The text of the first part of John 10, 29 is, as C. K. Barrett has put it, \(^1\) "in confusion", and in spite of Barrett’s discussion and, more recently, that of J. N. Birdsall\(^2\) the confusion has hardly been dispelled. The most attractive reading on internal grounds, Barrett readily admits, is \(\delta \pi\alpha\tau\iota\rho \mu\omicron \nu \delta\zeta \delta\epsilon\delta\omega\kappa\nu\nu \mu\omicron \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron \nu \mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu \varepsilon\tau\iota\nu\). This is the text, the antiquity of which is now attested by Papyrus Bodmer II (P 66),\(^3\) favoured by R. Bultmann\(^4\) and C. H. Dodd.\(^5\) But Barrett argues — and Birdsall follows him in this — that "it is impossible to explain how this excellent reading came to be changed into the difficult \(\delta \ldots \mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu\)\(^6\), and instead supports the reading of \(\Theta: \delta\zeta \ldots \mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu\). Birdsall, however, accuses Barrett of "temerity" in "accepting a reading from a codex written by a scribe who was poorly acquainted with Greek"\(^7\), gives his own support to the reading of \(\Xi \Psi \text{L} \text{W} - \delta \ldots \mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu\) — and adopts Barrett’s translation thereof: "My Father in regard to what He has given me is greater than all." It should be added, in order to complete the picture, that Barrett had translated \(\delta \ldots \mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu\) only in order to reject it as "a very difficult reading". And indeed this bold use of a relative clause, without antecedent, to limit the meaning of an adjectival predicate would be unique in NT Greek and not easy to parallel elsewhere. For this reason \(\delta \ldots \)


\(^3\) P. Bodmer XV (P 75) is unfortunately defective at this crucial point: \(\delta \zeta \ldots \mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu \).

\(^4\) *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Göttingen 1941) p. 294 n. 4.


\(^6\) Cf. also J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London 1968) p. 256 n. 8: "For \(\delta\) and \(\mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu\) most authorities, including P 66 fam 1 fam 13 sin pesh hl sah, have \(\delta\zeta\) and \(\mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu\) (masculine). These give excellent sense, but make it impossible to account for the harder reading, which is to be preferred."

\(^7\) *Op. cit.*, p. 342. In fact \(\delta \zeta \ldots \mu\epsilon\iota\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu\) is also the reading of *inter alia* A!
μείζων is not fairly described by Birdsall as “a perfectly acceptable Greek sentence”.8

But if ὁ ... μείζων seems ‘ungriechisch’ Barrett’s δς ... μείζων is hardly better. For, unless Barrett is right, there is not a single instance in the NT of the application of a neuter adjectival predicate to a singular personal (masculine or feminine) subject.9 Certainly the parallels to δς

8 Op. cit., p. 344. The fact that Birdsall’s interpretation of ὁ ... μείζων places an intolerable limitation upon the power of the Father should not be lightly disregarded. Birdsall claims (loc. cit.) that this “apparent limitation ... may be no more than an accident of phrasing”.

9 The variety of incongruous neuter predicate to which I refer should not be confused with any of the following:

(1) The predicative use of the singular neuter adjective in statements of general validity; cf., e.g., Iliad II, 204 οὐκ ἔχειν τινα πολυκορινίαν. Blass-Debrunner, Grammatik des neuestamentlichen Griechisch12 (Göttingen 1965) para. 131, claim that this construction does not occur in the NT, but cf. Matt. 6, 25 = Luke 12, 23 (οὐδὲ ἢ γνωτίσαι πληθυντών θείον τῆς τροφῆς;) where the adjectival character of πληθυντὸς is surely (pace Blass-Debrunner) obvious; Matt. 6, 34 (ἂρχετον τῷ ἡμέρᾳ ἢ κακία αὐτῆς;) II Corinth. 2, 6 (Ἰκανὸν τῷ τοιούτῳ ἢ ἐπιτιμία αὐτῷ). The two latter examples are clearly (again pace Blass-Debrunner) general statements, and though ἄρκετον and ἰκανόν might here be regarded as indeclinable equivalents of satis (as seems to be the case with ἰκανόν at Luke 22, 38 ἄρκετός is certainly declinable at I Peter 4, 3.

(2) The use of neuter pronominal predicates with personal subjects, as at I Corinth. 9, 22 (τοὺς πᾶσιν γέφυρα πάντα;) ibid. 15, 10 (εἰμὶ δὲ εἰμὶ;) Galat. 6, 3 (εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τοῖς εἰναι τὰ μηδὲν ἄνω;) cf. Blass-Debrunner, para. 131f. John 8, 25 (τὴν ἄρχην ὅτι καὶ λαλῶ ὡμιλῶ) is not a case in point. Barrett’s interpretation (op. cit., p. 283f: “I am from the beginning what I tell you”) is impossible if for no other reason than that (τὴν) ἄρχην, when used as a temporal adverb, seems always to mean “in the beginning” (as opposed to later) and never “from the beginning”. In John 8, 25 the phrase is used in a virtually negative sentence to mean “at all” (“Why do I speak to you at all?”); cf. Ps.-Clement, Hom. 6, 11, PG 2, 205 εἰ μὴ παρακολουθεῖ ὡς λέγω, τι καὶ τὴν ἄρχην διαλέγομαι;

(3) The collective use of the neuter singular with reference to persons, as at John 17, 24 (Πατέρα, δὴ δοκεῖκας μοι, ἥσαν ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ κἀκεῖνον ὅσιν μετ᾽ εὐμόδ;) cf. Blass-Debrunner, para. 138, 1.

(4) The substantival use of the neuter adjective, either with the definite article, as at Acts 17, 29 (τὸ θείον), or without, as at Mark 4, 22 (ἰνα ἐλθῃ εἰς φανερὸν;) cf. Blass-Debrunner, para. 263f.

(5) The type of transition from masculine or feminine to neuter and vice versa (frequently though not exclusively through the medium of the substantival use of the neuter adjective preceded by the article) which facilitates the identification of personal deity and impersonal philosophical principle and in consequence plays an important role in Hellenistic theologies. For a NT instance of this phenomenon cf. Acts 17, 23ff. (ὁ δὲ άγνοοντες ἐροθετείτε, τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὃδε κτλ.). F. F. Bruce (The Acts of the Apostles (London 1952) p. 336) comments: “Paul starts with his hearers’ belief in an impersonal divine essence, pantheistically conceived, and leads them to the Living God revealed as Creator and Judge.” Cf. also I John 1, 1ff. I have drawn attention to other instances of this category of transition in my paper Ammonius on the Delphic E, Classical Quarterly 19 (1969) 185ff.
... μείζόν cited by Barrett are more apparent than real. Thus the veiled language of Matt. 12, 6 (λέγω δὲ ύμῖν ὅτι τοῦ εἰροῦ μείζόν ἐστιν ὁ δὲ) and Matt. 12, 41 f. = Luke 11, 31 f. (... καὶ ἰδοὺ πλείον Ἰονᾶ ὁ δὲ ... καὶ ἰδοὺ πλείον Σολομόνος ὁ δὲ) offers no counterpart since in none of these instances is there a personal subject of which a neuter adjective is predicated – Jesus is not made to say ἔγω εἰμι πλείον Σολομόνος.

