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THE CAESAREAN OMISSION OF THE PHRASE
'SON OF GOD' IN MARK 1:1

Alexander Globe
University of British Columbia

Whether the phrase 'Son of God' should be included in the first verse of Mark is one of the thorniest New Testament textual cruxes. Nineteenth-century scholars, overawed by its omission in the newly discovered codex Sinaiticus ($\kappa = 01$) and wary of theological features that did not appear to be primitive, tended to view the phrase with suspicion.¹ Thus Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, and Nestle banished it from their Greek testament texts, while von Soden placed it in brackets. Although all modern English translations include the phrase (as do the Greek editions of Lachmann, Tregelles, Souter, Merk, and NEB Greek), it is placed in brackets by the widely used United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* and is omitted by the British and Foreign Bible Society's Greek, Aland's Greek *Synopsis*, Nestle's 25th edition, and some current European vernaculars (including the French version by Jean Grosjean in *La Bibliothèque de la Pléiade* [Paris, 1971], and the Dutch version of the Netherlands Bible Society, 1951). Three recent discussions of the text reflect the same variety of opinion. Cranfield adduces five "very strong reasons for regarding [the longer text] as original."² Metzger records the consensus of the UBS editors by placing the reading in the category where "there is a considerable degree of doubt whether the text or the apparatus contains the superior reading."³ Slomp argues that the phrase is

¹ Tischendorf published the fourth-century codex Sinaiticus in 1862. The title 'Son of God' reflects early Christian kerygma as recorded in Acts and the Epistles, while 'Son of man' is the more primitive synoptic title; see *TDNT* 8. 366-92, 430-61. Cf. the radical German championing, after 1894, of the Sinaitic Old Syriac variant in Matt 1:16; see my article on "Some Doctrinal Variants in Matthew 1 . . .," *CBQ* 42 (1980) 63-65 and n. 43.

² C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1963) 38. Commentaries have little discussion of the variant; most English-speaking exegetes accept the longer reading as genuine.

³ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971) 73; quotation from p. xxviii. B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort ("Notes on Select Readings," *The New Testament in the Original Greek* [2 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1881] vol. 2, App. I, p. 23) comment that "neither reading can be safely rejected."

TABLE OF PATRISTIC CITATIONS OF MARK 1:1 NOTED IN GREEK TESTAMENTS										
<i>The correct attestation is given in capital letters (i.e., LONG, SHORT, or OMIT). Brief comments explain reasons for correct and incorrect identifications.</i>										
	United Bible Society (3d; 1975)									
	Nestle, rev. Aland (25th; 1975)									
	Aland, <i>Synopsis Quat. Evang.</i> (7th; 1971)									
	Merk (9th; 1964)									
	British & Foreign Bible Soc. (2d; 1958)									
	Souter (2d; 1947)									
	Legg, Mark (1935)									
	Nestle (15th; 1932)									
	von Soden (1913)									
	Westcott and Hort (1881)									
	Tischendorf (8th; 1869)									
	Tregelles (1857-70)									
	Lachmann (1842)									
✓ - correct identification or choice	1	-	7	4	2	1	3	2	1	3
x - incorrect identification or choice	-	1	4	5	5	1	5	1	4	3
o - second variant noted	1	2	2	2	-	1	3	1	1	-
Irenaeus (202) author's abridgement	2/3 Latin: LONG Armenian: LONG Greek = 1/3 Latin: short	o	o	o	✓	o	o	o	o	o
Origen (254)	3 Greek, 1 Latin: SHORT misread Latin: long	✓	o	✓	✓	✓	o	✓	✓	o
Victorinus of Pettau (304)	original text: LONG Jerome's ed.: short			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Serapion (362)	SHORT			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Titus of Bostra (378)	corrupt ed.: OMIT corrupt ed.: short			x	x	x	x			x
Basil (379)	author's abridgement: OMIT author's abridgement: short			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cyril of Jerusalem (386)	SHORT			✓		✓				✓
Ambrose (397)	LONG			✓			✓	✓		✓
Epiphanius (403)	author's abridgement: OMIT author's abridgement: short			x			x			x
Severian (408)	LONG corrupt text: short			✓	✓					✓
Jerome (420)	full text 4/6: LONG author's abridgement 2/6: short			o	o	x	o	o	x	o
Augustine (430)	LONG			✓			✓			✓
Cyril of Alexandria (444)	LONG			✓						✓

secondary and should be omitted.⁴ In the light of such persistent disagreement, can any firm conclusion about the text of Mark 1:1 be reached?

