is interested in *trin.* 4.4–6 is not the singleness of his person, but the singleness of his flesh or body. Augustine clarifies that though Christ's death and resurrection apply to the double death and resurrection of the human person that occur in body and soul, neither Christ's soul nor his divine nature dies and rises: Christ's death and resurrection are the death and resurrection only of his body (*corpus*) or his flesh (*caro*). Christ's soul cannot die and rise because the death of the soul is the death of sin and Christ is without sin.³⁵

The sinlessness of Christ's soul mandates that Christ's experience has only a single death and resurrection (in body), whereas all with sinful souls, that is all humans, have a double death and resurrection (in body and soul). However, it is not simply Christ's sinlessness that allows him to harmonize with and so save humanity. If a sinless soul were all that were required for the relationship of the single and the double to bring about human salvation, Mary would be as capable of saving as was her Son, for Augustine says, "When we are talking of sin, Mary

33. *Trin.* 4.6 (CCSL 50: 167.54–57): "sed indutus carne mortali et sola moriens, sola resurgens, ea sola nobis ad utrumque concinuit cum in ea fieret interioris hominis sacramentum, exterioris exemplum."

34. The best study on Augustine's conception of sacrament and example, especially as refers to *trin.* 4.6, is Basil Studer's "*Sacramentus et exemplum* chez saint Augustin," in *Recherches Augustiniennes* 10 (1975): 87–141. On this cf. also Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 140–159.

35. See *trin.* 4.6 (CCSL 50: 167.52–54): "Neque enim fuit peccator aut impius ut ei tamquam spiritu mortuo in interiore homine renouari opus esset et tamquam resipiscendo ad uitam iustitiae reuocari."

is the exception for of her because of the honor of the Lord I am willing to have absolutely no question whatever.”³⁶

Since Christ’s soul can neither die nor rise—and therefore cannot serve as sacrament or example for the death or resurrection of humans—it is in fact the body that accomplishes the whole work of the harmonizing single. Augustine reiterates several times that Christ attains this harmony of salvation exclusively through the physical—that is, fleshy or bodily—part of him.³⁷ Physicality and visibility are necessary for both sacraments and examples, and so “Christ’s body,” not his soul and not his divine nature, “in both things, that is, in both death and resurrection, was supplied to us as a kind of medicine, suitable for both the sacrament of the inner man and the example of the outer man.”³⁸ Christ’s human nature, particularly his body, serves as the single to humanity’s double.

In delineating the single of Christ in *trin.* 4.4–6 as the body of Christ’s human nature, not as his person, Augustine does not make the move that post-Chalcedonian readers expect. Augustine does not say that Christ is single with respect to his person (with the correlate being that he is double with respect to his nature). Even though Christ is double in the sense that he has two natures, in his relationship to humans he is single because humans have full, visible, access only to one side or one part of Christ at a time. The point is not that Christ is single with respect to person. The singleness of Christ’s person is important in that it provides a unity and identity to the human sequential viewing of Christ’s natures; nevertheless, what Augustine is labeling as “single” in *trin.* 4 is the two natures of Christ, precisely because they are appropriated sequentially and individually by humans. In this life humans see

36. *De natura et gratia liber unus* (nat. et. gr.) 36.42 (CSEL 60: 263.23–24): “Excepta itaque sancta uirgine maria, de qua propter honorem domini nullam prorsus, cum de peccatis agitur, haberi uolo quaestionem.”

37. In this section, Augustine uses body and flesh synonymously to refer to the single of Christ applied to humanity’s double. For “flesh” see *trin.* 4.6 (CCSL 50: 167.54–57): “sed indutus carne mortali et sola moriens, sola resurgens, ea sola nobis ad utrumque concinuit cum in ea fieret interioris hominis sacramentum, exterioris exemplum.”; *trin.* 4.6 (CCSL 50 168.84–85): “Iam uero ad exemplum mortis exterioris hominis nostri dominicae carnis mors pertinet.” For “body” see *trin.* 4.6 (CCSL 50: 169.107–112): “Una ergo mors nostri saluatoris duabus mortibus nostris saluti fuit, et una eius resurrectio duas nobis resurrectiones praestitit cum corpus eius in utraque re, id est et in morte et in resurrectione, et in sacramento interioris hominis nostri et exemplo exterioris medicinali quadam conuenientia ministratum est”; *trin.* 4.6 (CCSL 50: 168.75–77): “Resurrectio uero corporis domini ad sacramentum interioris resurrectionis nostrae pertinere ostenditur.”