Again, at John 10, 30 we read not ἔγω εἰμι ἐν or ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐστι but ἔγω καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐσμέν. Since εἷς μία ἐν (which is in any case pronominal in character rather than adjectival) necessarily lacks plural forms, a true concord of subject and predicate is in this instance out of the question and the neuter singular the only correct possibility. That this is the case is only confirmed by the solecism of Galat. 3, 28: πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The offensive εἷς has already been removed from the text in P 46, whilst Patristic writers generally replace εἷς with the more appropriate ἐν in their citations of this text. Finally, it may be worth emphasizing that there is no pronounced tendency in the NT towards the use of discordant neuter adjectival predicates in sentences of a non-general nature. In addition to possible instances already mentioned I have noted only the following: Matt. 19, 4 = Mark 10, 6 = LXX Genesis 1, 27 (ἀρσεν καὶ θηλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς); John 19, 11 (οὐκ εἷςς ἐξουσίως κατ᾽ ἐμοῦ οὔδεστιν εἰ μὴ ἢν δεδομένον σοι ἁνωθεν); Acts 12, 3 in D (ἰδὼν δὲ ὅτι ἄρεστον ἐστιν.
tois IOUOALIOS ή ἐπιχείρησις αὐτοῦ); I John 2, 8 (ἐντολήν κατιήν ὑπὸρο ὑμῖν, δ ἐστίν ἄληθεν). At Rev. 12, 5 (ἐπεκέν νὼν ἄρσεν, δ ... νίον and ἄρσεν are in apposition (cf. Blass-Debrunner, para. 136, 3); however, it is indicative of the strong sense, even in the Hellenistic age, of the need for congruence in the case of adjectives applied to nouns denoting persons that even here a wide variety of authorities from P 47 onwards have substituted in place of ἄρσεν the masculine form of the adjective.

The above considerations cast serious doubt on the reading ὁς ... μετίζων and give firm grounds for assuming (since the substitution of ὁ for ὁ and vice versa is one of the most common of scribal errors) that if ὁς is correct then μετίζων is in origin simply a transcriptional mistake for μετίζων. It is left to us then to choose between the neuter formulation ὁ ... μετίζων and the masculine ὁς ... μετίζων. The choice is not difficult to make, for, as Barrett points out, “If ... we accept the neuter reading, it is difficult to attach a meaning to the sentence and impossible to fit it into the context. The sentence will run; As to my Father, what he has given me is greater than all, and no one can snatch... The nominativus pendens is Johannine; but what is the Father’s gift to the Son? The context suggests the sheep, but these cannot be said to be greater than all”.

However, before we conclude in favour of ὁς ... μετίζων we must consider the objection raised against this reading by Barrett and others that “it is impossible to explain how this excellent reading came to be changed into the difficult ὁ ... μετίζων”. In reply to this claim one can only point out that the transition from ὁς ... μετίζων to ὁ ... μετίζων or ὁ ... μετίζων is in fact well within the bounds of transcriptional probability. In the case of the transition to ὁ ... μετίζων it is not difficult to conceive the scribe as motivated, whether consciously or unconsciously, by the desire to provide an explicit object to δέδωκε. The notion of the Father giving to the Son, it may be recalled, occurs with particular frequency in John, but if ὁς ... μετίζων is correct then 10, 29 is one of the few instances in this gospel (other examples are 14, 27 and 16, 23) in which δίδωμι occurs without an expressed grammatical object. It is surely difficult to deny the possibility of a scribe failing to note that the object

---

15 In this last instance the neuter is not strictly predicative but may nevertheless be considered relevant to our inquiry.

16 Cf., e.g., John 5, 36 (ὁ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ), 6, 37 (ὁ δίδωσιν μοι ὁ πατήρ), 6, 39 (ὁ δέδωκέν μοι), 17, 2 (ὁ δέδωκας αὐτῷ), 17, 4 (ὁ δέδωκας μοι), 17, 9 (περὶ ὧν δέδωκας μοι), 17, 24 (πατήρ, ὁ δέδωκας μοι), 18, 11 (ὁ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ).
of δέδωκε (αὐτά = πρόβαστα)\textsuperscript{17} was to be supplied from the previous sentence and in consequence succumbing to the urge to bring the language of 10, 29 into line with formulations occurring elsewhere in the gospel by substituting δ for δς. Whether the deterioration from μείζων to μείζον (which latter form could only be understood as predicative to the object of δέδωκε) was in any way responsible for this substitution or was a product thereof, or perhaps a completely independent transcriptional error, it is probably impossible on the basis of the presently available evidence to decide. But one might reasonably suspect rather that the transition to μείζον (a mere orthographical slip) has preceded and provoked the alteration of δς to δ than the scribe has altered δς to δ in front of μείζον at the expense of the logic of the sentence as a whole. This, however, is a matter of only secondary interest. The important fact is that at whatever point in the tradition the variant μείζον emerged the transition from δς to δ is fully explicable in terms of transcriptional probability. In consequence of which consideration it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the original reading was, as near as we can ascertain,\textsuperscript{18} ὁ πατὴρ μου δς δέδωκέν μοι πάντων μείζων ἐστίν.

For the remainder of this paper I turn to a feature of John 10, 29 which has, I think, escaped the attention of commentators but which certainly merits consideration. It is remarkable that the combination 1πάντων μείζον\textsuperscript{19} appears to have been a Hellenistic liturgical formula or ἐπίκλησις. As such it occurs in a famous magical papyrus at Leiden in a prayer which opens as follows (PGM XIII, 63 ff.):

\[ \text{ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε τὸν πάντων μείζων, τὸν πάντα κτίσαντα, σε τὸν αὐτοκεννήτον, τὸν πάντα ὅριντα καὶ μὴ ὅριμενον ὅπως γὰρ ἔδωκες ἥλιον τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν ἀπάσαν, σελήνην ἀυξείν καὶ ἀπολήγειν καὶ ὅριμους ἔχειν τακτοῖς, μὴ δὲν ἀναρήσας τῷ προγενεστέρῳ σκότῳ, ἀλλ' ἔστηται αὐτὸν ἐμέρισας: σοὶ γὰρ φανέντος καὶ κόσμοι ἐγένετο καὶ φοι ἐδάνη, σοὶ πάντα ὑποτέκται, σοὶ οὖν δέων δύναται Ἰδεῖν τὴν ἀληθινὴν μορφήν. ὁ μεταμορφοῦμενος εἰς πάντας, ἀδρας τοῦ Άλων Αἰώνος.}\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17} The object of δέδωκεν ("them") has been made explicit in the Sahidic version, as also already in P. Bodmer III. In P 75 the size of the lacuna between ἐδωκέν μὴτ and παντων μειζον suggests that here too an explicit object to the verb of giving has been introduced into the text – presumably αὐτά, or even πάντα (cf. K. Aland, Neue neutestamentliche Papyri II, New Testament Studies 11 (1964-65) 19).

\textsuperscript{18} In particular the following uncertainties should be noted: μοι is not universally attested; P 66 and P 75 read ἔδωκεν; the tradition is divided as to whether μείζων should precede or follow πάντων.

\textsuperscript{19} Or μείζον πάντων. The order of the terms would not affect the formularic character of the whole.

