

# **AGAINST THE SPIRIT-FIGHTERS (PNEUMATOMACHIANS) OR THE HOLY SPIRIT AS GOD IN CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE (AD 55-AD 60)**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Thou the Father who is without beginning are holy, thou co-beginningless Son, and thou divine Spirit:  
Enlighten (each of ye) us with faith **who worship you** (Φώτισον ἡμᾶς πίστει **σοι λατρεύοντας**)  
and snatch us out of the eternal fire.<sup>1</sup>

## **INTRODUCTION**

This study first points out probable error in modern-day Scripture translations no matter a person's church affiliation. Philippians 3:3 has been mistranslated by most English Bibles for hundreds of years and demands today a correct reading of the text and begs a plausible hypothesis why said translations are so bad. Several passages of Scripture explicitly identify the Holy Spirit to be divine and worshipped in the New Testament (e.g., Romans 1:7-9). The Spirit is a hypostasis enjoying explicitly some of the same attributes as God the Father and Jesus the Son, making the Holy Spirit a clear example of a third divine being in texts as early as AD 55 (Philippians 3:3).<sup>2</sup> These facts will be attested as early as St. Athanasius in the East and St. Ambrose in the West but are strangely not of interest to contemporary interpreters of the Bible into English. The conclusion of this study explains how and why contemporary Biblicists lack interest in the divinity of the Spirit.

In order to confront these questions, this study will underline errors among the first English mistranslations of St. Paul's overt commitment to the Holy Spirit to be someone receiving divine worship. Authoritative English translations of the Bible (no matter the denomination) in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries first solidified a custom of imitating poor Latin translations of the Greek Bible. Thereby, they ignore the *Textus receptus*'s Greek (used for the King James Version AD 1611),<sup>3</sup> and the Byzantine textform (used in Byzantium),<sup>4</sup> and even today's eclectic critical Greek text of Philippians 3:3 (e.g., Nestle-Aland). Today, few translators are concerned that they have distorted the reading of Philippians 3:3, likely due to fads and fashions of Biblical printing that reward

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\*\*\*Our thanks to Dr. James Snapp and Sam Shamoun for their suggested improvements to this study. I thank Dr. John Demetracopoulos for marshalling a number of arguments to challenge my ideas that, therefore, lead to improvements on the philological arguments made in this text (I have mentioned his main alternative explanation in footnote 5 below).

<sup>1</sup> R.P.J. Goar (ed.), *Ἐὐχολόγιον sive rituale graecorum complectens ritus et ordines divinae liturgiae* (Venice: Typographia Bartholomaei Javarina, 1730), chapter 23, section 1.

<sup>2</sup> Compare 2 Corinthians 3:6 ("the Spirit gives-life") to John 15:26, where the Spirit is emphasized as "He" or a masculine entity. See Acts 8:29 (for one example) of the Spirit speaking by himself. See John 6:63, where the Spirit has the title "life-giver" uniquely reserved to God himself in the LXX (2 Kings 5:7; Ezra-Nehemiah 9:9, 19:6; Psalm 70:20; Ecclesiastes 7:12; Job 36:6). Compare the aforementioned life-giver Spirit to Romans 8:10-11.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., the Stephanus versions of the Greek New Testament (e.g., 1550).

<sup>4</sup> See Maurice Robinson and William Pierpoint (ed.), *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform* (Southborough MA: Hilton Book Publishing, 2005), 473.

translators for being sensitive to well-known phrases from the past (if tolerably accurate) but scholars are also encouraged to project primitive theology onto St. Paul and thus mistranslate his plain meaning according all the possible Greek readings in favor of what is equivalent to a scribal corruption of the authentic text (insofar as it has been reconstructed). Whether a translation tries to prioritize verbatim formal equivalency (e.g., KJV) or free translation (e.g., Good News Bible) of Philippians 3:3, early-modern editions remained enslaved to the Latin Vulgate translation (as will be shown below), while contemporary editions are nowadays plausibly victims of theological pressures and prejudices of translators who fail to correct this passage. This article challenges step-by-step the printing industry's neutralization of the Holy Spirit's divinity, as if only a post-Biblical concept (Is it a conspiracy?). In reality, early Christians likely professed many different theologies of the Holy Spirit so that so-called proto-orthodox held for a divine Spirit (along with a divine Son) and they ultimately won over their proto-heterodox rivals, even if official orthodoxy was only formally decided by a juridical body allied with a civil executive power to make orthodoxy stick beginning in AD 381 (that is, the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople I).

## 1. PHILIPPIANS 3:3

This ancient prayer, above, from Byzantine Late Antiquity not only invokes the divine Spirit but provides the model for how to offer worship or “*latreia*” to the Spirit (and Father and Son) grammatically! The statement: “I give *latreia*” or “I worship” or “*latreuô*,” is followed by the **dative case** in Greek for the thing “to which” I give due worship. When it comes to worship, the **dative** is simply the way to express worshipping the object of your service in Greek (I have found no evidence of the accusative, nor of the genitive). This brings about a problem with modern-day Bibles (ninety-nine percent of the time) that is very weird! The translators of the Bible have access to the same grammar books and dictionaries that you and I do (even obscurer and better ones!). So, it is surprising to see that so few translations are concerned about prior criticisms that the KJV and Vulgate do not get St. Paul's words correctly in Philippians 3:3.<sup>5</sup>

Look up “*λατρεύω*” in the Liddell-Scott lexicon/dictionary (2006).<sup>6</sup> Importantly, why does the verb take the **dative (to/for ‘x’)**? Answer: There is an unspoken direct object: *latreuô* + **dative** = **to**

<sup>5</sup> I have consulted about ten commentaries on Philippians 3:3, none of the New Testament scholars address the grammar explicitly of Philippians 3:3, and all ignore giving an account of how to understand the syntax here. I thank Dr. John Demetracopoulos (Patras) for providing the strongest (and only) counterargument to my thesis, which is to argue here for “the dative of manner.” The probability of this, as Dr. Demetracopoulos remark, depends on its use and testimony in both Jewish-Greek, LXX, and NT writings (among others). More remotely, it must be shown that this is at least a viable option in Koine Greek and, less immediately circumstantial, Attic. Wherefore, I acknowledge that I argue for a position and, in matters of grammar, there may always the possibility of an alternative explanation.

<sup>6</sup> There are three definitions (of which only definition no. 3 makes sense to all translators for Philippians 3:3):

(1.) work for hire or pay, Sol. 13.48: to be in servitude, serve, X.Cyr.3.1.36; *παρά τινι* Apollod.2.6.3.

(2.) *λατρεύω τινί* to be subject or enslaved to, S.Tr.35, etc.: c. acc. pers., serve, E.IT1115 (lyr.), f.1. in Id.El.131: metaph., *λατρεύω πέτρα*, of Prometheus, A.Pr.968; *μόχθοις λατρεύων τοῖς ὑπερτάτοις* βροτῶν S.OC105; *λατρεύω νόμοις* obey, X.Ages.7.2; *λατρεύω καιρῶ*, = Lat. *temporibus inservire*, Ps.-Phoc.121; *τῷ κάλλει λατρεύω* to be devoted to . . . , Isoc.10.57; *λατρεύω ἡδονῇ* Luc.Nigr.15.