The Patristic and Manuscript Evidence

The facing chart indicates how fragmentarily, confusingly, and even inaccurately the patristic evidence for Mark 1:1 has been recorded in Greek New Testaments. Errors have been compounded, since the information in some sources "has been taken almost wholly from printed editions of the Greek New Testament and has not . . . been checked."⁵ Five writers quote Mark 1:1 with the words 'Son of God' in passages where the context clearly favors the longer text: Irenaeus (d. ca. 202), Ambrose (d. 397), Jerome (d. 420), Augustine (d. 430), and Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444). The phrase is certainly omitted by Serapion of Thmuis (d. ca. 362) and probably by Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386).⁶ The other citations require discussion.

As Turner points out, many patristic quotations of Mark 1:1-2 are "directed to the comparison of the different openings of the four Gospels, in particular to their appropriateness to the respective evangelic symbols: and with this view they tend to omit as

⁴ Jan Slomp, "Are the Words 'Son of God' in Mark 1.1 Original?" *BT* 28 (1977) 143-50. This article is vitiated by a faltering grasp of NT textual criticism (on p. 144, the Textus Receptus is represented as the Greek version underlying the RV of 1881, while lines 20 and 32 do not give a clear account of codex 01) and by the apologetic purpose for preferring the shorter text (so that "Non-Christian readers will not find a stumbling block in the very first verse"—see p. 150).

⁵ *The Greek New Testament*, ed. Kurt Aland et al. (3d ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1975) xxxvi. Other Greek testaments rely heavily on Tischendorf and von Soden for patristic evidence.

⁶ Irenaeus *Adv. haer.* 3.10.5 (Latin) and 3.16.3 (Latin and Armenian); ed. W. W. Harvey (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1857) 2. 39, 84; ANF 1. 425, 441; *Irénée de Lyons: nouveaux fragments arméniens*, ed. Charles Renoux (PO 39, fasc. 1 [1978]) 50-51; see also William Sanday, *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis, being the New Testament Quotations . . .* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923) 44. *Adv. haer.* 3.16.2-3 cites Rom 1:1-4, Gal 4:4-5, and Mark 1:1-2; Irenaeus' exposition repeats the phrase 'Son of God' several times. Ambrose *Expos. Luc.* 10.118 (CCSL 14. 379 PL 15.1926). Jerome *Tract. Marc.* 1, *Comm. Matt.* 1, *Comm. Hiezec.* 1.1.6/8 (CCSL 78. 451; 77. 17; 75. 11). Augustine *De cons. evan.* 2.6 (CSEL 43. 114; PL 34. 1084-85). Cyril of Alexandria *Contra Iulian.* 10.330 (PG 76. 1007-8). Serapion of Thmuis, *Against the Manichees* (ed. Robert P. Casey; HTS 15; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1931) chap. 25 (p. 41, also in PG 40. 921-22) and chap. 37 (Casey ed., p. 55, not in the corrupt text in PG 40). Cyril of Jerusalem *Cat. lect.* 3.6 (PG 33. 533-36; trans. Wm. Telfer, LCC 4 [London, 1955] 93) offers an ambiguous context, but Cyril has several agreements with 01, W, Θ, fam-1, fam-13, 28, 565, and Origen in Mark; see J. H. Greenlee, *The Gospel Text of Cyril of Jerusalem* (SD 17; Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1955) 34-35.