\textsuperscript{20} The text is translated and commented upon by A.J. Festugière, La révélation
I quote this prayer (which reoccurs with slight variations at PGM XIII, 570 ff. and is referred to by its *incipit* at PGM XIII, 688 ff.: γράφως ... τὴν στήλην, ὑς ἦ ἀρχή 'ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε, τὸν πάντων μείζονα') at such length because it contains clear indications of Hellenistic Jewish ancestry. Thus, the term *αὐτογέννητος* is particularly suited to the unfathered God of the Jews, and indeed its Jewish associations are well attested. The term is applied to God in the *Sibyline Oracles* (VIII, 429), whilst Ps.-Justin quotes an oracle, apparently popularly ascribed to Apollo at Delphi, as follows (*Cohort. 11, PG 6, 264*): ἔρμηνευ γάρ τινος, ὡς αὐτοί (sc. the Greeks) φατε, τοῦ παρ' ὑμῖν χρηστηρίου τίνας συνεβέθ θεοσεβεῖς ἀνδρας γεγενήσθαι ποτε, ὅτω τ' χρηστηρίου εἰρηκέναι φατε:\n
Μοῦνοι Χαλδαίοι σοφῖν λάχον, ἡδ' ἄρ' Ἐβραϊ, αὐτογέννητον ἀνακτα σεβαζόμενοι θεον ἀγνός.\n


At *Cohort. 21, PG 6, 285* Ps.-Justin apparently wrote αὐτὸν in place of ἄγνος.\n
*A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (ed. Lampse) s.v. αὐτογένεθλος lists this reference incorrectly and mistakenly suggests Choirilus as the source of the oracle. For αὐτογένεθλος, αὐτογένης, αὐτογέννητος and αὐτοφυής in Gnostic and early Christian theologies see *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. It may be added that the term αὐτογένητος occurs frequently in the *Apocryphon of John* (pp. 30–35 in P. Berol. 8502), and that all these terms, as well as αὐτοπάτωρ, are well represented in the *Anonymous Gnostic Writing of the Codex Bruciianus* (cf. C. Schmidt, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften* I, 3. Aufl. v. W. Till, GCS Bd. 45 (Berlin 1962), Wortregister s.v.). In the *Oracula Chaldaica* (p. 25 Kroll) the patriarch νός was described as αὐτογενεθλος, whilst Porphryry (*Hist. phil. fr. 18 Nauck*) used the terms αὐτογένητος, αὐτοπάτωρ and αὐτογόνος of the eternal procession of νός from the first god: προηλθε δὲ προαίωνος ἄρ' αὑτοῦ τοῦ δεδο όρμημένος, αὐτογένητος δὲ καὶ αὐτοπάτωρ ὡς γὰρ ἑκείνου κινουμένου πρὸς γένεσιν τὴν τοῦτον ἢ πρόδοος γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ τούτου παρελθόντος αὐτογόνον ἐκ δεδο. For αὐτογένεθλος cf. further the *Theosophia Tubingensis*, p. 107, 18 (quoted below) and 109, 10 Buresch. Other terms similarly used of the deity as causa sui are αὐτάτης, αὐτωχέως, αὐτοδόχως, αὐτοσαράκτος, αὐτόσπορος (cf. *Theos. Tub.* p. 107, 18 Buresch αὐτὸς ἢνας πάντως, αὐτόσπορος, αὐτογένεθλος), αὐτόσυντος (Synesius, *Hymn.* IX, 52 Terzaghi; not listed in *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*), αὐτόπατρος (Nonnus, *Paraphr. in Jo.* I, 1, PG 43, 749; not listed in *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*). *Const. apost.* VI, 11, PG 1, 936 indicates that some Christian circles regarded terms of this type as Gnostic and in consequence rejected them: οὐκ αὐτάτης καὶ αὐτογένεθλον (sc. τὸν πατέρα), ὡς ἑκείνοι (sc. the followers of Simon Magus) οὖνται,
place of aυτογένητος the term aυτοφυής occurs in Book III of the Sibylline Oracles in a passage which also in other respects bears marked resemblances to the prayer in PGM XIII (Orac. Sib. III, 11 f.; 17 ff.):

εἰς θέος ἐστὶ μόνοροχος ἀθέσφατος αἰθέρι ναϊνον 
αὐτοφυής ἀόρατος δράμενος αὐτὸς ἀπαντά: 

τίς γὰρ θνητὸς ἐὰν κατειδίων δύναται θεὸν ὅσσοις; 
ἡ τις χωρίσει κάν τοῦνοι μοῦνον ἀκοῦσαι 
οὐρανόν μεγάλοιο ἦς ἔσσων κρατέοντος; 
δὲς λόγῳ ἐκτίσει πάντα καὶ οὐρανόν ἰδεὶ ἐκλασαν 
ηξίλον τ' ἀκάμανα σελήνην τε πληδουσαν 
ἀστάρα τε λαμπετόδοντα, κραταίαν μητέρα Τῆθην,

ἀλλ' ἀϊδον καὶ ἀναρχον. Cf. further Ps.-Clement, Recogn. III, 3, 8 ff., GCS, Pseudeklement. II, p. 97, 8 ff. (PG I, 1283): ingenitii autem appellatio non quid sit, nobis intelligere dat, sed quod non est factus; autopatora[n] vero et autogeneton, hoc est ipsum sibi patrem ipsamque sibi filium qui vocaverunt illud quod est ingenitum, contumeliam facere conati sunt dubius deservientes rationibus; III, 4, 2f., GCS., ibid. II, p. 98, 6ff. (PG 1, 1283); III, 11, 1ff., GCS, ibid. II, p. 105, 15ff. (PG 1, 1287 ff.). The term ἀλόγχευτος is used of Dionysus in an inscription, dating from the first half of the third century after Christ, from the Dolicheneum at Dura (cf. H. N. Porter, A Bacchic Graffito from the Dolicheneum at Dura, American Journal of Philology 69 (1948) 27 ff.), and in all probability, according to Porter (op. cit., p. 32), refers not to the fact that Dionysus was "born in a manner other than the usual manner" (cf. ἀλόγχευτος at Colluthus, De rapt. Hel. 182), but to his being ungenerated or self-produced (cf. Synesius, Hymn. IX, 54 Terzaghi). Porter rules out the former interpretation on the ground that (loc. cit.), "The initiates in Dura did not have the interest in or knowledge of mythology and etymology possessed by Nonnus and Colluthus". However, since even at Dura some knowledge of the mythology of Dionysus would be essential to the existence of his cult, Porter's argument does not convince entirely. On ἀὐτοπατωρ and ἀλόγχευτος see also A. Cameron's note (to which I am indebted) Gregory of Nazianzus and Apollo, Journal of Theological Studies 20 (1969) 240f. Since terms of the above type play no significant role in Philo, it seems reasonable to regard them as a relatively late development. However, it should be noted that the term αὐτογόνος, or some equivalent may have been used of the physical universe by the Early Academic Crantor in his commentary on the Timaeus; cf. Proclus, In Tim. I, 277, 8 ff. Diehl: οὐ δὲ περὶ Κράντορα τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐξηγητάς φασι γεννητὸν λέγεσθαι τὸν κόσμον ὡς ἀπ' αἰτίας ἄλλης παραγόμενον καὶ οὐκ ὅτα ἀὐτόγονον οὐδὲ αὐθύποστον. The presence of the term αὐθύποστος shows that Proclus is paraphrasing Crantor's argument rather than quoting him verbatim; cf. H. Đörrie, Ὑπόστασις: Wort- und Bedeutungsgeschichte (Nachr. d. Akad. d. Wiss. in Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Kl. 1955, Nr. 3), p. 67. Moreover the conception appears in full philosophical flower in a fragment of Chrysippus preserved in Philodemus, De pieitate p. 80 Gomperz: ἀπαντά τε ἐστὶν ἀιθῆρ ὁ αὐτὸς ὁ δὲ καὶ πατήρ καὶ ύλός, ὃς κάν τὸ πρῶτοι μὴ μάχεσθαι τὸ τῆς Ῥεία[ν] και μητέρα [τού] Διός εἶναι καὶ δειναξτέρα. Relevant to the antiquity of the conception is also Plutarch, De Iside 376 A: τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἰσιον πολλάκις τῆς ἈΘηνᾶς ὄνοματι καλοῦσα (sc. the Egyptians) φράζοντα τοιοῦτον λόγον “ὧδεν ὁ ιός ἐμφατῆς”, ὁπερ ἐστὶν αὐτοκινητοῦ φορὰς δηλατικόν. For God as causa sui in a Stoic context see also Seneca, Quaest. nat. VII, 30, 3 (quoted on p. 253 below). On this topic see further Synesius, Hymn. I, 144 ff. Terz., and Terzaghi's notes thereon.
Here, as in the prayer in PGM XIII, we meet the theme of divine power and creativity combined with the conception of the unseen, all-seeing God. Also this latter conception has specifically Jewish associations. Cf. Matt. 6, 6 (Ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων εν τῷ κρύπτῳ) and Leviticus Rabbah 4, 8 (“Like God, the soul sees but is not seen”); further Philo, De opific. 69 (ὅς γὰρ ἔχει λόγον ὁ μέγας ἡγεμόν ἐν ἀπαντι τῷ κόσμῳ, τούτων ὡς οἰκεί κ(103,89),(331,135)