(3.) *serve the gods* with prayers and sacrifices, *λατρεύω Φοῖβῳ* E.Ion152 (lyr.): c. acc. cogn., *πόνον λατρεύω τινί* render due service, ib.129 (lyr.); *πόνον . . . τόνδ’ ἐλάτρευσα θεῶ* IG2.1378.

x. So, I render + to x or I serve + to x. So, Philippians 3:3 could also be read (hypothetically) “*pneumati theou latreuontes*”; the construct should obviously mean: We-rendering-due + to the Spirit + of God.

Contrariwise, I think that the Old Latin Bible (around AD 250) and Pseudo-Clement of Rome in Greek (around AD 250) are the best candidates for influencing the history of Christians’ distorted reception of this text with an alternative idea: “Worshipping the Lord/God **in** the Spirit of God.” In the region of Syria around 250 AD, an author called Pseudo-Clement witnessed this reading: “**en pneumati**,” and then put in the dative “The Lord/God”: “She is worshipping (*latreuouosa*) without ceasing and immovably the Lord (*tôi kyriôi*) **in** the Spirit (**en pneumati**) of God (*theou*).”<sup>7</sup> Likewise, at about the same time, a similar reading of Philippians 3:3 is followed in the (majority text of the) Old Latin (around AD 250): “we serve God **by** the Spirit” (*spiritu*).<sup>8</sup> The reading of Pseudo-Clement (not missing the word “God”) is doubtfully related to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century *Papyrus number 46* [I supply my translation in the brackets] ~~missing God~~:

[*Papyrus 46* Philippians chapter 3:]

verse 3 [for we:] **ημεις** γαρ [are circumcision:] εσμεν η περιτομη [who:] οι [in Spirit:] **εν** πνευματι  
[“of God” is missing!] [are worshipping:] **λατρευοντες**<sup>9</sup>

Significantly, the modern versions of Philippians 3:3 in *today’s* English translations, rather than translating the passages according to the best witnesses, follow for some reason the erroneous readings of the Old Latin (whose reading is different from *Papyrus number 46*). Like many (erroneous) Old Latin, Vulgate, and even (rare) Greek variants, the Semi-Arian Eusebius (around 330s) singularly adopted a reading to *Papyrus 46*, possibly signaling both of their corrections to the original text motivated by what is called a low Christology (view of Jesus) and, by extension, a low pneumatology (view of the Holy Spirit): “For we are in circumcision, **who are worshipping in(!)** God’s spirit (*hoi en pneumati Theou latreuontes*), and not persuaded by the flesh.”<sup>10</sup> Eusebius opens up the possibility that his alternative reading (as inauthentic) with a preposition “**in**” may highlight a “low Christology” or proto-Arian reading of St. Paul in some early manuscripts versus the originally high Christology and high Pneumatology of the Apostle Paul. *Papyrus 46*, by also omitting the word “God,” perfectly avoids any implications that the Spirit could be divine. The modern translator, by and large, wants us to read into St. Paul’s passage a hopelessly complex divvying up of a simple phrase in the line of Eusebius’s and *Papyrus 46*’s addition of “**in**”:

[Incorrect English with its projected commas added to the Greek text to reflect its weird reading:]

<sup>7</sup> F. Diekamp and F.X. Funk (ed.), *Epistula de virginitate*, in *Patres apostolici 2*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Laupp, 1913), Book 1, chapter 7, section 2. These seems to me to be an allusion only.

<sup>8</sup> Herman Beuron (ed.), *Ad Philippenses*, *Vetus Latina: Die Resten der altlateinischen Bibel* 11, (Freiberg: Herder, 1949), 181. The variant (in the dative) “Spirit” (*spiritui*) is also attested in some important texts and detailed in the apparatus.

<sup>9</sup> P. W. Comfort & D. P. Barrett (eds.), *The text of the earliest New Testament Greek manuscripts* (Philippians 3:3) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius, *Commentarium in Psalmos* (*Patrologia Graeca* 23:877).

For **we** are in the circumcision, **we**, by God’s **Spirit**, **are worshipping**, and are proud **in** Christ Jesus, and not **in** flesh (are we) persuaded (Philippians 3:3)

[Incorrect Greek with projected commas added to the Greek text to reflect an implausible reading:]

*Hêmeis gar esmen hê peritomê, hoi, pneumatî theôu, latreuontes, kai kauchômenoi **en** Christôi Iêsou, kai ouk **en** sarki pepoithotes* (Philippians 3:3)

This English interpretation with all its crazy commas lacks the virtue of parsimony. The ancient *Papyrus 46* copyist was better at changing the authentic text –if Paul had wanted to write something that makes sense with “**in Spirit**” (as modern translators project psychologically), then St. Paul should have written thus:

[Erroneous correction of the text by Greek copyist of *Papyrus 46*:]

**We**, **\*in\*** God’s **Spirit**, **are worshipping**, and are proud **in** Christ Jesus, and not **in** the flesh (Philippians 3:3)

*hoi, \*en\* pneumatî theôu, latreuontes, kai kauchômenoi **en** Christôi Iêsou, kai ouk **en** sarki* (Philippians 3:3)

But the errant copyist’s version in *Papyrus 46* was never embraced by the ancient or Golden Age Fathers, who witness only the variant in line with the Old Latin testimony. Neither does the Byzantine majority text (leading to the Greek text for KJV), nor even the modern (eclectic) critical edition (the best texts in Greek!) acknowledge the significance of poor reading in *Papyrus 46*. The 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> century *Papyrus 46* copyist might be conjectured to reject a high-Spirit-theology in preference to a harmonization that omits the word “God” and adds the very pretty three-part phrase: “**in...in...in...**”.<sup>11</sup> So, why do modern versions wrongly say “**by/in the Spirit**” (Philippians 3:3) if “**Spirit**” is not an instrumental dative (unless someone shall propose the dative of manner)?<sup>12</sup>

Before answering this question, a theological objector to me might try to rebut me, favoring a modern-English translator: “This high pneumatology (view of the Spirit) is too advanced and is without supporting context. How does worshipping the Holy Spirit even make sense here?” This hypothetical objection is neutered by a foregoing verse of St. Paul in Philippians 2:1: “If then there is any encouragement **in** Christ, any consolation **from** love, any **Spirit’s participation** (*koinônia pneumatos*), any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete.” From Philippians 2:1-3:2 much of the vocabulary and ideas are repeated in anticipation of Philippians 3:3. The foregoing verses are in direct anticipation of Philippians 3:3. So, why does St. Paul add: “**worshipping**

<sup>11</sup> A harmonization with John 4:23: “**worshipping the Spirit** in truth,” without mention of “God” might be here.

