

ON THE WORDS
 ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΗΣ ΘΕΟΣ
 IN SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

THE purpose of this Dissertation is to investigate the true reading of the last verse in the Prologue to St John's Gospel (i 18). The result, I think it will be found, is to shew that *μονογενῆς θεός* should be accepted in place of the received reading *ὁ μονογενῆς υἱός*, alike on grounds of documentary evidence, of probabilities of transcription, and of intrinsic fitness. The reading of three primary Greek MSS. has been known only within the last half-century; so that naturally this verse has not shared with other disputed texts of high doctrinal interest either the advantages or the disadvantages of repeated controversial discussion; and thus it offers a rare opportunity for dispassionate study. The history of the phrase *μονογενῆς θεός* in early Greek theology, of which I have attempted to give a rude outline, has also an interest of its own.

The verse stands as follows in the better MSS.:

θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενῆς θεὸς ὁ ἄν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

The *Documentary Evidence* for *μονογενής θεός* consists of

Manuscripts: NBC*L 33 (N* omits the following *ὁ ὧν*; N^o and 33 prefix *ὁ*).

Versions: the Vulgate ('Peshito') or Revised Syriac; the margin of the Harclean Syriac; the Memphitic; and one of the two Æthiopic editions (the Roman, reprinted in Walton's Polyglott), in accordance with one of the two earlier British Museum MSS., a third of the MSS. yet examined having both readings¹. The article is prefixed in the Memphitic rendering. The Thebaic and the Gothic versions are not extant here.

ὁ μονογενής υἱός is found in

Manuscripts: AC^eEFGHKMSUVXTΔΑΠ and all known cursives except 33.

Versions: the Old Latin (q has *u. filius Dei*); the Vulgate Latin; the Old Syriac; the text of the Harclean Syriac; the Jerusalem Syriac Lectionary; the Armenian; and Mr Pell Platt's Æthiopic edition, in accordance with many MSS.

The *Patristic* evidence, though remarkable on any possible view, admits of various interpretation on some points. The grounds for the chief conclusions here stated will be found in a note at the end: it must suffice here to mark the limits of doubtfulness as clearly as the circumstances permit.

The reading *μονογενής θεός*, with or without *ὁ*, in direct quotations from St John or clear allusions to his text, is attested as follows. Two independent reports of VALENTINIAN doctrine furnished by Clement of Alexandria (*Exc. ex Theodoto*, p. 968 Pott.: a paraphrastic allusion a little later has *υἱός* by a natural combination, see p. 32), and Irenæus (p. 40 Mass.: corrupted in the inferior MSS. of both Epiphanius, who supplies the Greek, and the old translation, which in this *allusion* is faithfully literal). IRENÆUS himself at least once (256), and I strongly suspect two other times (255, 189): in all three places the original Greek is lost. CLEMENT himself twice (695, 956: in the second place, where the language is paraphrastic,

¹ It is impossible to convey a true impression of the Æthiopic evidence in few words. Some particulars will be found in Note C.

Clement has $\delta \mu. \nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, as in a still looser paraphrase at p. 102 he has $\delta \mu. \dots \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma \tau\eta\varsigma \pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\varsigma$). ORIGEN at least three times (on John i 7 [the commentary on i 18 itself is lost], iv. p. 89 Ru.; [on John i 19, p. 102, the reading of two MSS. only is recorded, and they vary suspiciously between $\delta \mu. \nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ and $\delta \mu. \nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$; in an indirect reference shortly afterwards $\tau\omicron\nu \mu.$ stands without a substantive;] on John xiii 23, p. 439; *c. Cels.* ii 71, p. 440, certainly in two MSS., apparently in all except two closely allied MSS., from which De la Rue introduced $\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma$). Eusebius twice, once as an alternative not preferred by himself (*De Eccl. Theol.* p. 67, $\delta \mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\gamma\eta\varsigma \nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma, \acute{\eta} \mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\gamma\eta\varsigma \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$), and in one other exceptional but seemingly unsuspecting place, p. 174. EPIPHANIUS three or four times (*Anchor.* p. 8 [the clear statement here confessedly leaves no doubt as to the quotation at p. 7, hopelessly mangled in the printed text]; *Panar.* 612, 817). BASIL at least twice (*De Sp. Sanct.* 15, 17, pp. 12, 14 Garn., quotation and statement confirming each other, as the Benedictine editor notes, adding that earlier editions, unsupported by any of his six MSS., read $\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma$; the quotation with $\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma$ at p. 23, which has no note, may therefore be only an unwary reprint). GREGORY OF NYSSA ten times, always somewhat allusively, as is his usual manner in citing Scripture, (*c. Eunom.* ii p. 432 [469 Migne]; 447 [493]; 478 [540]; iii 506 [581]; vi 605 [729]; viii 633 [772]; ix 653 [801]; x 681 [841]; *De vit. Mos.* 192 [i 336]; *Hom. xiii in Cant.* 663 [i 1045]: on the other hand $\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma$ is printed twice, *c. Eun.* ii 466 [521]; *Ep. ad Flav.* 648 [iii 1004]). The (Hœmœousian) Synod of Ancyra in 358 (in *Epiph. Pan.* 851 c: the allusion here is reasonably certain¹). DIDYMUS three times (*De Trin.* i 26 p. 76; ii 5, p. 140 [cf. i 15, p. 27]; on Ps. lxxvi 14, p. 597 Cord. [with absolute certainty by the context, though $\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma$ is printed]: an allusion on Ps. cix 3, p. 249 Cord. or 284 Mai, drops the substantive). CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA (*ad l.*