Strikingly similar to the prayer in PGM XIII is also Orac. Sib. fr. 1, 7 ff.:

A similar combination of ideas is also found in Ps.-Justin, De mon. 2, PG 6, 316, in a supposed Orphic poem (= Orph. fr. 245 Kern) deriving

24 Cf. Orac. Sib. IV, 12 ff.:

88 The analogy between the soul and the unseen deity also appears in popular Stoicism; cf. Ps.-Aristotle, De mundo 399 b 11 ff. Although it may be supposed that nothing escapes the notice of Zeus (cf., e.g., Hesiod, Opera 267 πάντα ὤδεν Δίος ὀφθαλμός καὶ πάντα νόησα), it is in Greek tradition the preeminently visible sun that is commonly thought of as observing and taking note of everything (cf., e.g., Iliad III, 277 Ἡλέκτος ἠ, ὡς πάντα ἐφορεῖ καὶ πάντα ἐπακούει). But though the sun may be visible, it is dangerous to stare at it. Orac. Sib. fr. 1, 10 ff., following Xenophon, Mem. IV, 3, 14, points out that since the human eye cannot even gaze at the sun without suffering damage, man is a fortiori incapable of beholding God – an argument that made considerable appeal to Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian writers (cf. Geffcken ad loc.).


27 This does not necessarily imply that God is not causa sui; cf. Orac. Sib. fr. 1, 17: αὐτογενῆς ἀγένητος ἀπαντα κρατῶν διὰ παντός.
from a Jewish propaganda source\textsuperscript{28} which listed, after the fashion of a γνωμολογία, texts (mostly forged, but some genuine) under the names of authors of the classical age in support of Jewish beliefs and practices:

\begin{quote}
\textit{εἰς ὑπὸτι αὐτογενῆς, ἐνὸς ἐκχονα πάντα τέτεκται:}
\textit{ἐν δ’ αὐτός αὐτὸς περιγίγνεται, ὡδὲ τις αὐτὸν εἰσοράς ἤθητον, αὐτὸς δὲ γε πάντας ὁρᾶται.}
\end{quote}


Highly relevant to our theme is also the \textit{Kerygma Petri} (fr. 2 Klostermann) as quoted by Clement of Alexandria at \textit{Strom. VI}, 5, PG 9, 257\textsuperscript{ff.}:

\begin{quote}
γινώσκετε οὖν ὅτι εἰς θεός ἐστίν, ὃς ἀρχὴν πάντων ἐποίησεν, καὶ τέλους ἐξουσίαν ἔχον ... ὁ ἀόρατος, ὃς τὰ πάντα ὑρῆ, ἀχώρητος, ὃς τὰ πάντα χωρεῖ, ἀνεπιδείκτος, οὐ τὰ πάντα ἐπιδείκται καὶ δι’ οὐ δὲ ἐστὶν, ἀκατάληπτος, ἀέριος, ἀφθαρτός, ἀποίητος, ὃς τὰ πάντα ἐκοινώσεν λόγῳ δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

Whilst from the Jewish propagandizing compilation to which reference has just been made derive the following verses, ascribed by Clement (\textit{Protr. VI}, PG 8, 173) to Euripides (fr. 1129 Nauck), and by Ps.-Justin (\textit{De mon. 2}, PG 6, 316) to Philémon:

\begin{quote}
θεὸν ἃς ποιοῦν, εἰπέ μοι, νομιστέον (νοητέον Clem. Alex.);
τὸν πάνθ’ ὄραντα, κακῶν ὅψ ὥρωμεν.
\end{quote}

It is hardly necessary to remark that these verses should in fact be referred neither to Euripides nor to Philémon but rather to the pen of a Hellenistic Jewish forger. Again, Ignatius, \textit{Ad Magn.} 3, 1\textsuperscript{f.}, contrasts God, the invisible ἐπίσκοπος πάντων, with His visible representative,


\textsuperscript{29} Cf. Kern, \textit{Orph. fr.}, pp. 255\textsuperscript{ff}. See also p. 253 below.

\textsuperscript{30} Lactantius, \textit{Div. Inst.} I, 7, PL 6, 152, remarks that God \textit{a Sibylla αὐτογενῆς, et άγεννυτος, et ἀποίητος nominatur}. As J. Geffcken notes (\textit{Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina} (Leipzig 1902) p. 74), the term ἀποίητος occurs nowhere in the extant \textit{Sibyllina}. Perhaps Lactantius had in mind the closely related fr. 2 of the \textit{Kerygma Petri}. 
the ἐπίσκοπος of the Magnesians: εἰς τιμὴν οὖν ἐκεῖνῳ τοῦ θελήσαντος ἡμᾶς (sc. θεοῦ) πρέπον ἔστιν ἐπακούειν κατὰ μηδεμίαν ὑπόκρισιν· ἐπεὶ οὐχ ὅτι τὸν ἐπίσκοπον τούτον τὸν βλεπόμενον πλανὴ τις, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἄρατον παραλογίζεται. τὸ δὲ τοιοῦτον οὐ πρὸς σάρκα ὁ λόγος, ἀλλὰ πρὸς θεόν τὸν τὰ κρύφια εἰδότα. Another Christian variant on this Jewish theme occurs in the Apology of Aristides (IV, 1 = Barl. et Joas. 27, PG 96, 1109): ὃς (sc. θεὸς) ἔστιν ἀφθαρτὸς τε καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος καὶ ἄρατος· αὐτὸς δὲ πάντα ὅρη· καί, καθὼς βουλεῖται, ἀλλοιοῖ καὶ μεταβάλλει.

Peculiarly relevant to our discussion is also the final prayer of the Anonymous Gnostic Writing (c. 22) of the Codex Brucianus, in particular the following (GCS, Koptisch-gnostische Schriften I, p. 366, 29ff.): “Er ist der Keim aller Güter (ἀγαθό), er ist auch schwanger von ihnen allen, der Selbstentstandene (αὐτοφόρης) oder (ἡ) der alleinige Spross, der vor dem All existiert, der sich allein gezeugt hat, der zu jeder Zeit existiert. Ein Selbstgezeugter (αὐτογέννητος) und Ewiger ist er, der keinen Namen hat und dem alle Namen gehören, der eher erkennt als das All, der das All betrachtet (Θεωρεῖ) und auf das All blickt, der das All erhört, der mächtiger ist als (παρά) alle Kräfte, in dessen unbegreifliches Gesicht niemand schauen kann.”