38. *Trin.* 4.6 (CCSL 50: 169.110–112): “corpus eius in utraque re, id est et in morte et in resurrectione, et in sacramento interioris hominis nostri et exemplo exterioris medicinali quadam conuenientia ministratum est.”

only the humanity; they see the Son of Man but not the Son of God. Although the doubleness of Christ's natures is intrinsic to the mechanism of human salvation, since redemption is the successive viewing of these natures—either human or divine but never both—from the human perspective, in the framework of redemption, Christ is the single.

Augustine's emphasis on Christ as the single serves to undermine the Homoian association of the Son with visible and therefore inferior divinity. Augustine's anti-Homoian logic requires a recognition that Christ's natures (not his person) are each, separately, referents of the single. The single is able to be salvific to humanity because it works as both sacrament and example, functions that require visibility. Through his definition of Christ's harmonizing single as Christ's human nature, not his person, Augustine emphasizes that the divinity of Christ remains invisible to humans in this life. By using the analogy of the single and the double in a way that emphasizes the invisibility of Christ's divinity, while acknowledging the salvific visibility of his human nature, Augustine uses numerology in *trin.* to refute Homoian subordinationism.

Part III: The Son as the Double in the *De Musica*

Augustine Points the Reader of the De Trinitate 4 to the De Musica

Augustine uses the numerological analogy of the single and the double in *trin.* 4 in order to fulfill the purpose he set for himself: to answer the question of why Christ was sent by the Father. His numerological association of Christ with the single serves as a partial answer to this question and at the same time undermines the Latin Homoian move of subordinating the Son by connecting him to visibility. According to Augustine, Christ was sent so that his two natures, viewed singly by humans, might serve as the means and the end of human redemption. The answer to the other side of this question (which answers why *the Son*, out of all the trinitarian persons, was sent), is found not in *trin.* 4 but in *mus.* 1, and centers around associating the Son not with the single or the number One, but with the double, or the number Two.

Though it seems odd to argue that Augustine associates the Son with the number One in *trin.* 4 but the number Two in *mus.*, the trajectory of scholarship that ties *trin.* 4 with *mus.* forces us to recognize this seemingly contradictory association of numbers with the Son. I will argue here that another trajectory of scholarship, which understands *trin.* as definitively engaged in anti-Homoian polemic, provides a reason for Augustine's "odd" association of the Son with different numbers in the two different works.

When Augustine introduces the numerological analogy of the single and the double in Book 4 of *trin.*, he makes several statements that point to the connection between God, numbers, and music, and particularly to his *mus.*³⁹ Scholars such as Gerard Rémy⁴⁰ and Isabelle Bochet⁴¹ have already noticed the connection between *trin.* 4 and *mus.* First, Augustine's vocabulary when speaking of the single and the double is decidedly musical. When Augustine explains the relationship of the single to the double in general, he uses the word *consonantia*, translated as musical consonance or harmony, and for the relationship between Christ's single and humanity's double, he uses *concinere*, which literally means "to sing together."⁴² Second, Augustine defines the relationship of the single and the double as the Greek word ἁρμονία.⁴³ He envisions salvation as a harmonic reordering of what has become disharmonious. Third, after saying, "This is not the place for me to show the importance of the consonant proportion of the single to the double,"⁴⁴ he proceeds to give a short explanation of the relationship of the single to the double by way of music and the concord between different pitches. Augustine explains that the single and the double can be demonstrated to our ears through the medium of music.⁴⁵ He

39. For more modern treatments of this relationship between God, numbers, and music, see Catherine Pickstock, "Ascending Numbers: Augustine's *De musica* and the Western tradition," in *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (London and New York: Routledge), 185–215; Alfonso López Quintás, "La música, símbolo de la Trinidad: Consideraciones a propósito de una obra extraordinaria," *Pensamiento* 54 (1998): 443–447.