¹ The laxity of a reference to Prov. viii 25 ($\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\nu$ for $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\eta\mu\epsilon$) in the same sentence was unavoidable, and it was

guarded by ample previous exposition (852 BC, 853 B—D): here it would have been gratuitous and misleading.

p. 103 [without $\acute{\omicron}$] by Mr Pusey's best MS. and repeated references in the following comment), and in at least three other places (*Theos.* 137, [without $\acute{\omicron}$] 237; *Dial. quod Unus*, 768: twice (*Theos.* 365; *Adv. Nest.* 90¹) Aubert's text has *υἱός*, which will probably have to give way, as it has had to do in the commentary². To these might perhaps be added the emperor JULIAN (p. 333 Spanh.), for though the full quotation and one subsequent reference have *υἱός*, another has *θεός*, which the argument seems on the whole to require.

The patristic evidence for [$\acute{\omicron}$] *μονογενῆς υἱός* has next to be given. Irenæus twice, but only in the Latin translation (see above), and exactly in the Old Latin form, with *nisi* inserted before *unigenitus*, and once with *Dei* added to *Filius*, so that we seem to have the reading of the translator, as often, not of Irenæus. HIPPOLYTUS (c. *Noetum* 5) without $\acute{\omicron}$: all depends on Fabricius's editing of a modern copy of a single Vatican MS., and the context is neutral. AN EPISTLE from certain bishops at ANTIOCH (260—270 A.D.) to Paul of Samosata (Routh, *R. S.* iii 297), again dependent on a single MS., unexamined for some generations, and with the detached phrase *τὸν μονογενῆ υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ θεόν* occurring not long before. The Latin version of the "ACTS" of the disputation between ARCHELAUS and Mani, c. 32, where again the inserted *nisi* shews the impossibility of deciding whether author or translator is responsible. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA six times, *De Eccl. Theol.* p. 67 (with *θεός* as an alternative, see above), 86, 92, 142; in *Ps.* lxxiv. p. 440 Mont.; in *Es.* vi. p. 374. EU-

¹ In this case the text is also Pusey's (p. 170); but it rests on a single MS. of the fifteenth century: it is followed in a few lines by *δ γε μὴν ἐν κόλπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατὴρ μονογενῆς θεὸς λόγος*.

² In the 'Dialogues' of an unknown CÆSARIUS (*Inter.* 4, post Greg. Naz. iv 864 Migne), probably of the fifth if not a later century, the context implies *θεός*, though *υἱός* is printed. The ap-

parent conflict of text and context has been lately pointed out by Prof. Abbot, who still regards the reading as only doubtful. The possibility of reconciling with the actual language an inferential argument from John i 18 containing *υἱός* seems to me infinitesimal: but I am content to leave Cæsarius in a note.

STATHIUS, *De Engastr.* p. 387 All. ALEXANDER of Alexandria, *Ep. ad Alex.* in Theodoret, *H. E.* i 3; but with the detached phrase τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ on the next page. ATHANASIUS seven times (*Ep. de Decr. Nic.* 13, 21; *Or. c. Ar.* ii 62; iv 16, 19, 20, 26). GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, *Orat.* xxix 17. Basil of Cæsarea, *Ep.* 234, p. 358, besides one of the three places in the *De Spiritu Sancto* already mentioned, where at least one Moscow MS. has θεός: but the evidence adduced above casts doubt on both places. Gregory of Nyssa twice (see p. 3); but the reading is most suspicious. TITUS OF BOSTRA (*adv. Man.* p. 85 Lag.: but p. 93 ὁ μ. υἱὸς θεός). THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA (*ad l. bis* in Mai, *N. P. B.* vii 397 f.). CHRYSOSTOM *ad l.*, and later writers generally. On Julian see p. 4.

It is unsatisfactory that so much of the patristic testimony remains uncertain in the present state of knowledge; but such is the fact. Much of the uncertainty, though not all, will doubtless disappear when the Fathers have been carefully edited. In familiar passages scribes, editors, and translators vie with each other in assimilating biblical quotations to the texts current among themselves; and from the nature of the case the process is always unfavourable to ancient readings, whether true or false, which went out of use comparatively early. It would therefore be absurd to treat the uncertainty as equally favourable to both readings. Where we have a Greek original, without various reading noted, and without contradictory context, υἱός has a right to claim the authority provisionally, in spite of private suspicions: but it would be unreasonable to concede to υἱός any appreciable part in Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Didymus, or Cyril—I ought to add, in Irenæus or Basil—notwithstanding the variations already mentioned. Serious doubt must also rest on an isolated υἱός in a neutral context, when, as in the case of the Epistles of the Antioch bishops and of Alexander, μονογενῆς θεός is found at no great distance, though without any obvious reference to John i 18: the doubt is not removed by the fact that one or