The Hellenistic Jewish liturgical material in Books VII and VIII of the Constitutiones apostolicae31 contains much that is pertinent to our inquiry. See, e.g., Const. apost. VIII, 5, PG 1, 107332: "Ο ὄν, δέσποτα, κύριε, ὁ θεὸς, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ μόνος ἀγέννητος, καὶ ἀβασίλευτος· ὁ ἄει ὄν, καὶ πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων ὑπάρχων· ὁ παντὶ ἀνενδηκής, καὶ πάσης αἰτίας καὶ γενέσεως κρείττων· ὁ μόνος ἀληθινός, ὁ μόνος σοφός· ὁ ὄν μόνος ὑψιστός· ὁ τῇ φύσει ἄρατος· ὁ γνώσις· ἀναρχος· ὁ μόνος ἀγαθός, καὶ ἀσύγκριτος, ὁ τὰ πάντα εἰδώς πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν· ὁ τῶν κρυπτῶν γνώσης· κτλ. And further ibid. VIII, 15, PG 1, 1112f.33: ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἀληθινός καὶ ἀσύγκριτος, ὁ πανταχός ὄν καὶ τοῖς πάσι παρών καὶ ἐν οὐδενὶ ὡς ἐνόν τι υπάρχων, ὁ τόπος μὴ περιγραφόμενος, ὁ χρόνος μὴ παλαιούμενος, ὁ αἰών μὴ περατούμενος, ὁ λόγος πὴ παραγόμενος, ὁ γεννᾶς μὴ υποκείμενος, ὁ φυλακῆς μὴ δεόμενος, ὁ φθορᾶς ἀνώτερος, ὁ τροπῆς ἀνεπίδεκτος, ὁ φύσει ἀναλ-

The interpretation of the name 'Ispahî as ὁ ὥραν θεόν = Ἰαπάτι also occurs at Const. apost. VII, 36, PG 1, 1032, and is familiar from Philo (cf., e.g., De mut. nom. 81: Ἰαπάτι ὥραν τὸν θεόν καλεῖται) and a wide range of more or less contemporary sources. It is particularly fascinating to meet this etymology in the context of the above prayer, because it represents there a reaction against the conception of the deity as τὸν πάντα ὥραν καὶ μὴ ὥραμενον. God is not absolutely invisible, but makes Himself known to those who approach Him in the proper spirit, and in particular to His chosen people, τὸ ὥρατικὸν γένος (cf. Philo, De mut. nom. 109).

In the NT this latter theme is apparent at, e.g., Matt. 5. 8 (μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεόν ὄρωνται), and Hebrews 12, 14 (εἰρήνην διώκετε μετὰ πάντων, καὶ τὸν ἁγιασμὸν, οὐ χρήσις οὐδεὶς ὁμαται τὸν κύριον). Also the seemingly ambiguous Hebrews 11, 27 (τὸν γὰρ ὥραν τὸν ὥραν ἐκαρτήρησεν) should probably be interpreted as indicating that the Invisible did in fact make Himself visible to Moses. At any rate, taking into account the nature of the Hellenistic situation, I cannot accept the view of W. Michaelis that, "The author is not interested in the question whether Moses ever saw God or not". Of especial interest, however, is I John 4, 7 f.: πᾶς ὁ ἁγιασμὸς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγένηται καὶ γινόσκει τὸν θεόν. ὁ μὴ ἁγιασμὸν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν, ὅτι ὁ θεός ἁγάπη ἐστίν. For the prevalence in the Middle Platonic period of the view, particularly associated with the Pythagoreans, that ὁ θεὸς τὸ δύμα γνωρίζεται (Albinus, Didasc. 14, p. 169 Hermann) see J. H. Waszink on Calcidius, In Tim. 51, p. 100, 10 ff. It should be noted further that the doctrine is specifically linked with the problem of

---

34 A Christian interpolation.
35 For further references see H. Leisegang, Der heilige Geist (Leipzig-Berlin 1919) p. 224 n. 3.
36 Cf., e.g., Melito, De Pascha 603 ff. For further examples see O. Perler’s commentary (Sources Chrétienes, 123) thereon.
37 More references in Leisegang, op. cit., p. 223 n. 4.
39 Cf. III John 11 ὁ κακοποιῶν οὐχ ἑφακεν τὸν θεόν.
knowledge of God in the *Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides*,\(^{40}\) fol. IV, 21 ff.:

[ἡμεῖς] καὶ πάντα τὰ


důντα τὸ μηδὲν ἐσμέν πρὸς αὐτόν. δι' ἄν

αιτίαν οὐκ ἔχωρει τὸ γνῶναι αὐτὸν, ὅτι

μηδὲν ἔστιν πάντα τὰ ἄλλα πρὸς αὐτόν,

αἷ δὲ γνώσεις τὸν ὁμοίω αἵρουσι τὸ ὁ-


Thus it is only by becoming like God that man can gain knowledge of Him. This point is stressed at *Corpus Hermeticum* XI, 20 (I, 155, 11 ff. N-F): εἶν οὖν μὴ σεαυτόν ἐξισάτης τῷ θεῷ, τὸν θεὸν νοησάω οὐ

dύνασαι τὸ γὰρ ὁμοίον τῷ ὁμοίῳ νοητόν. Cf. also *Plotinus, Enn.* I, 6, 9, 32 ff. H-S: γενέσθω δὴ πρῶτον θεοειδῆς πάς καὶ καλὸς πάς, εἰ μέλλει

θέασομαι θεὸν τε καὶ καλὸν. The same view seems to be reflected at I John 3, 2: οἴδαμεν δὲ εἶναν θανερωθῇ δύοιοι αὐτὸς ἑσόμεθα, ὅτι


Whilst such statements are in accord with the claim made at Ps. 17, 15 that God will indeed reveal Himself to His righteous servant, Exodus 33, 20 had ascribed to God the emphatic assertion that Οὐ δυνήσῃ ἰδεῖν μου τὸ πρόσωπων οὐ γὰρ μὴ ἴδῃ ἀνθρώπος τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ

ζήσεται.\(^{42}\) This latter view receives frequent emphasis in the NT; cf., e.g., John 1, 18 (ὁ θεὸν οὖδεὶς ἐδοξάκεν πάσητε), 6, 46; I John 4, 12 (ὁ θεὸν

οὐδείς πάσητε τεθέαται), 4, 20; I Tim. 6, 16 (ὁ ἐδεδν οὖδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται). However, the strictness of this conception is often

modified or neutralized by the contrary claim that the Son is the mediator of the divine vision; cf., e.g., Matt. 11, 27 (οὐδεὶς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν υἱὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ πατὴρ, οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις ἐπιγινώσκει εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ φεἀ εἶναν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἄποκαλύψαι); John 1, 18 (ὁ ἐν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ

πατρός, ἐκείνος ἐξηγήσατο (sc. τὸν θεόν)), 12, 45 (ὁ θεορῶν ἐμὲ θεωρεῖ τὸν πέμψαντα με), 14, 9 (ὁ ἑωράκει ἐμὲ ἐδοξάκεν τὸν πατέρα).