40. Gerard Rémy, *Le Christ Médiateur dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin* (Lille: Université de Lille III, 1979), 340–346. Rémy believes that *trin.* 4 is tied to *mus.* through the numerological analogy of the single and the double.

41. Bochet, "The Hymn to the One" (n. 26), 46–47. Bochet is so certain that this connection between *trin.* 4 and *mus.* is warranted that she provides no justification for her explanation of *trin.* 4 via the medium of *mus.* Bochet believes these two works are connected by their shared preoccupation with both harmony and numbers.

42. For *consonantia* and *concinencia*, see *trin.* 4.4 (CCSL 50: 164.19–21): "Haec enim congruentia (siue conuenientia uel concinentia uel consonantia commodius dicitur quod est unum ad duo)." For *concinere*, see *trin.* 4.5 (CCSL 50: 165.1–4): "Verum quod instat in praesentia quantum donat deus edisserendum est, quemadmodum simplum domini et saluatoris nostri iesu christi duplo nostro congruat et quodam modo concinat ad salutem."

43. *Trin.* 4.4 (CCSL 50: 164.19–24): "Haec enim congruentia (siue conuenientia uel concinentia uel consonantia commodius dicitur quod est unum ad duo), in omni compaginatione uel si melius dicitur coaptatione creaturae ualet plurimum. Hanc enim coaptationem, sicut mihi nunc occurrit, dicere uolui quam graeci ἁρμονίαν uocant."

44. *Trin.* 4.4 (CCSL 50: 164.24–25): "Neque nunc locus est ut ostendam quantum ualeat consonantia simpli ad duplum."

45. Augustine suggests that harmony of the single to the double can easily be shown with the use of a "properly adjusted monochord" (*trin.* 4.4).

concludes these introductory remarks on the single and the double by saying that a full explanation would “require a long lecture.”⁴⁶

The musical vocabulary, the centrality of the concept of harmony, and the allusion to a “long lecture” where the “importance of the consonant proportion of the single to the double” is explained in its entirety all point to a treatment on music, which Augustine accomplished in the *mus.* many years before Book 4 of *trin.*⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, outside of Book 4 of *trin.*, the largest treatment of the numerological relationship of the single and the double is found in *mus.* In *trin.* 4, Augustine consciously presents *mus.* as a handbook to be read alongside his explanation of the single and the double in *trin.*

The Number Two: Through which all Things are Made

Within *mus.*, Augustine offers an important treatment of the meaning of the numbers One and Two and their relationship to each other.⁴⁸ In *mus.* 1.12, he says that Three is the perfect number because it contains within itself a beginning, a middle, and an end.⁴⁹ The number One has only a beginning and the number Two likewise. We might be inclined to say that Two has a beginning and a middle, but Augustine argues that there is no such thing as a middle without an end nor an end without a middle.⁵⁰ Two is, like One, only a beginning (without a middle or an end), but it differs from the number One in that it is dependent on it. The beginning of Two is One (since one plus one is two), but the beginning of all other numbers is Two because Two is the origin of all addition and combination. Though all numbers

46. *Trin.* 4.4 (CCSL 50: 164.32–165.1): “Sed hoc ut demonstretur longo sermone opus est.”

47. The first five books of *mus.* are generally dated at 387–391, more than 25 years prior to the writing of Book 4 of *trin.* which occurred between 414 and 415. For a discussion of the dating of *mus.* Book 6, see Martin Jacobsson, *Aurelius Augustinus De musica liber VI: A Critical Edition with a Translation and an Introduction* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2002).

48. Whereas the language of *mus.* speaks of the numbers One and Two (*unum* and *duo*), and Book 4 *trin.* more commonly speaks of the single and the double (*simplum* and *duplum*), nevertheless, in *trin.* 4.4, Augustine equates the relationship between the single and the double with the relationship between the numbers One and Two: *trin.* 4.4: (CCSL 50: 164.19–25): “Haec enim congruentia (siue conuenientia uel concinentia uel consonantia commodius dicitur quod est unum ad duo), in omni compaginatione uel si melius dicitur coaptatione creaturae ualet plurimum. Hanc enim coaptationem, sicut mihi nunc occurrit, dicere uolui quam graeci ἀρμολύαον uocant. Neque nunc locus est ut ostendam quantum ualeat consonantia simpli ad duplum.”