much intervening matter as possible."⁷ Because they represent authors' contractions rather than exact citations from Bibles, such incomplete quotations should not be recorded in critical apparatuses. On these grounds, five passages cited as witnesses to the shorter variant should be removed from apparatuses. Irenaeus, in *Against All Heresies* 3.11.8 (preserved in Greek and Latin translation),⁸ discusses the opening of each gospel. His quotations, however, are truncated, with only vss 1 and 3 cited from John 1, with vss 1 and 18 only from Matthew 1, with Luke 1:5 paraphrased rather than quoted, and with the phrase 'Son of God' and Mark's citation from Malachi omitted from Mark 1:1-2. In Jerome's edition of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 4.4 by Victorinus of Pettau (d. 304), Mark 1:1-3 is quoted omitting 'Son of God' in vs 1 and Mark's citation from Malachi in vs 2b. Basil the Great of Cappadocia (d. 379), in *Against Eunomius* 2.15 (PG 29.601), omits 'son of Abraham' from Matt 1:1, and in Mark 1:1-3 omits 'Son of God' and the quotation from Malachi. Epiphanius (d. 403), Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, in his *Panarion Haereses* 51.6.4 (GCS 31, Epiphanius 2, p. 255) quotes Mark 1:1-3 excising the words 'Jesus Christ, Son of God' and the quotation from Malachi. Another type of occasional contraction appears in two of Jerome's citations that omit 'Son of God' from Mark 1:1-2: see his *Commentary on Malachi* 3.1 (CCSL 76A.927) and *Epistle to Pammachius* 57.9 (ed. Labourt, 3.67).

Actually, it is clear from other quotations that three of these writers read the longer text of Mark 1:1 in their Bibles. The two unambiguous passages in Irenaeus have already been mentioned. The longer text also appears in three passages of Jerome, as well as his Vulgate, which here follows all known Old Latin MSS. The original version of Victorinus' *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 4.4 has a different text from Jerome's recension,⁹ with two of the biblical citations adapted to the context. In Luke 1:5, the words about Herod's reign are omitted; Matt 1:1 appears in the unique form, 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, son of David'. Whether consciously or

⁷ C. H. Turner, "A Textual Commentary on Mark 1," *JTS* 28 (1926/27) 150. Cf. B. M. Metzger's caveats in "Patristic Evidence and the Textual Criticism of the New Testament," *NTS* 18 (1971/72) 379-400, esp. 396 § 2.

⁸ *Adv. haer.* (ed. Harvey 2.49); ANF 1.428; Sanday, *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei*, 44. In Sanday's work (p. cxxix), A. Souter, discussing "The New Testament Text of Irenaeus," concludes that there "seems no doubt that Iren. had the fuller text" of Mark 1:1.

⁹ *Victorini Episcopi Petavionensis Opera*, ed. Iohannes Haussleiter (CSEL 49 [1916] 52; reprint in *PL Supp* 1.123, with Victorinus' original and Jerome's recension on the same page. On Jerome's revisions, see CSEL 49. xxxvi-xlv.

not, Victorinus transferred the phrase 'Son of God' from his quotation of Mark 1:1 to Matt 1:1, where the filial statement strengthens the identification of Matthew's symbol as the face of a man. All three of these writers should thus be recorded in apparatuses as witnesses only to the longer variant of Mark 1:1.

Origen (d. 254), of Alexandria and after 232 A.D. of Caesarea, quotes Mark 1:1-2 invariably without 'Son of God' in the works that have survived in Greek: twice in parts of the *Commentary on John* written in Alexandria,¹⁰ and once in *Against Celsus*, written ca. 246-48 in Caesarea and attested by a seventh-century papyrus.¹¹ Some scholars find the longer variant in Origen's *Commentary on Romans*, composed before 244 at Caesarea, the whole book extant only in Rufinus' free Latin translation.¹² But the quotation of Mark 1:1 in that work definitely omits 'Son of God', and the text is offered as proof of the 'Gospel of Christ' in a passage where the phrase 'Gospel of the Son' would have expedited the argument. In a word, both the Greek and the Latin witnesses show that Origen knew only the shorter form of Mark 1:1.