In interpreting Hellenistic pronouncements such as the above regarding man’s ability to “see” the deity, one must bear in mind that such terms as ὁρῶ, ἑωρῶ, ἑάωμαι are ambiguous in that they may refer to


\(^{41}\) Cf. also II Corinth. 3, 18.

mentally apprehension as well as to physical sensation. There is no doubt that in the heat of the Hellenistic debate this distinction frequently became blurred or was left completely out of account. On the other hand it was often emphasized (usually in dependence upon Plato, Tim. 28 A 1 f.: νοεί μετὰ λόγου περιληπτόν) that though God is inaccessible to the physical eye, He may be grasped by νοῦς or λόγος, the divine element in man. Thus our Jewish propagandizing source quotes the Ps.-Orphic fragment to which reference was made above as follows:

οὐδὲ τις αὐτόν
eἰσοράμα θνητῶν, αὐτός δὲ γε πάντας ὁρᾶται.

In Ps.-Aristobulus’ version, however, we read:

οὐδὲ τις αὐτὸν
eἰσοράμα ψυχῶν θνητῶν, νῦν δ’ ἐἰσοράμαται.

Cf. also the Neopythagorean Ps.-Onatas ap. Stobaeus, Anth. I, p. 48, 12 f. Wachsmuth: οὗ μὲν ὄν θεός αὐτός οὔτε ὀρατός οὔτε αἰσθητός, ἀλλὰ λόγῳ μόνον καὶ νόῳ θεωρατός. It is interesting that Seneca makes the same point in connection with the Stoic conception of the self-production of the deity at Quaest. nat. VII, 30, 3: Quam multa praeter hos (sc. cometas) per secretum eunt numquam humanis oculis orientia! Neque enim omnia deus homini fecit. Quota pars operis tanti nobis committitur? Ipse qui ista tractat, qui condidit, qui totum hoc fundavit deducte circa se, maiorque est pars sui operis ac melior, effugit oculos; cogitatione visendus est. The same theme occurs again, but with a significant addition (cf. Matt. 5, 8), at C.H. VII, 2 (I, 81, 16 f. N-F): οὗ γὰρ ἐστιν (sc. οὗ θεός) ἀκουστός, οὐδὲ λεκτός, οὐδὲ ὀρατός ὀφθαλμοῖς, ἀλλὰ νῦν καὶ

---

43 Cf. Michaelis, op. cit. (see previous footnote).
45 A. S. Pease on Cicero, N.D. I, 49 (non sensu sed mente cernatur) has gathered many references (though his list is far from exhaustive) to illustrate the commonplace nature of this theme.
46 Cf. pp. 248 f. above.
47 Cf. p. 249 above.
48 Cf. footnote 23 above.
Kapùí? With this one may compare Origen, Contra Cels. VI, 69, PG 11, 1404: ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ θεὸς καθ' ἡμᾶς τῷ μὲν μὴ εἶναι σῶμα ἀόρατος ἔστιν τοῖς δὲ θεωρητικοῖς καρδία θεωρητός, τούτεστι νῦν καρδία δὲ ὡς τῇ τιχούσῃ, ἀλλὰ τῇ καθαρᾷ: οὐ γὰρ θέμες μεμολυσμένην καρδίαν ἔνοραν θεό, ἀλλὰ δὲ καθαρῶν εἶναι τῷ τού καθαροῦ κατ' ἀξίαν θεωρητικόν.

Elsewhere Origen emphasizes the role of the Son (λόγος) as mediator. Thus at Contra Cels. VI, 65, PG 11, 1397 Origen criticizes Celsus' view that God is οὐδὲ ἑκτός (a polemical rejection, or better, exaggeration, of Tim. 28 A 1 f.):

"οὐδὲ λόγῳ ἑκτός" diastēλλομαι τῷ σημαιόμενον, καὶ φημι, εἰ μὲν λόγῳ τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν, εἰτε ἐνδιαθέτει, εἰτε καὶ προφορικόν καὶ ἡμεῖς φήσομεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἑκτός τῷ λόγῳ ὁ θεὸς: εἰ δὲ, νοησάντες τὸ, "Εν ἄρχῃ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος": ἀποφαινόμεθα, ὅτι τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ ἑκτός ἔστιν ὁ θεὸς, οὐ μόνος αὐτός καταλαμβανόμενος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ἂν αὐτὸς ἀποκαλύψει τὸν πατέρα, ψευδοποίησομεν τὴν Κέλσου λέξιν, φάσκοντος Οὐδὲ λόγῳ ἑκτός ἔστιν ὁ θεὸς.

48 However, according to Origin, Contra Cels. VII, 45, PG 11, 1488, Celsus also claimed that God was ἄρρητος τινα δυνάμει νοητός. The extremist view also appears in Philo at De leg. spec. II, 165 (ὁ αὐτότατος πατὴρ θεόν τε καὶ ἀνθρώποι καὶ τοῦ σώματος κόσμου δημιουργός, οὐ τὴν φύσιν ἀόρατον καὶ δυστόπαστον οὐδὲν οὐ μόνον δραμάνι ἀλλὰ καὶ οὐδενία πάντες οἱ περὶ τὰ μαθήματα καὶ τὴν ἀλλήν φιλοσοφίαν διατρίβοντες ἁναζητεῖν γλίσονται; cf. ibid. I, 36 ff.: άμείνον γὰρ ὀδυνὲν τοῦ ζητεῖν τον ἀληθῆ θεόν, κἂν καὶ τὸν διαφενέν δύναμιν ἄνθρωπίνην, ἐπειδή καὶ οὗ περὶ τὸ βουλευθεῖν μαθεῖν σπουδή καὶ καθ' αὐτῆς ἁλέκους ἡδονάς καὶ εὐφροσύνας ἐργάζεται. KtL. Lactantius, Div. inst. I, 8, PL 6, 153, conflates this extremist view with Tim. 28 C 3 ff.: cuius (sc. dei) vim maiestatemque tantam esse dicit in Timaeo Plato, ut eam neque mente concipere, neque verbis enarrare quisquam possit, ob nīmiam eius et inaestimabilem potestatem. As E. Norden (Agnostos Theos (rp. Darmstadt 1956) p. 84 n. 2) pointed out, Lactantius' closing words (which have no counterpart in the Timeus) have been borrowed from Minucius Felix' paraphrase of Tim. 28 C at Oct. 19, 14, PL 3, 296: quem et invenire difficile, praecipua et incredibili potestate; et, cum inveniris, in publicum dicere impossibile praefatur. There is no need to suppose, as does A. Wlosok (Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis (Heidelberg 1960) p. 226), that the formulation of Minucius Felix was in turn directly influenced by Apuleius, De deo Soer. 3: cum Plato ... frequentissime praedicet hune solum maiestatis incredibili quodam nimietate et ineffabili non posse penuria sermonis humanis quavis oratione vel modice comprehendi, etc. Minucius and Apuleius may well have been independently influenced by a Greek source which conflated Tim. 28 C and Rep. 509 B 9 f.: έτε ἐπεκείμενη τῇ ὀνήματι προσβείς καὶ δυνάμει ἀνέρχοντας. Cf. also Lactantius, De ira. 11, 11, PL 7, 112 (nece mente comprehendi (sc. deus)); and the misrepresentations of Xenophon, Mem. IV, 3, 13, and Plato, Laws 821 A at De ira. 11, 13, PL 7, 112f. A. D. Nock (The exegesis of Timaeus 28 C, Vigiliae Christianae 16 (1962) 79 ff.) argued against the view of Dr. Wlosok that Lactantius' neque mente concipere reveals "GNOSTIC" influence. Celsus' οὐδὲ λόγῳ ἑκτός makes it quite plain that the doctrine was in fact "schulplatonisch".
Clement of Alexandria, too, dwells upon the role of the divine λόγος, but emphasizes that divine generosity is also involved; cf. Strom. V, 12, PG 9, 124: ἄλλον οὖν ἐπιστήμην λαμβάνεται τῇ ἀποδεικτικῇ (sc. ὁ Θεός) αὐτῇ γὰρ ἐκ προτέρων καὶ γνωριμωτέρων συνίσταται, τοῦ δὲ ἄγνωστον οὖν προσφέρει. λείπεται δὴ θεία χάριτι καὶ μόνῳ τὸ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ λόγῳ τὸ ἄγνωστον νοεῖν. For divine generosity cf. also the Hermetic Asclepius 41 (II, 353 N-F): gratias tibi summe, exsuperantis-sime; tua enim gratia tantum summus cognitionis tuae lumen consecuti.50 Irenaeus, Contra haer. IV, 20, 5, PG 7, 1034 f., reconciles Exodus 33, 20 with Matt. 5, 8 as follows: ... Dominus ait: “Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.” Sed secundum magnitudinem quidem eius, et mira-bilem gloriam, “nemo videbit Deum, et vivet”; incapabilis enim Pater: secundum autem dilectionem et humanitatem, et quod omnibus posit, etiam hoc concedit ipsis qui se diligunt, id est videre Deum, quod et prophetabant prophetae. Quoniam “quae impossibilia apud homines, possibilitia apud Deum” (Luke 18, 27). Homo etenim a se non videt Deum. Ille autem volens videtur hominibus, quibus vult, et quando vult, et quemadmodum vult. Rather similar is C.H. X, 15 (I, 120, 7f. N-F): οὐ γὰρ ἄγνωστον θεός ἀλλὰ καὶ πάνω γνωρίζει καὶ θέλει γνωρίζεσθαι. The same theme is also in evidence in the prayer (to which we shall presently turn) at the close of the Hermetic Poimandres (C.H. I, 31 (I, 18, 3 f. N-F)): ἄγιος ὁ Θεός, διὸ γνωσθῆναι βούλεται καὶ γινώσκεται τοῖς ιδίοις. In the Budé edition Festugière translates this (correctly, I believe) as follows: “Saint est Dieu, qui veut qu’on le connaisse et qui est connu de ceux (or qui se fait connaître à ceux) qui lui appartennent.” For ιδίοις in the required sense cf. Justin, Dial. c. Tryph. 121, PG 6, 757: τοὺς δὲ ιδίους ἀναπαύει (sc. ὁ Θεός), ὑποδιδοὺς αὐτοῖς τὰ προσδοκώμενα πάντα. I cannot accept the translation later suggested by Festugière51: “Saint est Dieu, qui veut qu’on le connaisse et qui est connu par ses caractères propres.” The Greek could hardly convey this meaning without the assistance of some unambiguous substantive such as appears in the preceding verse (C.H. I, 31 (I, 18, 1f. N-F)): ἄγιος ὁ Θεός, οὗ η βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων.