49. *Mus.* 1.12.20 (PL 32: 1095.26–28): “Quare in ternario numero quamdam esse perfectionem uides, quia totus est: habet enim principium, medium et finem.”

50. *Mus.* 1.12.21 (PL 32: 1095.56–1096.4): “Quid ergo dicemus de duobus? Num possumus in eis intelligere principium et medium, cum medium esse non possit, nisi ubi finis est; aut principium et finem, cum ad finem nisi per medium non queat perueniri?”

originate from the number One (in that they can be broken down into units of one), as multiple numbers, they find their origin in the number Two (since Two is the first number that is a combination of numbers).⁵¹

Mus., being a treatment of music and rhythm, makes no explicit correlation between the numbers One and Two and the trinitarian persons. However, Augustine does summarize the role of the numbers One and Two by using language that recalls the trinitarian doxographical formula of Rom. 11:36: “For from him (*ex ipso*) and through him (*per ipsum*) and in him (*in ipso*) are all things.”⁵² This language, which designates the trinitarian persons through prepositional phrases (the Father is *ex quo*, the Son *per quem* and the Holy Spirit *in quo*), is very common in Augustine’s work.⁵³ In *mus.*, he says that One is the number from which (*a quo*) and Two the number through which (*per quod*) all other numbers exist.⁵⁴

In *trin.* 4, Augustine not only points the reader toward *mus.* but also directs the reader as to how to interpret what he finds in *mus.* Augustine legitimates and encourages a trinitarian reading of *mus.*’s treatment of the numbers One and Two and in particular the association of the Son with the number Two through his use of the same prepositional formula in *trin.* 4.3 (the section immediately prior to his introduction of the single and the double and his direction of the reader to *mus.*). In *trin.* 4.3, Augustine, following John 1:3, describes the Son as the one “through whom (*per ipsum*) all things were made.” By explicitly connecting the Son with the participial phrase *per quem/ipsum* immediately before directing the reader to *mus.*’s use of the same participial phrase, Augustine is requiring a recognition of the trinitarian implications of his use of Pythagorean numerology in *mus.* In light of this explicit connection of the Son with the participle *per* in *trin.* 4, we find that the numbers One and Two in *mus.* correspond, respectively, to the persons of the

51. *Mus.* 1.12.21 (PL 32: 1096.11–20). “Bene faceres, si ex aduerso sibi constituerentur duo principia: nunc autem hoc alterum principium de illo primo est, ut illud a nullo sit, hoc uero ab illo: unum enim et unum duo sunt, et principia ita sunt ambo, ut omnes numeri quidem ab uno sint; sed quia per complicationem atque adiunctionem quamdam fiunt, origo autem complicationis et adiunctionis duali numero recte tribuitur. fit ut illud primum principium a quo numeri omnes; hoc autem alterum per quod numeri omnes, esse inueniantur.”

52. Augustine’s quotation of this text reads (see, for example, *trin.* 1.12 [CCSL 50: 41.78]): “Quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso sunt omnia.”

53. Du Roy gives a list of 45 places in the Augustinian corpus where Augustine is clearly referring to the doxology of Rom. 11:36. See Appendix 5 (pp. 478–485) in Oliver du Roy, *L’Intelligence de la foi en la trinité selon saint Augustin: Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu’en 391* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966).

54. *Mus.* 1.12.21 (PL 32: 1096.18–20): “fit ut illud primum principium a quo numeri omnes; hoc autem alterum per quod numeri omnes, esse inueniantur.”

Father and the Son; the Father by whom and the Son through whom all things came to be; the Father who is the beginning and the Son who is also a beginning while owing his own beginning to the Father.⁵⁵

Mus., as one of the earliest works of Augustine's career, lacks the anti-Homoian polemical thrust found in *trin.* Likewise, though Augustine's Manichean use of Pythagorean numerology, as narrated in the *conf.*, enlightened him to the danger of a subordinationist use of Pythagorean numerology, he demonstrates his belief that Pythagorean numerology is not inherently subordinationist or materialistic by returning to it in *mus.* In addition, Augustine circumvents any danger of trinitarian heterodoxy in *mus.* by avoiding an explicit connection between the numbers One and Two and the Father and Son, respectively.