The tractate *Against the Manichees* by Titus (d. 378), Bishop of Bostra in Syria, has been cited in the past from an imperfect edition filled with interpolations from Serapion's treatise of the same name.¹³ Because the quotation of Mark 1:1 in Pseudo-Titus'

¹⁰ *Comm. in Ioan.* 1.13 and 6.24 (GCS 10, Origen 4, pp. 18, 134; cf. ed. A. E. Brooke [Cambridge, 1896] 1.17, 140). The first four books were written in Alexandria ca. 226-29, and the sixth in exile ca. 232; see Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (3 vols.; Utrecht: Spectrum, 1950-60) 2.49.

¹¹ *Contra Celsum* 2.4 (GCS 2, Origen 1, p. 131; *Extraits des livres I et II du Contre Celse d'Origène d'après le papyrus*, ed. Jean Scherer [Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Bibliothèque d'étude 28; Cairo: L'Institut, 1956] 106-7). On the date, see Henry Chadwick, trans., *Origen: Contra Celsum* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1965) xv.

¹² *Comm. in Rom.* 1.3 (*Origenis Opera omnia*, ed. Charles Delarue [4 vols.; Brussels/Paris, 1733-59] 4.464 = PG 14.846-47). On the date, see Quasten, *Patrology*, 2.49-50. The passage does not appear in Jean Scherer's reconstruction of the Greek text in *Le commentaire d'Origène sur Rom. III.5-V.7 d'après les extraits du papyrus* (Cairo: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1957). On Rufinus' liberties in translating this work, see Scherer's introduction, 85-121; cf. Quasten, *Patrology*, 2.37, 58.

¹³ Titus' third book as given in PG 18.1213-56 reproduces Serapion *Against the Manichees* chaps. 36-53 verbatim (Casey ed., p. 52, line 5 to p. 77, line 56). Migne's corrupt edition reappears in Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλληνῶν Πατέρων καὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συγγραφέων 19, Τίτος Βόστρων . . . (Athens: Ἀποστολικῆς Διακονίας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, 1959) 9-116. On the disarranged MSS forming the basis of these editions of Titus, see R. P. Casey, "The Text of the Anti-Manichaean Writings of Titus of Bostra and Serapion of Thmuis," *HTR* 21 (1928) 97-111. Casey's promised critical edition (109 n. 22) never appeared, but Titus may be consulted using (a) the Greek of Books 1.1-3.7 and the early Syriac translation edited in 2 vols. by Paul A. de Lagarde (Berlin, 1859), reprint ed., *Titus Bostrenus syriace et graece* (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1967), and (b) the Greek of Book 3.7-29, ed. Peter Nagel, "Neues griechisches

Manichees 3.4 (PG 18. 1218) falls in an intercalation from chapter 37 of Serapion, Titus should not be referred to in apparatuses for the first verse of Mark.

Finally, Severian (d. 408) in *De sigillis librorum* 5 (PG 63. 541) quotes Mark 1:1-2 without 'Son of God' in a passage stating that "Mark in his gospel . . . indeed writes 'Son of God', but immediately contracts his language," presumably because Mark 1:2 refers to John the Baptist. The contradiction between the comment and quotation is confusing, but, as Tischendorf speculates, 'Son of God' probably dropped out of Severian's quotation during manuscript transmission.¹⁴

Given this assessment of the patristic evidence, an apparatus for Mark 1:1 follows.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the Old Syriac MSS and Old Latin k have lacunae here.

- A Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ 01^a B D L W, probably Severian (d. 408).
 B Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ A E F G^{suppl} H K M S U V Y Γ Δ Π
 Σ Φ Ω 047, all but three known Greek minuscules, Byzantine lectionary (Menologion, 3 Jan.), Cyril of Alexandria (444).
 C Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ or Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ it (all extant MSS — a, aur, b, c, d, f, ff², l, q, r²), vg, syr^{p, h}, cop^{sa, bo}, arm, geo^{op, tb}, eth, goth, arab, pers, pers harmony, Irenaeus^{lat, arm} (202), Victorinus of Pettau (304), Ambrose