To return to the main theme of this paper, the evidence assembled


above shows that we can hardly be wrong in ascribing a Hellenistic Jewish origin to the prayer in PGM XIII. However, this conclusion in no way implies that the use of the locution πάντων μείζων as a divine title must be considered exclusively Jewish. The formula seems on the contrary to be a widespread Hellenistic type. Thus Seneca (Ep. 58, 17) describes God as maior ac potentior cunctis. That Seneca has in mind a Greek formula can be seen from C.H. VI, 2 (1, 73, 6 N-F) where the universe is referred to as τῷ ζῷῳ τῶν πάντων μείζων καὶ δυνατωτάτῳ. The Hermetic Poimandres presents, in the final prayer just referred to above, a variation on the formula which carries the thought a step further in negative theological direction and is intended, perhaps, to put new life into a commonplace theme (C.H. 1, 31 (I, 18, 8 ff. N-F)):

άγιος ει, ὁ πάσης δυνάμεως ἱσχυρότερος.

άγιος ει, ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων.

άγιος ει, ὁ κρείσσων τῶν ἑπαίνων.

The popularity of the prayer (C.H. I, 31f.) from which these lines are taken may be judged from its presence in toto in a Christian prayer-book (P. Berol. 9794) dating from the late third century after Christ, and from the occurrence on an amulet in the British Museum (No. 56489) of the following formula: ὁ μείζων τῆς ὑπεροχῆς, ὁ τῆς δυνάμεως ἱσχυρότερος, ὁ τῶν ἐνκομίων κρείσσων, μενναῖ. The full connotation of the words ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων at C.H. I, 31 is, I think, perhaps not captured by Festugiere’s translation in the Budé edition: “... toi qui es plus grand que toute excellence.” The use of ὑπεροχή in the Hellenistic period is by no means limited to the expression of transcendency. In fact, the term is commonly used to indicate political power or supremacy, as may be seen from LSJ s.v. II, 3. Cf., e.g., I Tim. 2, 2: ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ δυντων. Moreover,

52 For a LXX counterpart cf. Soph. Sir. 43, 28: ὁ μέγας παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐργα αὐτοῦ.

53 Probably a Stoic-pantheistic transference of a divine title from the transcendent god to the universe. For Stoic ambivalence in this regard cf. Seneca, Quaest. nat. I, praef. 13: Quid est deus? mens universi. quid est deus? quod vides totum et quod non vides totum, sic demum magnitudo illi sua redditur, qua nihil maius excogitari potest, si solus est omnia, si opus suam et intra et extra tenet.


57 Possibly also P. Berol. 9794 read τῆς ὑπεροχῆς rather than πάσης ὑπεροχῆς; cf. C. Bonner, op. cit., p. 365.
also μείζων is frequently employed in the Hellenistic age of persons in authority; cf. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch d. griech. Pap.*, s.v. In consequence of this I would interpret ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων as indicating not merely transcendency but also that the deity is more powerful than any authority, i.e., King of kings. It should be noted that appellations of this type are particularly widespread in the Hellenistic period. Instances abound in the LXX; cf., e.g., Deut. 10, 17 (θεὸς τῶν θεῶν καὶ κύριος τῶν κυρίων), Ps. 88, 28 (ὑψηλὸν παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεύσιν τῆς γῆς), Daniel 2, 47 (θεὸς τῶν θεῶν καὶ κύριος τῶν βασιλέων), II Macc. 13, 4 (ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλέων). NT instances are I Tim. 6, 15 (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων), and Rev. 1, 5 (ὁ ἅρχων τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς).⁵⁸ Cf. further Philo, *De leg. spec.* I, 18 (βασιλεὺς βασιλέων), *ibid.* I, 20 (θεὸς θεῶν), Diodorus Sic. I, 47, 4 (βασιλεὺς βασιλέων Ὄσιμανδάς εἰμι), *ibid.* I, 55, 7 (βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ διεσπότης διεσποτῶν Σεαόδων), Plotinus, *Em. V*, 5, 3, 20 H-S (βασιλεὺς βασιλέως καὶ βασιλέων). And for a veritable proliferation of such formulations see the Anonymous *Gnostic Writing* (c. 22) of the *Codex Brucianus* (GCS, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften I*, p. 366, 14 ff.): “Dies ist der Ἱωάν οἱ Vater aller Väter und Ἰησοῦ οἱ Gott aller Götter und Ἱούσ οἱ Herr aller Herren und Ἰησοῦ οἱ Sohn aller Söhne und Ἰησοῦ οἱ Erlöser (σωτήρ) ὅll οἱ Erlöser (σωτήρες) und Ἰησοῦ οἱ Unserbaren (ἀπόρατος) ὅll Unserbaren (ἀπόρατος) und Ἰπιστούμενος ὅll Ἰησοῦ οἱ Schweigen (σιγή) alles Schweigens (σιγαί) usw.”