<sup>12</sup> The difficulty here, from what I can see, lies in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (search engine). I find only rare examples in ancient Greek literature of the verb “*latreuô*” up to the 1<sup>st</sup> century, where it exists absolutely without any possible noun governed by “*latreuô*” (neither helping nor hurting my case). Otherwise, Philippians 3:3 and Luke 2:47 would be the first 2 alleged instances in the history of the language where a dative next to a form of *latreuô* does not indicate a noun governed by the verb. This novelty of interpretation or linguistic change (only attested from AD 55-AD 70) in two isolated cases, requires some argument how a normal grammatical construct left unchanged elsewhere from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC until the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD does not for some reason apply in these two cases.

(God’s) **Spirit**”? In answer, I think that it is because St. Paul wants to explain his innovative Platonic-sounding phrase “**participate Spirit**” (Philippians 2:1); so that we don’t think Platonically or Stoically about participation in the divinity.<sup>13</sup> He clarifies that “**participation**” = “**worship**” just as our communion with Christ Jesus. Both phrases (2:1/3:3) use a verb that does not include a preposition in its construct. Both phrases include a verb that doesn’t take the accusative,<sup>14</sup> and both verbs manifest a phrase where the Spirit lacks the neuter article “the (*to*)” before the neuter word **Spirit** (*pneuma*). The effect is that we find out in Philippians 3:3 more about being “**in** Christ” and also more about St. Paul’s thoughts regarding **the Spirit’s communion, whom we worship** (thus linking God’s **Spirit’s communion** with God’s **Spirit’s worship**).

If we investigate more specifically the Greek *participle*: *latreuontes* (Philippians 3:3), then we only find relevant examples of its use in Jewish works (although the *verbal* form is all over Greek literature) prior to St. Paul.<sup>15</sup> In Jewish examples, prior to St. Paul’s usage, I have found one instance in the Septuagint (= LXX) and two instances in the *Apocalypse of Enoch* of *latreuont(es)*, which is always followed by **the object of worship in the dative** (see LXX Daniel 7:27; *Apocalypse of Enoch* 10:21, 99:7)

As such, it is no surprise that St. Athanasius (around AD 360) uses Philippians 3:3 in his list of proof-texts for the divinity of the Holy Spirit in his famous letters to Serapion (see the citation at the **CONCLUSIONS**). This is enough to understand that Philippians 3:3 is considered a foil to fighters-against-the-Spirit (pneumatomachians), as they existed in upper Egypt in the 360s. However, by the 370s (around maybe AD 378), St. Ambrose of Milan attests to the authentic reading of Philippians 3:3 in both the Greek manuscripts and Old Latin manuscripts in Italy:

“**We worship the Spirit**” [Philippians 3:3]. But if some of the Latin codices compete in variants, then untrustworthy persons (*perfidii*) have falsified some of them. Should one inspect the Greek codices, one also might notice that there is written: “*hoi Pneumati Theou latreuontes* [we are God’s **Spirit worshipping**],” which Latin codex is translated: “*qui Spiritui Dei servimus*.” Therefore, since the same Apostle asserts that what is necessary to worship belongs to the Spirit, which is not to a creature, but claims what is to be worshipped to the creator. Evidently, he utterly showed, too, the Holy Spirit to be creator, and to be venerated in the midst of the honor of the eternal divinity, since it was written: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and **him alone** (*solo ipso*) shall **you worship** (*servies/latreuseis*)” (Matthew 4:10).<sup>16</sup>

St. Ambrose of Milan’s Anti-Arian, *On the Holy Spirit*, attests the authentic reading known to him as a foil to Arius: “For we are circumcision, **who worship the Spirit** of God” (*qui Spiritui Dei servimus*). His disciple, St. Augustine of Hippo (died AD 430), later explicitly attests other Latin

<sup>13</sup> The Platonists and the Stoics of the first century use this language, of which the latter is most likely influential on St. Paul, whose academy at Tarsus was founded by an eclectic Stoic Athenodorus of Tarsus.

<sup>14</sup> The verb: “*koinônô* + genitive” is not used here, but *koinonia* + genitive is simply an alternative expression with the exact idea only device of identifying an agent (I, you, etc.).

<sup>15</sup> This is excepting one inconclusive phrase in Dionysius of Halicarnassus about a century prior to St. Paul –who often coincides with St. Paul due to their proximity of time, place, and rhetorical training. Dionysius has no noun near “worship” and is therefore using the word absolutely, not in a construct. See Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, Book 7, chapter 9, section 3.

<sup>16</sup> Ambrose of Milan, *On the Holy Spirit*, book II, 5.46-47.

variations as corruptions in the manuscripts known to him in Africa, where he prefers the Latin readings in line with the best and oldest Greek manuscripts!<sup>17</sup> St. Augustine (after AD 410) knows the correct readings in two of his works. First, there is *Against Two Epistles of Pelagius*: “We who (serve) the Spirit, [who is] God (*qui Spiritui Deo*) or we serve the Spirit of God (*vel, Spiritui Dei servimus*).” Next in St. Augustine’s: *On the Trinity*: “We are circumcision, worshipping the Spirit of God (*nos [...] Spiritui Dei servientes*).” This proves that the patristic tradition of St. Ambrose (with impeccable Greek) and St. Augustine (whose Greek is tolerable, if imperfect,) each support our translations from Antiquity in Italy and North Africa, in Latin, and by comparing their variants to Greek witnesses.

St. Jerome never physically corrected, nor edited, Philippians (for he stopped before finishing the Gospel of St. John),<sup>18</sup> so we simply have a slightly corrected so-called Vulgate, as accomplished by anonymous editors. Any significant comment or interpretation by St. Jerome is not known to me, for he did not personally correct Philippians in the Vulgate, which reads thus: “For we (*Nos*) are circumcision, who serve (*qui servimus* [*to serve takes dative like Greek*]) God (*Deo*<sup>[dative]</sup>) **by** the Spirit (*Spiritu* <sup>[ablative]</sup>).” This is not due to St. Jerome. However, it is not implausible that St. Jerome would have been familiar with this corrupted Latin reading, since this is the likely Greek reading as found in his Latin translation of Philippians 3:3 from Didymus the Blind’s Greek *On the Trinity* (*Patrologia Latina* 23:157): “We are circumcision, who, **by** the Spirit, are serving the Lord (*Nos [...]qui, Spiritu, Domino servientes sumus*).”