Material zu Titus von Bostra (Adversus Manichaeos III 7-29)," *Berliner Byzantinische Arbeiten* 44 = *Studia Byzantina* 2 (1973) 285-350. Lagarde prints the Greek interpolations from Serapion as an appendix to Titus' Greek Book 3 (pp. 69-103). The indexes of scriptural quotations in Lagarde (Greek vol., pp. 125-27) and Nagel ("Neues griechisches Material," 350) list few NT citations in Titus' genuine treatise, including only one from the Gospels (John 1:5, in Book 2.36 = Lagarde ed., p. 47). Titus' name should be replaced with Serapion's at three other places in the UBS apparatus: Matt 19:4 κτ' ἵσως = Serapion *Man.* 52 (Casey ed., p. 74); Mark 1:2 ἐν Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφήτῃ = Serapion *Man.* 25 and 37 (Casey ed., 41, 55); John 1:18 ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός = Serapion *Man.* 40 (Casey ed., 58), but cf. ὁ μονογενὴς θεός = Serapion *Man.* 48 (Casey ed., 67).

¹⁴ Westcott and Hort ("Notes on Select Readings," 23) speculate that Mark 1:1 appeared twice in Severian's Bible, once with the phrase 'Son of God', the other time without. Severian's quotation does not substantiate this view.

¹⁵ I have collated freshly all the uncials and over a hundred minuscules, versions, and fathers from printed editions, facsimiles and microfilms (purchased with the aid of Humanities Research Grants from the University of British Columbia). MS 255 is also cited in support of variant F by Westcott and Hort ("Notes on Select Readings," 23), followed by Legg and the commentaries of H. B. Swete (p. 1), E. Gould (p. 4), and Cranfield (p. 38). This number now refers to a MS of the Acts and Epistles. In the nineteenth century, however, it applied to a codex of the Gospels from Mount Athos that Matthaei saw in the Synod Library in Moscow during the eighteenth century. The MS was no longer there in 1894; see C. Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum graece*, 8th ed., vol. 3, *Prolegomena* by C. R. Gregory (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1894) 514-16. Dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century and containing 299 folios, this is probably the same MS as codex 1555 (now Athos, Vatopediu 918), which also has a thirteenth-century date, 298 folios, and the shorter text in Mark 1:1

(397), Jerome (420), Augustine (430).

D Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ κυρίου 1241.

E [κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] syr^{pal}.

F Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ 01* Θ 28^{corr} 1555*, geo^{ad}, arm^{mss}, Origen^{gr}, lat
(254), Serapion (362), probably Cyril of Jerusalem (386).

G Ἰησοῦ 28*.

Several of these readings are clearly secondary. First, the addition of the article in reading B, unattested before the fifth century, is a typical Byzantine revision, elevating the idiom of the phrase 'Son of God' to proper Attic style.¹⁶ Otherwise, readings B and C support A. Variant D may have unconsciously substituted the abbreviation 'Lord', $\overline{\text{K}\overline{\text{U}}}$, for 'God', $\overline{\text{Θ}\overline{\text{U}}}$; this twelfth-century anomaly has no claim to originality. As for reading E ('the Lord Jesus Christ'), the Palestinian Syriac is a lectionary compiled about the fifth century, and lectionaries tend to handle the text freely at the start of lessons.¹⁷ While its omission of 'Son of God' supports reading F, the word 'Lord' is a secondary, reverential addition. Finally, regarding variant G, the original scribe of codex 28 omitted the abbreviation for 'Christ' after 'Jesus', but later added $\overline{\text{X}\overline{\text{U}}}$ as a superscript after $\overline{\text{I}\overline{\text{U}}}$ in the large, blank space between the title of Mark and the first verse. Because he carefully returned to perfect his MS, there can be little doubt that his exemplar read 'Jesus Christ' without any addition.

The evidence for Mark 1:1 thus resolves into a choice between witnesses including the phrase 'Son of God' (variants A, B, C) and those omitting it (variants E, F, G). These readings will now be examined on the basis of external attestation, possible scribal corruption, and internal evidence within Mark.