Taken alone, neither *mus.* nor *trin.* clearly advocates for a metaphysical application of Pythagorean numerology to the Trinity. *Mus.* and *trin.* work as two pieces in a puzzle. Only a correlation of the two leads to the association of the Son with the number Two. In requiring a detailed knowledge of multiple works of his corpus in order to arrive at the connection between the Son and the number Two, Augustine hopes to share this teaching with his followers but not his Homoian adversaries.

The Theological Dangers of a Correspondence between the Son and the Number Two

Augustine's association of the Son with the number Two, pointed to in *trin.* 4 and accomplished in *mus.* 1, is a risky theological move. He is very aware of the dangers of applying numbers to the Trinity. The first problem is that numbers never come alone; they bring math with them, in particular the functions of addition and subtraction. In *trin.* 6.9, Augustine clarifies that applying the term "Trinity" to God does not make him threefold, in other words, the product of addition.⁵⁶ Likewise, the Father is the beginning of the Son, the Father and the Son are the beginning of the Spirit, and the Father, Son, and Spirit, are the beginning of all creation. However, it is incorrect to infer that, since Father, Son, and Spirit each

55. Augustine most often uses Paul's doxology to refer to the Trinity as a whole. Nevertheless, in *trin.* Book 6 he is adamant that the three "persons are not to be taken as muddled together in the text *From whom are all things, through whom are all things, for whom are all things*" (*trin.* 6.12). Augustine does envision each trinitarian person as having a distinct role in creation. This distinct role does *not* mean that they do separate or different things but, rather, that even though the "working of the Father and of the Son is equal and indivisible . . . yet the Son's working comes from the Father" (*trin.* 2.3).

56. *Trin.* 6.9 (CCSL 50: 237.8–10): "Nec quoniam trinitas est ideo triplex putandus est; alioquin minor erit pater solus aut filius solus quam simul pater et filius."

acts as a beginning, there are three beginnings or three lords or three creators.⁵⁷ Augustine explicitly demands that when numbers are applied to the Trinity, they must always be used in a way that disregards the mathematical functions of addition and subtraction.

The second difficulty of associating numbers with the Trinity is that, even free from the functions of addition and subtraction, the number Two applied to the Son brings with it several theological implications that are unacceptable to orthodox trinitarian formulations. The numbers One and Two quickly transform into “First” and “Second,” which, if understood as referring to anything other than causality, introduces a subordinationist hierarchy into trinitarian discourse. Furthermore, the number Two in Pythagorean number theory is a composite number. An application of this property of compositeness to the Son is another way of introducing subordinationism into the Trinity: the composite Son is less than the simple Father.

The Latin Homoians had already begun applying numbers to the Trinity as a means of subordinating the Son.⁵⁸ The Latin Homoians take divine simplicity as their starting point and consistently repeat in their creedal formulas that God is *solum*, “alone.” They continue this thought by saying that the aloneness of God does not allow the addition of the Son as an equal divinity; if God is *solum*, the Son must be second. The Latin Homoians with whom Augustine would be familiar, for example Palladius⁵⁹ and his disciple Maximinus,⁶⁰ both repeat as a creedal formula the profession of Arius in his *Letter to Alexander of Alexandria*, namely, that the Father is the “one and alone true God . . . the alone unbegotten, the alone eternal

57. *Trin.* 5.15 (CCSL 50: 223.30–37): “Si ergo et quod datur principium habet eum a quo datur quia non aliunde accepit illud quod ab ipso procedit, fatendum est patrem et filium principium esse spiritus sancti, non duo principia, sed sicut pater et filius *unus deus* et ad creaturam relatiue unus creator et *unus dominus*, sic relatiue ad spiritum sanctum unum principium; ad creaturam uero pater et filius et spiritus sanctus unum principium sicut *unus creator* et *unus dominus*.”

58. Marius Victorinus, writing a generation earlier (359–361) against the “Arians,” tries to undermine the subordinationist power of divine simplicity by presenting the Son as (like the Father) simple. See, for example, *Aduersus Arium* 1.43 (CSEL 83.1: 133.23–27): “Ipsum ergo ueritatem esse substantia est; non enim aliud substantia, aliud ueritas; quod enim simplex, hoc ueritas: simplex deus, simplex filius; ueritas deus, ueritas filius, et deus et filius una ueritas.”