The most eloquent Greek tongue and greatest Scriptural commentator of Late Antiquity, St. John Chrysostom (AD 390s), is a questionable witness for proving the divinity of the Spirit like the Vulgate, due to no fault of his own, but due to the fact that he possessed a defective reading of Philippians 3:3 similar to the Vulgate, which he testifies to four times in his commentary on the Philippians (*Patrologia Graeca* 59:92): “And again: ‘..., **by** the Spirit, are we worshipping God (..., *Pneumati, Theōi latreuontes*)” (See also *Patrologia Graeca* 62:255, 257, II. 9 & 22).<sup>19</sup>

Next, Theodoret (around AD 432) knows both the authentic version and Syrian witness of St. John Chrysostom’s reading, which makes us suspect that the corruption in Syria is possibly responsible for the poor reading in some Latin texts leading to the Greek instrumental-dative-Spirit to become the Latin ablative-Spirit, for the Latin exemplar might be thought to have originated in the environs of Syria where three similarly corrupted readings: (1.) Pseudo-Clement, (2.) St. John Chrysostom, and (3.) Blessed Theodoret (all diverse from the Greek reading from *Papyrus no. 46*). In line with the Old Latin and Vulgate that matches these corrupt readings, the oldest and typical English translations retain a similar mistranslation: “**in** the Spirit” and “**by** the Spirit.” This is clearly wrong but at least the Latin errors were not culpable (and the early Englishmen were –to a

<sup>17</sup> See the Old Latin of Philippians 3:3 with the testimony of St. Ambrose at footnote at v.3 (the testimony of St. Augustine follows): Petrus Sabatier (ed.), *Bibliorum sacrorum latinae versiones antiquae seu Vetus italica...*, vol.3 (Paris: Didot, 1751), 821a: <https://archive.org/details/Sabatier3/page/n861/mode/2up>.

<sup>18</sup> See H. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016), viii, 32-33.

<sup>19</sup> I do not see why this could not be taken (in biblical context) even here as apposition, so that *pneumati-theōi*, is taken to mean: “worship God, who is Spirit...” but evidently Chrysostom did not use it for Anti-Arian purposes and translators into Latin took this as “*spiritu*” or **ablative** of instrument.

degree— less culpable than moderns) due to textual issues beyond ancients’ control, whereas today’s English translations are more likely due to theologically motivated projections interpreted into an English text. Rare is the English translation (though they do exist) that understands this objections to such a translation. Nevertheless, we see accurate translations from time to time such as with the modern translators Erasmus of Rotterdam and the Wesleyan scholar Godfrey. Contemporary translators typically continue projecting an impossible reading onto the text, as if out of reverence for the traditional Latin-Biblical and English-Biblical translations that have *nothing to do with the Greek, nor with the patristic external testimony of Ambrose’s and Augustine’s critically relevant comments*. My correct and precise translation in line with the scientifically critical text is as follows:<sup>20</sup>

For *we* (ἡμεῖς) are circumcision, *who worship* God’s *Spirit* (οἱ [dative =] πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες [= participle requiring dative]) (Nestle-Aland Philippians 3:3)<sup>21</sup>

See what I see as the more correct translation, for example, in the [Godbey New Testament](#): “For we are the circumcision, *who serve* God’s *Spirit*, and boast in Christ Jesus, also having no confidence in the flesh.” The King James Version (AD 1611) is barely tolerable, as it is potentially misleading in its reading that is too unrepresentative of the simplicity of thought by St. Paul:

For *we* are the circumcision, *which worship* God *in* the *Spirit*, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (KJV Philippians 3:3)

The Codex Bezae-dominant composite text (or *Textus receptus* of Stephanus 1550; the Mother-document from whence comes the King James Version, AD 1611) should be translated with the same meaning as St. Athanasius and the same readings as St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and according to the Nestle-Aland 28<sup>th</sup> edition: “*We are worshipping* God’s *Spirit*” (*hoi pneumatitheou latreuontes*). This compact (insular) dependent clause makes no sense to translate in imitation of some Old Latin and anonymously corrected Vulgate readings.

Finally, in the patristic tradition, the learned St. John Damascene (who [dubiously] commentates Philippians 3:3) is simply a good reminder of the universal tradition of worship of the Spirit by the grammatical construct at hand. So, it remains natural among native Greek-speaking Byzantine writers to adore God the Spirit in the dative as did St. Paul: “*I adore* (*latreuô*) *three hypostases* [dative], *Father* and *Son* and *Holy Spirit* [all dative], and *this alone* [dative]

<sup>20</sup> I suspect that this prejudice is a learned and conditioned belief that there is a primitive pneumatology in St. Paul and the New Testament that requires this reading to be mangled rather than to let the more psychologically difficult reading to stand! The prejudice is odd, since Philo the Jew clearly and famously attests the divine status of *theos* and *kyrios* by the AD 40s. St. Paul would hardly be original for revamping (not inventing) this famous Jewish exegesis.

<sup>21</sup> “*Pneuma theou*” is a technical term from the Septuagint (LXX) and unmistakably means “the Holy Spirit”: (1.) “God’s *Spirit*” is carried with him over the waters of creation (Genesis 2:2); (2.) God’s *Spirit* is borne upon someone (Number 23:7, 24:2); (3.) God’s *Spirit* drives itself/is borne upon prophet and Saul (LXX ≈1 Samuel 10:10, 19:9, 20:23) and a priest (2 Chronicles 24:20). Ezekiel is led “in vision” and “*in* God’s *Spirit*” (Ezekiel 11:24). The “name of God” is equivalent to “God’s Holy *Spirit*” (Theodotion≈LXX Daniel 4:8-9, 4:18, 4:11, 5:14).

(Oration 1 *On Images*, section 4). He repeats this again in *On the two wills in Christ* (section 9): “And we worship the all-holy Spirit (*panagiōi pneumati latreuomen*).”

I should also underline that the Renaissance Greco-Latin scholar, who translated St. Augustine’s *On the Trinity* into Greek, that is, the Eastern Orthodox monk Maximus Planudes (who translates in the AD 1280s), translated statements as still true in Greek, first uttered by St. Augustine:

The Holy Spirit is not at all a creature, to whom (*hōi*) this kind of *latreia*/worship (as Paul says) is proffered by all the saints: “For we are circumcision, we who adore/worship God’s Spirit (*hoi Pneumati Theou latreuontes*).” Now, many booklets even among the Latins have the following text: “we are adoring God’s Spirit (*hoi Pneumati Theou latreuontes*).” [This is the case for] All of them or a little less than all. But it is in the manuscripts of the Latin copies that we do not find: “We are adoring God’s Spirit” but rather: “We are adoring in the Spirit of God.” (Greek version of *On the Trinity* book I, chapter 6, section 13).