The Textual Complexion and Geographical Distribution of Witnesses

The shorter text appears only in witnesses with a marked Caesarean or Western affinity, mainly confined to Egypt, Palestine, Armenia, and Georgia. The Caesarean sources include the MSS Θ and 28, the Old Georgian and Old Armenian versions, and the fathers

¹⁶ Cf. Westcott and Hort, "Notes on Select Readings," 23.

¹⁷ See Ernest C. Colwell and D. W. Riddle, eds., *Prolegomena to the Study of the Lectionary Text of the Gospels* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1933) esp. 2 and 18 on the secondary nature of many lectionary incipits. On the date, see B. M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) 77. Unaware of these facts, Eberhard Nestle argued that syr-pal had best preserved Mark's original opening; see "How Does the Gospel of Mark Begin?" *Expositor* ser. iv/10 (1894) 458-60.

Origen,¹⁸ Serapion, and Cyril of Jerusalem;¹⁹ the Palestinian Syriac also has some Caesarean traits;²⁰ and codex 01 has occasional Western coloring, while MS 1555 belongs to von Soden's I^r class, a group with sporadic Western readings.²¹ By contrast, the longer reading has an impressively wide textual and geographic distribution. It is found in most of the Neutral and Alexandrian witnesses (01^a, B, L, 33, 579, 892, the Coptic, and Cyril of Alexandria) as well as the majority of Western witnesses (including MSS D and W, all the extant Old Latin MSS, and Irenaeus).²² The longer reading was accepted as genuine by most fourth-century textual traditions in both the east and west—the Byzantine Greek, many Caesarean sources, the Syriac Peshitta, the Vulgate, and every known Latin writer. Such an impressive array of witnesses, covering virtually every text type and geographical location from the second century on, would normally be enough to prove the authenticity of a reading beyond any doubt.

Scribal Practices Possibly Generating the Readings

The shorter reading could have been produced from the longer through the scribal confusion of the similar endings of the uncial abbreviations $\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{Y}} \bar{\text{X}}\bar{\text{Y}} \bar{\text{Y}}\bar{\text{Y}} \bar{\Theta}\bar{\text{Y}}$, leading to the unintentional omission of the last four letters by *homoioteleuton*.²³ Something similar

¹⁸ For a list of Caesarean authorities and bibliography on them, see B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 214–15. Before the Caesarean sources were isolated, Westcott and Hort ("Notes on Select Readings," 23) thought that the omission was "possibly Alexandrian."

¹⁹ See Greenlee, *Gospel Text of Cyril of Jerusalem*, 32. I hope to offer full evidence about Serapion's text in the near future; as an example of a Caesarean reading, his quotation of Luke 16:16 in *Manichees* 37 (Casey ed., p. 55) reads $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\chi\rho\upsilon$ (ζ) for $\acute{\epsilon}\omega\zeta$ with 01, B, L, R, X, fam-1, fam-13, Justin, Origen, and Eusebius. That Serapion's text has Caesarean readings presents little surprise in a writer from fourth-century provincial Egypt, where the third- and fourth-century Caesarean papyri 37 and 45 were found.

²⁰ On the problematic affinity of syr-pal, see Metzger, *Early Versions*, 82.

²¹ On codex 01, see Metzger, *Text of the NT*, 46; and Gordon D. Fee, "Codex Sinaiticus in the Gospel of John," *NTS* 15 (1968/69) 23–44. Gregory's MS 1555 is von Soden's ϵ 1341; see *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen, 1913) 2. xv for the grouping and 1 §§ 238–40 for I^r characteristics.

²² Souter, "NT Text of Irenaeus," clv: "When Irenaeus is not in company with D he is with the Old Latin or the Old Syriac or some other early authority for the Western text."

²³ Such is Turner's conclusion in "A Textual Commentary on Mark 1," 150. Cranfield (*Mark*, 38) records the argument that "at a time when the divine Sonship of Jesus was taken for granted the phrase could have been omitted [intentionally] on stylistic grounds in order to reduce the ugly piling up of genitives." The MS in question could have started a chain of MSS with the same omission. But if this factor swayed more than one scribe, the shorter reading might have spread more randomly among different text types.

happened to the copyist of codex 28, who originally missed $\bar{\chi}\bar{\upsilon}$ after $\bar{\iota}\bar{\upsilon}$. The localization of the reading suggests that this was the cause of the variant in a fairly small number of representatives of the Western and Caesarean strata of texts.