59. Augustine’s time in Milan in the 380s coincided with the controversy between Palladius and Ambrose.

60. Maximinus is a disciple of Palladius. Augustine enters into a direct polemical battle with Maximinus later, in 418. Augustine was also familiar with three Latin anti-Arian texts: Hilary’s *De Trinitate*, Victorinus’s *Aduersus Arianum*, and Ambrose’s *De Fide* (see Barnes, “The Arians of Book V” [n. 19], 1).

God.”⁶¹ Palladius continues Arius’s statement: “the alone wise God, the alone good God, the alone immortal, the alone invisible God.” The consistent repetition of *solum* (alone) is used by both Arius and the Latin Homoians to exclude the Son from true divinity. Furthermore, Maximinus also states that this solitary existence of the one, true, God (the Father) necessitates that we recognize the Son as a “second God” or “second in rank.”⁶²

The dangers of associating the Son with the number Two are heightened in a situation where the theological tendency is towards subordinationism. For this reason, Augustine avoids any direct association of the Son with the number Two, including the theological conclusion of the Son’s aptness for the Incarnation, in the anti-Homoian polemic of *trin.*

The aptness of the Son’s nature for the Incarnation is not a point that Augustine cares to emphasize within the first four books of *trin.*, concerned as he is to discourage the subordinationism of Latin Homoianism.⁶³ In these first four books, Augustine

61. Palladius, *Scholia ariana in concilium Aquileiense: Palladi Ratiarensis fragmenta* 339r (CCSL 87: 180.43–45): “credo in unum solum uerum d(eu)m auctorem omnium . . . solum ingenitum solum sempiternum d(eu)m solum sapientem d(eu)m solum d(eu)m bonum solum . . . inmorthalem solum inuisibilem d(eu)m solum unigeniti patrem.” Maximinus, *Scholia ariana in concilium Aquileiense: Maximini episcopi dissertatio contra Ambrosium* 304r (CCSL 87: 159.4–5): “credo in unum solum uerum d(eu)m, auctorem omnium solum ingenitum solum sempiternum . . . d(eu)m.” Arius, *Epistula ad Alexandrum Alexandrinum* 339v (H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, t. 3.1 [Berlin-Leipzig, 1934], 12–13).

62. Maximinus, *Scholia ariana in concilium Aquileiense: Maximini episcopi dissertatio contra Ambrosium* 304v (CCSL 87: 160.2–161.4): “Unum solum uerum d(eu)m patrem cr(ist)i secundum+ ipsius cr(ist)i magisterium satis aperte et nimis euidenter uolentibus et nolentibus predicare numquam esitauit sciens hunc solum uerum d(eu)m solum esse ingenitum+ sine principio sine fine senpiternum supernum sublimem superiorem auctorem altissimum omni excellentiae excelsiorem omni bonitati meliorem interminatum incapauilem inuisiuiem inmensum inmortalem incorruptiuiem incommunicauilem incorporalem inconpositum simplicem inmutauilem indiuisum inmoile(m) inindigentem inaccessiuiem inscissum inregnatum increatum infectum perfectu(m) in singularitate extantem inconparauiliter omnibus maiorem et meliorem. Secundum traditionem et auctoritatem diuinarum scribaturarum hunc secundum deum et auctorem omnium a patre et post patrem et propter patrem et ad gloriam patris esse numquam celauit.” Maximinus’s labeling of Christ as both “second in rank” and “second God” is similar to the logic of Eunomius’s Anomoian theology, wherein the laws of “order” require that whatever number or rank each trinitarian person has in order, they must also have in nature (*Apologia* 1, 25). According to Eunomius’s logic, if the Son is the number two in order (because he has a beginning) he will also be second, and so inferior, in nature.