## 2. USE OF THE VERB “WORSHIP” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

We’ve already looked at all Greek instances of the participle “worshipping” (*latreuo*) in Greek before St. Paul. All evidence taken together leads to the conclusion that “*pneumati latreuontes*” can only mean “worshipping (God’s) Spirit.” However, other verb forms of the term “worship” are found in the New Testament elsewhere. For example, “Jesus said to him ‘Away with you, Satan, for it is written: *Worship the Lord God and serve him only* (*autōi monoi latreuseis*)’” (Matthew 4:10). Here, the dative noun related to the verb –as normal– immediately precedes the verb just as Philippians 3:3 construction. This explains why the Fathers constantly cite Matthew 4:10 when they explain the meaning of Philippians 3:3. Furthermore, we should expect a preposition before a word in the dative in order to avoid confusion that can come about if a noun is hanging around next to the verb “worship” (*latreuō*). For example, “Being rescued from the hands of our enemies might serve him (*latreuein autōi*) without fear in holiness (*en hosiotēti*)” (Luke 1:47-48). One ostensible exception occurs to justify modern translations of Philippians 3:3. Let us look at the following (which proves to be superficial):

Then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple and in/by fasting and in/by prayer worshiped night and day. (Modified NKJV Luke 2:37)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The (so-called) Wycliffe translation (AD 1382) renders the Latin Vulgate in a manner befitting contemporary corruptors by adding gratuitously “God” in the dative (which St. Jerome did *not* add): “and sche departide not fro the temple, but *seruyde to God* nyht and dai in fastyngis and preieris” (Luke 2:37). The Tyndale Bible (AD 1534) likewise reads (allegedly translating the Greek): “yere which went never oute of the temple but served God with fastinge and prayer nyght and daye” (Luke 2:37). The Great Bible (AD 1539) is no better: “but *serued God with fastinges* and *prayers* nyght & daye” (Luke 2:37). The Bishops’ Bible (the base text for the KJV AD 1611) reads in AD 1568: “but *serued God with fastynges* and *prayers* nyght and day.” The Geneva Bible is the same story (AD 1560). Once again it looks like a poor understanding of the verb “*latreuō*” despite universal access to St. Augustine’s detailed comments on Philippians 3:3 in *On the Trinity*, I.6. A verbatim translation from the Latin Vulgate provides a better English text than all these supposed Greek translations from the Greek *Textus receptus*.

*kai autê chêra heôs etôn ogdoêkonta tessarôn, ê ouk ahistato tou hierou [dative:] nêsteiais kai deêsesis latreuoussa nykta kai hêmeran.* (Luke 2:37)

Here, according to typical English translations, we render the active participle as the English: “worshipping” with two **dative** nouns preceding it that are, in English translation, unrelated to it grammatically. This is, at first glance, evidence that the dative occurs next to *latreuo* without forming a construct (1.) in Greek, (2.) in the first century (3.) and in the Bible.

In response, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (that is, the largest online Greek database for this kind of research) records the same active participle occurring only 11 times prior to St. Paul (including Philo around AD 40-AD 50). Two cases are inconclusive (lacking any noun for *latreuô* to modify near it). This means that the purported occurrence in St. Luke of this singular exception is not per se a strong argument. Next, Luke 2:47 is a Semitic story by Jesus unlike the Greek-rhetorical piece written by St. Paul. Therefore, we should test the quality of Jesus’s-story-in-translation for its Greek grammar, if it is allegedly an exception thereto (which I did, and it is no exception!). Next, modern translations *never respect Luke’s real syntax, as it can be applied analogously to Philippians 3:3, but they instead mostly prefer to mangle the Greek of Philippians 3:3 failing to analogize it to their translation of Luke 2:37*. Many, if not most, modern translators make the Greek genitive “God (*Theou*)” (Philippians 3:3) to be worshipped: “we serve God **in/by** the Spirit” (Philippians 3:3). But is the genitive really the object of “*latreuô*”??? This is terribly irregular and indisputably betrays the translators (*traslatori*) as traitors (*traditori*) of Greek idiom on this point (this wordplay is a famous Italian proverb used by translators). Next, slightly better translators of Philippians 3:3 understand that God is not governed by the verb *latreuô* so that they merely mangle the Greek *less* (than those who pretend God is dative) into an approximated English as they struggle with the Greek’s inarticulate, artless meaning. I mean that these partial-manglers should theoretically want to translate thus: “We, **by** A [non-specific] **spirit** of God, **are worshipping**” (Literal Philippians 3:3). If these same translators really wanted to translate as they do for Luke 2:47 with Philippians 3:3 (to demonstrate sanity in their grammar), then the aforesaid literal translation should be made. Instead of rendering a sensible text (if odd), contemporary translators make “**Spirit**” a **dative** of instrument (that lacks: “A” or “**THE**”), yet they typically translate as follows: “We **by** **THE** Spirit of God **are worshipping**” (*hoi pneumatî theou latreuontes*) (Philippians 3:3). Where’s the “**THE**”? These half-manglers prove to be like the ancient scribes whose errors they have catalogued for two centuries and whom they lament, at times, to intentionally distort the Biblical text (sometimes for theological reasons). On this score, English translators today act like medieval copyists who reproduce their predecessors’ errant translations in every subsequent version by the same printery. They fail to correct their predecessors, to whose translations they customarily compare their own.

Finally, Luke 2:47 (*nêsteiais kai deêsesin latreuoussa*) can quickly be dispatched by Liddell-Scott, where “to be enslaved to” or “to be devoted to” is required, even though almost every translation nowadays misconstrues the meaning of *latreuô*, as if an action of the prophetess Anna is allegedly either to have **worshipped** or to have **served**. Many translations even <add a word> out of nowhere: “worshipped <God>,” because in desperation they miss the standard

meaning of *latreuô* + **an inanimate object** that is related to the verb. I edit and reproduce Liddell-Scott's second definition of *latreuô* as follows:

[verb:] λατρεύω + [dative:] τινί = to be subject or enslaved to, [...] metaphorical: [verb:] λατρεύω + [dative:] πέτρα = I am enslaved to a rock [as said] of Prometheus [...] He is being enslaved to the highest drudgeries of mortal men (μόχθοις λατρεύων τοῖς ὑπερτάτοις βροτῶν) [which is equal to another classical saying:] “I am subject to the laws (λατρεύω νόμοις) = obey, [...]”; [Another author:] “I am in servitude to time” (λατρεύω καιρῷ), = Latin: *temporibus inservire*, [...]; “I am devoted to the beautiful” (τῷ κάλλει λατρεύω) [...] “I am devoted to pleasure (λατρεύω ἡδονῇ) [...].

What, according to Liddell-Scott, should Luke 2:37 read? In answer, we ought to translate thus:

Then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple, and *she was continuously devoted to fasting and prayer* night and day (Luke 2:37)

So, instead of contradicting Greek grammar or forming a first exception thereto, the *latreuô* + **dative** construct (Luke 2:37) exemplifies just such a known construct and shows almost all modern translations to force yet another poor translation –inspired by sixteenth-century translations (probably using the Vulgate)– foisted upon twenty-first century readers. *If the inspired and original language of Philippians were Latin, then modern translations would be entirely justified according to a possible Latin variant* (but Greek editions fail to mention in their apparatus the Syrian-Greek variant: *pneumati theôï* of Chrysostom and Theodoret in their apparatus due to its poor authenticity!). The case with all the other uses of “**worship**” in the New Testament equally reflects my observations in the examples in this section (Luke 4:8; Acts 7:7, 7:42, 24:14, 26:7, 27:23; Romans 1:9, 1:25; Timothy 1:3; Hebrews 8:5, 9:9, 9:14, 10:2, 12:28, 13:10; Revelation 7:15, 22:3).<sup>23</sup>

### 3. ARE SCHOLARLY NEO-ARIANS MISTRANSLATING THE BIBLE?

Conspiracy theories are great for internet clickbait and selling novels (that are often advertised as facts or as histories), but in this case I do not think that Arianism motivates translators. I suspect that it is a combination of two realities: The superego of the King James Version AD 1611 on Protestant translators and the superego of the Douay version AD 1582 on Catholic translators. These together acted as virtual censors on early-modern Protestants and Catholics *not to mess with the revered textual translations unless necessary*. This best-guess theorizing is not a scholarly *conclusion* but a first hypothesis (in need of more study). I glean some possible truth in my ideas from the fact that the most recent study of the King James Version AD 1611 shows the English-translators' clear consultation of St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate for some improvements on the Bishops' Bible (AD 1602) culminating in the KJV (AD 1611).<sup>24</sup> St. Jerome

<sup>23</sup> Only one of these verses lacks a noun nearby at all and so is an inconclusive example.