Still, the longer reading could just as easily have been produced from the shorter, with a scribe intentionally adding the words 'Son of God' for reverential reasons, just as the Palestinian Syriac inserts the word 'Lord' before 'Jesus Christ' in Mark 1:1. Yet if this were the cause of the longer reading, one would expect the scribe to have modelled the phrase on the Attic grammatical standard, with one or two articles, i.e., (τοῦ) υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (see Mark 3:11; 14:61; Rom 8:19; and Gal 2:20 for the double article). But the phrase 'Son of God' in its most primitive form in Mark 1:1 stands without articles, as in Mark 15:39, and as the rest of the nouns in the first verse of Mark. Once again, the balance tips in favor of the longer reading.

The Relationship of Mark 1:1 to the Rest of the Gospel

Mark's first verse—"Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God"—stands as a summary of important themes for the entire book; significantly, most of the words reflect early Christian kerygma rather than the most primitive traditions about Jesus. The noun 'gospel', while occurring fifty-nine times in the Pauline letters, appears rarely in the gospels (outside Mark, only four times in Matthew), but it introduces an important theme in Mark 1:1, 14, 15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; and 14:9. Similarly, the phrase 'Jesus Christ' occurs frequently in Paul's preaching, but is found rarely in the gospels (Matt 1:1, Mark 1:1, and John 1:17).²⁴ Yet the word 'Christ' prepares an important theme in Mark, recurring in 8:29; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21; 14:61; and 15:32. The phrase 'Son of God', while common in Acts and the epistles, occurs only sixteen times in the synoptics, always under Marcan influence. Not surprisingly, the idea of Jesus' sonship with God forms a crucial theme in Mark 1:11; 3:11; 8:38; 9:7; 12:6; 13:32; 14:36, 61; and 15:39. Internal evidence, then, supports the authenticity of the longer reading.

Finally, Mark appears to have modelled his first verse on several Greek superscriptions in the LXX, which have a similar formula including (a) a noun without the article specifying the type

²⁴ Cf. Sherman E. Johnson, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Black, 1960) 32; on the phrase in the epistles, see *TDNT* 9. 551-55.

of proclamation, (A) sometimes, as in Mark, with a second noun in the genitive; (b) the name of the person who transmits the proclamation, (B) sometimes, as in Mark, in the genitive; and (c) the filial relationship of the person transmitting the proclamation, (C) sometimes, as in Mark, in a genitive phrase ('son of NAME') without any articles. Examples include Prov 1:1 (a, B, C); Eccles 1:1 (a, B, C); Cant 1:1 (A, b), Isa 1:1 (a, b, C); Hos 1:1 (A, b, c); Hos 1:2 (A, b); Amos 1:1 (a, B); Joel 1:1 (A, b, c); Nah 1:1 (AA, B, c); Zeph 1:1 (A, b, c); and Mal 1:1 (AA, b). Mark's adaptation of this type of superscription, modelling the phrase 'Son of God' on statements of filial relation at the beginning of some LXX books, authenticates his gospel as Scripture on a par with the Old Testament.

Conclusion

Five types of evidence point to the genuineness of the phrase 'Son of God' in Mark 1:1. First, the textual witness to the longer reading is impressively varied in terms of text type and geographical distribution, from the second century on. By contrast, the shorter variant is attested by only a handful of Caesarean and Western witnesses, mainly from the third to the fifth centuries. Second, the limited attestation of the shorter text suggests that it originated as a scribal omission by *homoioteleuton*, which never gained wide currency. Third, the grammatical form of the Greek phrase υἱοῦ θεοῦ, without articles, suggests Marcan rather than scribal authorship. Fourth, the phrase 'Son of God' summarizes an important theme of Mark's gospel. Lastly, the literary form of the entire first verse parallels other superscriptions found in Mark's most important model, the LXX translation of Old Testament Scripture.