63. The argument for the aptness of the Son for the Incarnation is present, though far from highlighted, in *trin.* itself. In *trin.* 2.9 (CCSL 50: 91.89–90), Augustine says, “sine ullo tempore in ipso uerbo erat quo tempore uerbum caro fieret et habitaret in nobis.” In other words, the Son, from the moment of his generation contained within himself his future as the incarnate one.

concludes that the Old Testament theophanies could have been accomplished by either the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, separately or together. In all cases the divinity remains invisible, and the only thing seen is a created substance.⁶⁴ With this conclusion he denies the Homoian claim that all these theophanies were accomplished by the Son who is the visible and thus inferior form of the divinity. Augustine's treatment of the Old Testament theophanies works toward a non-material, non-subordinationist understanding of the Son of God. Book 4 moves away from the Old Testament theophanies of the first three books into the question of the Incarnation. Augustine's goal is yet again to argue that there is nothing in the Incarnation that makes the Son inferior to the Father. For this reason he is adamant that even in the Incarnation, the divinity of Christ is immaterial and invisible. The danger of teaching that the Son is the member of the Trinity most apt for the Incarnation is that this aptness seems to posit an intrinsic connection between the Son and inferior materiality. Part of the Homoian definition of divinity is that it is perfectly simple and untarnished by composition.⁶⁵ According to Homoian logic, if the nature of the Son makes him apt for a non-divine existence as material and therefore composite, his nature is already inferior to the Father's.

The Theological Benefit: The Son as the Number Two Is the Trinitarian Person most Apt for the Incarnation

The theological benefits of connecting the Son with the number Two via Pythagorean numerology are great enough that Augustine directs the diligent readers among his followers to find this teaching in the interplay of *trin.* with *mus.* In associating the Son with the number Two through the interaction of *mus.* and *trin.* 4, despite all the dangers and heterodox implications, Augustine reveals his position on the usefulness of Pythagorean number theory in trinitarian discourse. Not only is Augustine convinced that Pythagorean numerology is not inherently subordinationist, but he also believes that Pythagorean number theory does have a place in trinitarian discourse; however, it must be used with caution and in polemic with the Latin Homoians it must not be used at all.

Pythagorean numerology does not provide the underlying framework of Augustine's trinitarian theology, which instead is based on his insistence on inseparable

64. *Trin.* 2.16 (CCSL 50: 101.50–52): “nos qui numquam apparuisse corporeis oculis deum nec patrem nec filium nec spiritum sanctum dicimus nisi per subiectam suae potestati corpoream creaturam.”

65. Maximus gives a laundry list of the characteristics of the Father's true divinity. Besides being invisible, true divinity is not composite but is simple and indivisible (Maximus, *Scholia ariana* 304v [CCSL 87: 160.2–30]). For the Latin text, see n.62 supra.

operations.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Augustine employs Pythagorean numerology because it clearly expresses an insight that is difficult to achieve according to the main lines of his trinitarian logic, namely, why the Son is the trinitarian member to become incarnate. Augustine's overarching emphasis on inseparable operations, where every work is shared by the three members of the Trinity, makes it difficult to assign distinctive characteristics to the divine persons.⁶⁷ The Pythagorean logic of Augustine's explanation of the numbers One and Two in *mus.* applied to the trinitarian relations shows that the Son is by his very nature the trinitarian person most apt for the Incarnation. Though Augustine certainly does not want to say that the divine nature of the Son is itself composite, as the number Two, the Son is the beginning of all things composite, and the Incarnation, as the combination of human and divine, is the most extreme and most perfect of all composite things.⁶⁸

66. Lewis Ayres, "'Remember that You Are Catholic' (*serm.* 52.2): Augustine on the Unity of the Triune God," *J ECS* 8 (2000): 40: "The closest we can come to identifying Augustine's 'point of departure' for describing the unity of God is the pro-Nicene doctrine of the inseparable operation of the three persons."

67. The first three books of *trin.* are Augustine's concerted effort to eliminate the distinctive characteristics that had been assigned to the Son both by the previous Latin tradition and the Latin Homoians. Augustine works to eliminate the connection between the Son and visibility. This connection had led to the widespread assumption that all Old Testament theophanies were accomplished by the Son. See Ayres, "'Remember that You Are Catholic'" (n. 66), for a study of Augustine's attempts to answer the question of why it was the Son who became incarnate via a pro-Nicene theology of inseparable operations.