<sup>24</sup> The oldest relevant Tyndale New Testament (AD 1525/6) reads: “For we are circumcision which **worshippe god in the sprete** and reioyce in Christ Iesu and have no confidence in the flesshe” (Philippians 3:3). If Tyndale's earliest

(who did not actually edit Philippians!) was not then viewed as a papist witness to the Bible, unlike the Douay Version that was considered papist when translating the KJV AD 1611. Instead, the Vulgate was often useful explicitly by editors of various books (or passages) for preparing the most celebrated English Bible in history.<sup>25</sup> Philippians in the KJV, however, is *not directly determined* by the Vulgate, since the Bishops' Bible was the explicit KJV-foundation, where AD 1568 + AD 1602 both read:<sup>26</sup> "For we are the circumcision, which **worship God in the spirite**, and reioyce in Christ Iesus, and haue no confidence in the fleshe" (Philippians 3:3). Sadly, this is the translation more or less given in all editions today that *presupposes the defective Erasmus-Stephanus-Bezae texts* (AD 1519/1550/1598)! Even with the defective reading (*theôï* instead of *theou*) Erasmus's own mastery of Greek was such that he still translated the Spirit as God to be worshipped (*spiritum...colimus*). Later, from the critical text of Westcott-Hort (AD 1881) to that of the Nestle-Aland (today), critical editions should have resulted in at least different English wording since the Greek wording of the *Textus receptus* was after all changed! Instead, the current translations in English are the same, although the current Greek text has changed! How odd and unfortunate! What is more, the old Douay-English Bible read: "For we are the circumcision, which **in spirit serve God** and we glorie in Christ Iesus and not having confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). How do we make sense of the essentially same translations by both putatively heretical English bishops of AD 1568 and the so-called papists translators': "**worship God in (the) spirit**" from the Douay AD 1582? In answer, the English Bishops and divines ignored the Greek and Erasmus's helpful Latin translation, preferring the interpretation in the Latin Vulgate of what is probably a corrupt Syrian text! Let us look:

"For we are circumcision *who (qui)*, **in spirit (spiritu)**, **God (deo)** do serve (*servimus*)"<sup>27</sup>  
(Vulgate Philippians 3:3)

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translation is really based in this passage upon the *Textus receptus*, then he is responsible for the corrupted translation that influenced later translations. However, parsimony suggests to me that he compared the Greek to the Latin Vulgate and interpreted Philippians 3:3 in line with the anonymous Vulgate translator. Next, the Geneva Bible (AD 1560) reads thus: "For we are the circumcision, which **worship God in the spirite**, and reioyce in Christ Iesus, and haue no confidence in the flesh." Drawn also from the Vulgate and the Tyndale Bible, the Bishops' Bible (AD 1568) was also useful to the benefit of KJV translators. It should be noted that the Great Bible (AD 1539) –hated by King James II– also exercised massive influence in England at the time and reads: "For we are circumcisiyon, which **serue God in the sprete**, and reioyce in Chryst Iesu, and haue no confydence in the flesshe" (Philippians 3:3). Thus do the Douay and the English Bibles all align in phraseology and vocabulary on this verse, suggesting a common ancestor, the Latin Vulgate. Likely, the (so-called) Wycliffe's Bible (AD 1382) is directly irrelevant to our study but it does attest our Vulgate reading of Philippians 3:3 in late-fourteenth century England, as rendered in English, perhaps familiar to some KJV translators: "For **we** ben circumcisioun, which **bi spirit seruen to God**, and glorien in Crist Jhesu, and han no trist in the fleisch."

<sup>25</sup> E.g., David Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10, 12.

<sup>26</sup> Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible*, 7, 12.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Weber, Roger Gryson (eds.), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), 1818.

The word order of this reading and the dative cases for Spirit and God right next to each other are the exact same readings witnessed by St. John Chrysostom and Blessed Theodoret of Cyrrhus (*pneumati theōi = spiritu deo*), as earlier in this article, and is also present in the Erasmus-Stephanus-Bezae editions (AD 1519/1550/1598). I suggest that Caesarea/Palestine and Syria might be the source for this reading as far back as AD 250 as witnessed by Pseudo-Clement. The Latin lacks any article (“A” versus “**THE**”) and so allows for latitude as in the AD 1568/1602 Bishops’ Bible addition of the article “**THE**.” This accounts for the one real difference between the Bishops’ Bible AD 1568/1602 and Douay AD 1582, where the Douay simply used another legitimate option from the Latin of omitting any article. Interestingly, the first-available version of the Greek text, as edited by Erasmus (AD 1519), contained the reading witnessed by St. John Chrysostom: “We worship God, [as] Spirit” (*hoi pneumati theōi latreuontes*).<sup>28</sup> But, Erasmus – even with a somewhat more ambiguous Greek variant– translated the verse into Latin very well: “we who adore God, as Spirit” (*qui spiritum deum colimus*).<sup>29</sup> Erasmus gave a better English sense, even with corrupted Greek, than today’s English editions do of the authentic text! The Stephanus 1550 text (*Textus receptus*) followed Erasmus’s Greek edition but nobody followed Erasmus’s new Latin translation, so that the translators/editors of the Bishops’ Bible either translated the Greek very badly, or (more likely in my view) preferred the Vulgate reading (against Erasmus) to unravel the very difficult Greek phraseology with its construction from “worship” (*latreuō*).<sup>30</sup> Modern translators have constantly felt the pressure to conform to either the KJV, or the Douay-Rheims, depending on their allegiances for so long that it has become an institutionalized custom (at least this is my working hypothesis). After the 1960s, when revisional histories or questioning-standard-histories burgeoned, patrologists lent great weight to a meta-narrative whereby the axiom: “Holy Spirit = God,” only developed along the lines of a supposed continuum with the result that there was only a gradual realization among Christians that the “Spirit = God” after much time (e.g., St. Basil the Great’s, *On the Holy Spirit*; AD 373/375), or when St. Athanasius separately dealt with the same issue in an epistle to *Serapion* a decade earlier (AD 360). The tendency is to write history (with all its gaps) so that there is a gradually increasing appreciation of the divinity of the Spirit by Christians, incrementally, starting from the Gospel of St. John (AD 90-AD 95) until the issue is squarely raised by Bishop Macedonius of Constantinople (AD 360). Instead, we should *not predetermine*, nor set-up a lower-to-higher Spirit-theory of progressive divinization on this topic. The evidence from each work and each region of the empire must be studied. St. Paul, in Asia Minor (and in Romans 1:9), taught the divinity of the Spirit. After St. Paul, St. John the Apostle clearly endorses a complementary doctrine in his Gospel, but each region of the empire (and Orient) must be studied in its own right to track the ebb and flow of the doctrine among its local communities as attested by extant writings, archaeological finds, and other relevant materials (e.g., art). What seems to me to be certain is that the full divinity and

<sup>28</sup> Erasmus of Rotterdam (ed.), *Instrumentum Novum* (Basel: John Frobenius, 1519), 418a.