Certainly in the Leiden papyrus the formula πάντων μείζων is not just another Hellenistic variation on the theme of the immensity and infinity of the supreme deity. Rather, a consideration of literary and liturgical parallels to the opening of the prayer – ἐπικαλοῦμαι σῷ τῶν πάντων μείζων, τῶν πάντα κτίσαντα – reveals that the formula in question refers specifically to the status of the primary God as ruler of the universe: God is invoked not only as creator of the universe ( iov πάντα κτίσαντα) but also as king thereof (τῶν πάντων μείζων). Thus, at the opening of a Hellenistic Jewish prayer⁵⁹ God is invoked as δέσποτά τῶν ὅλων, κτίσαντα καὶ πρῶτος σῷ τῶν πάντων (Const. apost. VIII, 9, PG 1, 1084). Cf. also the opening of the sacrificial prayer at II Macc 1, 24 (Κύριε, κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ πάντων κτίστης ... ὁ μόνος βασιλεὺς κτλ.) and likewise III Macc. 2, 3 (σῷ γάρ ὁ κτίσας τὰ πάντα καὶ τῶν ὅλων ἐπικρατῶν δυνάστης δίκαιος εἰ); Judith 9, 12 (δέσποτα τῶν ὅλων

⁵⁸ Cf. also Rev. 17, 14 and 18; 19, 16.
It is interesting to note that Philo's division of God's power into δύναμις ποιητική and δύναμις βασιλική simply integrates a pre-existent liturgical theme into a theological system.

This emphasis upon God as both creator and ruler is equally evident in early Christian texts. In the NT, for example, we meet it at Acts 4, 24 (δέσποτα, συ ο ποιήσας τον ουρανόν και την γην και την θάλασσαν και πάντα τά ἐν αὐτοῖς) and 17, 24 (ὁ θεός ὁ ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, ὦτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος). Again, Justin speaks of τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὁλῶν καὶ δεσπότου θεοῦ ὄνομα (I Ap. 61, PG 6, 421) and of τοῦ πατρὸς πάντων καὶ δεσπότου θεοῦ οὖς (I Ap. 12, PG 6, 345), whilst a poem of Gregory Nazianzen opens thus (PG 37, 514 f.):

Σοι χάρις, ὁ πάντων βασιλεὺς, πάντων δὲ ποιητά.

Particularly remarkable is Ep. ad Diogn. VII, 2 (ὁ παντοκράτωρ καὶ παντοκτίστης καὶ ἀόρατος θεός) which, like the prayer in the Leiden papyrus, combines the theme of ruling and creative power with that of the invisibility of God.

The designation of the supreme divinity as both creator and ruler is by no means peculiarly Judaeo-Christian. Already Terpander writes (fr. 1 Diehl) ζεῦ πάντων ἀρχά, πάντων ἀγήτωρ. And Heraclitus seems to be reflecting liturgical usage when he says of πόλεμος that (fr. 53 Diels-Kranz) πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἔστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεὺς. Justin speaks of αὐτὸν τὸν ἡγεμόνα καὶ γεννήτορα πάντων κατ’ αὐτοὺς (sc. the Greeks) Δία (I Ap. 21, PG 6, 361), with which we may compare Ps.-Aristotle, De mundo 399 a 30 f. (ὁ πάντων ἡγεμόν τε καὶ γενέτωρ, ἀόρατος δὲν ἄλλῳ πλὴν λογισμοῦ), where once again the theme of regal and creative power is combined with the conception of the invisible deity (adjusted

---

in the light of *Timaeus* 28 A 1 f.). And Apuleius makes Isis reveal herself to Lucius as *rerum naturae pares, elementorum omnium*\textsuperscript{63} *domina* (*Metam. XI, 5*).

These examples indicate clearly the connotation of the formula πάντων μείζων in the context of the Hellenistic Jewish prayer preserved in the Leiden papyrus. It remains for us to consider the relevance of all the evidence accumulated above to the locution as it presents itself in John 10, 29. Since it appears in such widely disparate sources as the Leiden papyrus, Seneca, the *Hermetica*, and John, the formula in question was clearly fairly commonly used in the Hellenistic period to describe the status of the supreme divinity. However, the evidence does not entitle us to conclude that the locution possessed in every instance the same connotation. Thus, in the Leiden papyrus the phrase demonstrably refers to the ruling power which the God to whom the prayer is addressed is presumed to exercise over the universe; i.e., πάντων refers (as is in general the case in Hellenistic ἐπικλῆσεις) specifically to the created universe in its entirety. But at *C.H. VI*, 2 (I, 73, 6 N-F) (αὐτῷ τῷ ἥλιῳ πάντων μείζων καὶ δυνατοτάτῳ), since the ἥλιος is identical with the physical universe, πάντων can hardly refer to the totality of created things. In fact in this instance πάντων seems to be used either in much the same vague sort of way as in such expressions as πρὸ πάντων (cf., e.g., I Peter 4, 8) or πάντων μᾶλλοσ (cf., e.g., Aristotle, *Metaph. 1079 b 12*), or else to indicate the superiority of the universe, itself a ἥλιος, to all other ἥλιοι; cf. *Apos. Mos. 16* (p. 8 Tisch.) where the διάβολος says of the serpent ἔδρον δὲ σὲ μείζων πάντων τῶν θηρίων, and likewise the parable of the mustard-seed (Mark 4, 32): γίνεται μείζων πάντων τῶν λαχάνων. Again, a certain ambiguity attaches to the term μείζων, which in John 10, 29 might signify not so much ruling power as more generally the Father’s superiority to, or transcendency over, the created universe or, more vaguely, “everything”.\textsuperscript{64} Johannine usage\textsuperscript{65} and also the context suggest the former interpretation, but the obvious parallelism of John 3, 31 (ὅ ἂνωθεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἑστίν.

---

\textsuperscript{63} For the fanciful interpretation of πάντα (= the physical universe) as a derivative of πέντε (= the five elements - ether, fire, air, water, earth) cf. Plutarch, *De Iside 374 A*: καὶ τὰ πάντα τῶν πέντε γέγονε παράνωμα.

\textsuperscript{64} On the relevant meanings of μέγας see Grundmann’s contribution s.v. in Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* IV (English trans. Grand Rapids 1967).

\textsuperscript{65} Cf. Grundmann’s *op. cit.*
κτλ...) speaks strongly in favour of regarding πάντων μείζων as indicative not only of ruling power but also of transcendency.  

However, looking aside from this latter question of the more precise connotation of πάντων μείζων in John 10, 29, the above evidence makes it apparent that since the formula was commonly applied to the supreme deity in the Hellenistic period its liturgical flavour is likely to have been familiar to the author of John. Such being the case, it is unreasonable to suppose – following Barrett – that the evangelist should have inexplicably and ungrammatically substituted the neuter form μείζων for the familiar μείζων.  

St. John's, Memorial University of Newfoundland

---

66 For the meaning of ἐπάνω πάντων see Arndt-Bauer-Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament s.v. ἐπάνω 2. b.
67 For information regarding the Coptic versions of the NT I am greatly indebted to Richard H. Pierce of the University of Bergen.