68. Augustine does not shy away from speaking of the incarnate Christ as composite or partaking in combination. In *ep.* 137.3.11, dated around 411/212, i.e., a few years before *trin.* 4, he says that just as in the human person there is a combination of soul and body, in the person of Christ there is the combination of Godhead with man: (cf. CSEL 44: 110.8–11), "Ergo persona hominis mixtura est animae et corporis, persona autem christi mixtura est dei et hominis; cum enim uerbum dei permixtum est animae habenti corpus, simul et animam suscepit et corpus."

The recent New City Press translation of Augustine's letters (*St. Augustine: Letters 155–210*; trans. Roland J. Teske, S.J. [Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2004]), offers an unfortunate mistranslation in the section following what I just quoted. According to this translation, Augustine explicitly denies that the incarnate Christ is composite. Teske's translation runs as follows: "The whole was joined to him as the body is to the soul, except that God is not changed into a composite subject to change, as we see both body and soul are," (219). However the Latin of this passage (*Ep.* 137.3.12 [CSEL 44: 113.4–8]) reads, "ut hominem suscipere dignaretur et cum illo uniri quodam modo, ut ei sic coaptaretur homo totus, quem ad modum animae corpus excepta concretione mutabili, in quam non conuertitur deus et quam uidemus quod habeat et corpus et anima." Teske has translated *concretione mutabili* as "a composite subject to change." However, *concretione* conveys the idea of materiality, not, of itself, composition. What Augustine is excluding from Christ is not composition (which does not factor in this passage) but the mutability (*mutabilis*) that, in our experience, accompanies materiality (*concretio*). I offer this translation of the passage in question: "he has deigned to take up a man and to unite with him in such a way that the

Conclusion

In this article I have combined two different scholarly trajectories—the first understands *trin.* as defined by anti-Homoian polemics and the second connects *trin.* 4 with *mus.*—in order to demonstrate the role of Pythagorean numerology in Augustine’s trinitarian theology.

The anti-Homoian polemic of *trin.* militates against a trinitarian use of Pythagorean numerology and its theological implications—including the aptness of the Son for the Incarnation—within the confines of *trin.* itself. The association of the Son of God with the number Two might unintentionally encourage materialistic and subordinationist tendencies and is vulnerable to abuse by Homoian logic, which associates true divinity with simplicity, singleness, and indivisibility. Augustine avoids this danger in *trin.* through the irony of associating Christ and in particular his *two* natures with the single or the number One in his use of the analogy of the single and the double in *trin.* 4.4–6.

Nevertheless, Augustine’s allusions to *mus.* in *trin.* 4, which include both references to *mus.* and directions for a trinitarian reading of the numerology found therein, indicate that Augustine believes that Pythagorean numerology, although unable to be applied in an anti-Homoian polemical context, is necessary for a full trinitarian picture. Though, for fear of unintentionally encouraging heterodox thinking, Augustine is circumspect in *trin.*, his reference to *mus.* for a more in-depth treatment of the trinitarian meaning of the single and the double does show that there is validity in associating the Son with the number Two. In particular, this association shows that the Son of God is the trinitarian member who becomes incarnate because he, as the double and as the beginning of all composite nature, is the most apt to become a composite being. The Son even as the pre-Incarnate Word had within himself the origin of combination. The assumption of humanity was the ratification or the manifestation of his trinitarian identity.

Trin. is not a complete picture of Augustine’s trinitarian theology. Rather, it is a picture of trinitarian theology that is tailored to refute the subordinationism of Latin Homoianism. Augustine himself recognizes the limitations of *trin.* and, in

whole man was joined to him in the same way as the body to the soul with the exception of changeable materiality. God is not changed by changeable materiality but we see that both soul and body do have this changeable materiality.” In summary, Augustine does not explicitly deny that the incarnate Christ is composite in this passage (*Ep.* 137.3.12). Augustine never talks about composition in this passage. One section earlier, in *Ep.* 137.3.11, he does talk explicitly about composition, using the word *permiscere*, and vigorously attributes this quality to the incarnate Christ.

an effort to present a more complete trinitarian theology, refers the reader of *trin.* 4 to *mus.* Further study may well reveal whether Augustine's *trin.* contains similar directives to other areas of his corpus.