<sup>29</sup> *Instrumentum Novum*, 418b.

<sup>30</sup> See the Stephanus (AD 1550) here: <http://textusreceptusbibles.com/Stephanus/50/3> or Biblegateway: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=philippians+3%3A3&version=TR1550>. The Bezae edition of the *Textus receptus* (1598) preserves this reading for the KJV here: <http://textusreceptusbibles.com/Beza/50/3>.

Godhead of the Spirit is argued by St. Paul along the lines of first-century Jewish theology of the hypostatization of sent-divine-beings into the world by YHWH. For St. Paul, the Son and the Spirit are the two divine beings sent by YHWH to dwell among the Christians in their communities, the Son for a set time, and the Spirit until the end of time.

#### 4. MODERN SCHOLARS IGNORED BY TODAY'S VULGATE-LOVERS?

The grammar, paleography (manuscript-writing analysis), and study of the authentic text of Philippians 3:3 has been at center stage since the infancy of modern lower criticism (textual criticism). Before a critical (or scientific and eclectic) text was able to be produced, it was not uncommon for scholars to criticize the KJV reading. For example, the Greek grammarian Granville Sharp writes:

In the London Polyglot [Bible], and many other valuable editions, the reading [Philippians 3:3] is *hoi pneumatī theōi* [who + dative-Spirit + dative-God], but in the Alexandrian manuscript it is *hoi pneumatī theou* [who + dative-Spirit + genitive-God], which seems to be the true reading; because the other is so unusual an expression, that the generality of translators have forced a construction which the context itself cannot fairly bear, even if the dative case, *Theōi* [dative: God], were admitted to be the true reading, unless another word, the preposition *en* [= in], be also added to it before *pneumatī* [dative: Spirit], as in John 4:23, and Romans 8:9, where the sense, which they have applied to this text, was really intended: but, without this addition, (as we may fairly judge by those example,) the literal rendering ought to be, “We are the circumcision, who worship the Spirit God.” Whereas they have commonly rendered it as if the preposition *en* was really inserted in the text before the dative: *pneumatī*, as in the two examples before cited (viz., *qui spiritu servimus Deo*” or “*qui spiritum colimus Deum*”), or, as in the Syriac version, “*qui Deo servimus in spiritu*” (Syriac). Or, as in the common English version: “Which worship God *in* the spirit.” But there is no such preposition in the Greek. The difficulty therefore of rendering the common reading (*theōi*) without supposing this addition of *EN* to be understood before *pneumatī* proves that the reading of the Alexandrian manuscript in this text is really to be preferred: “who worship the Spirit of God” (*hoi pneumatī Theou latreuontes*), whereby the apostle and Timothy, as an example to the church at Philippi, assert their profession, that they pay divine honor to the Spirit of God and that they glory in Christ (emphasis mine with my translations and slight edits).<sup>31</sup>

Thus Sharp, Greek grammarian.

The dawn of science tracing back families of manuscripts to their oldest representative and comparing these to other old or very old manuscripts (to create an eclectic text) had originally the goal to produce exactly St. Paul’s text as written around AD 55. An early attempt to expose Christians to the most ancient text (and, by implication, the most accurate reading,) of Philippians 3:3 occurs in the edition of the New Testament by Constantine Tischendorf.<sup>32</sup> In his annotation on Philippians 3:3, Tischendorf provided the following: (1.) Ambrose’s and Augustine’s testimony to *theou* (“of God”) instead of “*theōi*” (“to God”), (2.) The Syriac Peshitta, (3.) The

<sup>31</sup> Granville Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament...*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Vernor and Hood, 1803), 32-34.

<sup>32</sup> Constantine Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum graece ad antiquissimos testes denuo recensuit...*, 8th ed. (Lipsiae: Giesecke. & Devrient, 1872), 2:717.

Greek writers: Eusebius, Athanasius, Euthalius, Theodoret, and Damascene (4.) St. John Chrysostom’s alternative reading “to God” (*theôï*) as some Latin testimonies.<sup>33</sup>

Nor should it be thought that Vulgate scholars were unaware of the wrong reading and interpretation of the Greek in the Vulgate before a truly critical edition was first published. For example, French scholars had compiled the evidence supporting a different reading of the Vulgate in line with Saints Ambrose’s and Augustine’s testimonies regarding the Greek and Latin manuscripts in their days.<sup>34</sup> Theologians naturally supposed that the Ambrose-Augustine reading was subsequently corrupted by Arians in the Vulgate. This is unlikely the case due to the witness of Pseudo-Clement around AD 250 and the Old Latin witnesses.<sup>35</sup> In fact, a reasonable working hypothesis might suppose that the early-Syrian-Greek reading **dative-Spirit** + **dative-God** (“we who worship God <who is> **Spirit**”) was often taken to mean that the “**Spirit**” was in the **dative** of instrument. If so, just as Chrysostom himself took it, a North-African translator into Latin of the Syrian reading would have been justified by putting the Greek dative of instrument into the **ablative** of instrument in Latin, thus changing *pneumati* to *spiritu* instead of the correct dative as governed by the verb **worship** (*latreuô*), that is, *spiritui*. If this easily conjectured scenario (*divinatio*) proves to be the case, no Arians are responsible for the Old Latin and Vulgate reading of Philippians 3:3. Later, the Greek version of the verse, as known in third-century Syria, made it to the African Coast and was translated in the **ablative** and competed with the authentic reading of the verse in the dative for a number of centuries only to be given supremacy in the Latin West by its adoption into the Vulgate in the early-fifth century.

Last century, the well-received work by Dr. Arthur Downer noted the following:

If we are to accept the reading *Theou* for the *Theôï* of the Received Text [*Textus receptus*], [who do God’s **Spirit** worship] *hoi Pneumati Theou latreuontes*, “who worship the **Spirit** of God” is a distinct and direct statements that the Church offers direct adoration to the Holy Ghost: “[who do the **Spirit** of God worship] *qui Spiritui Dei servimus*.” It is fair to acknowledge, first, that this argument rests upon two assumptions: (a.) that *Theou* is the true reading, and (b.) that *latreuontes* here governs the dative *Pneumati*, and is not to be taken absolutely.<sup>36</sup>

Downer’s only doubts should have been allayed partially by the famous Westcott-Hort 1881 critical text that authenticates “*Theou*” in line with the Nestle-Aland 28<sup>th</sup> edition. Secondly, Downer’s a priori supposition that worshipping the Father, through the Son, by or in the Spirit, is “ancient” and preferred is anachronistic, for a plurality of early Christianities is supported amply by documentary evidence.<sup>37</sup> Hence, should a coeval text written by a Christian worship the Spirit or some (forbidden) creature, neither faith need be read into St. Paul’s *Epistle to the Philippians* a priori. St. Paul needs to be appreciated in his own first-century Jewish context in a Greco-Roman

<sup>33</sup> Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum*, 2:717, n. 3.

<sup>34</sup> J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Troisième et dernière encyclopédie théologique* (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1866), tome 44, cols. 991-992.

<sup>35</sup> Remy Ceillier, *Histoire Générale des auterus sacrés et ecclésiastiques*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: Vivès, 1860), 5:521a

<sup>36</sup> Arthur Downer, *The Mission and Ministration of the Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh T&T Clark, 1909), 294.

<sup>37</sup> Downer, *The Mission and Ministration of the Holy Spirit*, 294-295.

environment and in light of his identifiable Greek, Hebrew, and Latin sources. For example, there are contemporary Jews (e.g., Philo) who acknowledge divine entities as hypostases in addition to YHWH.

## CONCLUSIONS BY WILLIAM ALBRÉCHT: THE FATHERS KNOW BEST

The dust from the battleground for the truth of the ancient faith at Nicaea had barely settled when the heretics had readily fashioned their attacks that they now fully aimed towards the Deity of the Holy Spirit. Heresy is rarely ever fully defeated, instead it morphs and evolves into something new, taking semblances from past distortions of the faith and adding more spices into the batch of unholy soup. When the great and fiery Saint Athanasius penned his masterful work to Saint Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, he recognized that the death of Arius meant that the Ariomaniacs would now ramp up their attacks on the Trinity to an almost fever pitch level of assaults on Scripture and the Fathers. It was here that the Alexandrian stalwart noted that “we are the circumcision, who serve God’s Spirit,” further emphasizing the common reading of St. Paul’s letter amongst the orthodox camp of Christians. He further elaborated, “Once it has been demonstrated that the Holy Spirit is uncreated, we ought to understand that the one whose substance is not created is rightly joined to the Father and the Son.”<sup>38</sup> We can suspect that this reading was quite common for Saint Athanasius, as he repeats it more than once throughout his compilation of letters sent to St. Serapion that were intended to teach and instruct about the Trinitarian faith. For those within the true Church the Holy Spirit was uncreated and was Almighty God. This was a truth evident in the Scriptures and strongly defended by the earliest pillars of the faith. This teaching extended to all corners of the faith, thus serving as a true mark of catholicity. It is no surprise that we have the magnificent and holy St. Ambrose of Milan emphasizing in his *On the Holy Spirit* that it is right and proper to worship the Holy Spirit as true God. The holy doctor notes that these are the actual words of the Apostle Paul. It should then be expected that Saint Augustine would follow in the footsteps of his Father, Ambrose, in his cleverly and masterfully woven *On the Trinity*. A common theme found in the writings of Saint Augustine is the Biblical and historical distinction between the Greek words worship (*latreia*) and serve (*douleuo*). The titan of the Church would emphasize more than once in his writings that true worship is due to the one true God, noting in the ultimate fashion in his *The City of God*:

This is the worship which we owe to the divinity, or, if I must speak more exactly, to the deity. However, since I do not find a sufficiently suitable Latin expression, I must use a Greek term to suggest in one word what I wish to say. Wherever the term *latreía* has been found in Sacred Scripture, our interpreters, I know, have translated it as service. But the service which is due to men and of which the Apostle speaks when he admonishes slaves to obey their master is commonly called by another name in Greek, whereas the term *latreía*, according to the usage of those who put

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<sup>38</sup> Athanasius and Didymus, *Epistle Four to Serapion*, in *Works on the Spirit: Athanasius’s Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit, and, Didymus’s on the Holy Spirit*, trans. M. DelCogliano, A. Radde-Gallwitz, & L. Ayeres, ed. J. Behr, Popular Patristics Series 43 (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), 226.

divine revelation into human language, refers always or almost always to that service which pertains to the worship of God.”<sup>39</sup>

With this in mind, Saint Augustine would be careful to teach that worship is due to all three persons of the Most Holy Trinity. How could one offer *latreia* to the Father and not the Son? And so, this became the same for the Holy Spirit in the letters of Saint Augustine. The saintly bishop of Hippo was well acquainted with every kind of Christological heresy of his day. He was well aware of the theological and physical attacks that led to Nicaea and beyond. He wielded his mighty knowledge handed down to him by the great saints and doctors before him to defend the truth of the Deity of the Spirit of God.

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (and hence, too, the apostle repudiates those who worship and serve the creature more than the Creator), then assuredly the Holy Spirit is not a creature, to whom such a service is paid by all the saints; as says the apostle, “For we are the circumcision, **which serve the Spirit** of God,” which is in the Greek: *λατρεύοντες*.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps no defense of the Holy Spirit as true God, worthy of the highest form of honor, would be complete without mentioning the great and Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas. The holy and erudite Saint Thomas would take aim at Arianism and ultimately any form of subordinationism in his powerful *Summa Contra Gentiles* (beginning around AD 1255/1256). It must be noted, before we visit the famous statements of St. Thomas, that even by the thirteenth century, this reading from the letter to the Philippians was viewed as critically important. St. Thomas Aquinas would echo the knowledge of the doctor of grace, St. Augustine. For indeed there was knowledge that some corrupted manuscripts contained a variant reading of the third chapter of the letter to the Philippians. But it was obvious that the most ancient and correct reading spoke of giving true worship to the Holy Spirit. Saint Thomas argued from the position of ancient pedigree and overall context of Philippians 3:3: “From the Greek, it is plain that the text refers to service of *latreia*, which is due to God alone. Therefore the Holy Ghost is true God, and the worship of *latreia* is due to Him” (*Summa contra Gentiles*, book 4, section 17).<sup>41</sup>

It is our ultimate hope that our study restores the proper reading of what the Apostle Paul intended his audience to encounter in his Letter to the Church at Philippi. St. Paul was a true Trinitarian, and his previous writings were indications that he emphasized and supported prayer and worship to the Holy Spirit. Having been trained by the great Gamaliel, St Paul’s education was of the highest order. His grasp of the Scriptures was second to none, and his ability to understand the messages of the prophets of old and bring them to light in his present day was nothing short of masterful. For St. Paul, the Spirit truly gave life, and was seen as true God in the

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<sup>39</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God, Books VIII–XVI*, trans. G. G. Walsh & G. Monahan, ed. H. Dressler, The Fathers of the Church 14 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1952), 116.

<sup>40</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*, in *St. Augustin: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, vol. 3, trans. A. W. Haddan, ed. P. Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 23.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1924), 5:76.

great patriarchs and prophets. All of this could only mean that the same Holy Spirit was due the highest form of honor, that being true worship.