ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is a scholarly inquiry into the textual authenticity of John 1:13 and its theological implications. The research on this verse is quite challenging because of the two different readings of the verb γεννάω in various manuscripts, uncials and cursives. The two textual variants are ἐγεννήθη (was born) and ἐγεννήθησαν (were born). Johannine scholars have no common agreement on this point. Some modern versions of the Bible read it in the singular and some other versions in the plural. Read in the plural, it refers to Christians. Theologically it implies the baptismal birth of the Christians. But the singular reading refers to the virginal birth of Christ and implies the theology of Incarnation. Should we read this verse in the singular form (was born) or in the plural (were born)? This book gets into the intellectual battle between the two opposing groups of scholars. In this detailed and in-depth study, the author takes a position in favour of the singular reading. Then he exegetically analyses the singular reading of the text and presents its theological implications.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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D. S. KULANDAISAMY

THE BIRTH OF JESUS OR THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANS?

Denis Sahayaraj KULANDAISAMY

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Città del Vaticano 1909ff.
AnBib	Analecta Biblica, Roma 1952ff.
ARCIC	Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission
Asp	*Asprenas*, Napoli 1953ff.
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*, New York 1918-1978.
BAC	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid 1945ff.
Bib	*Biblica*, Roma 1920ff.
BiKi	*Bibel und Kirche*, Stuttgart 1946ff.
BiTod	*Bible Today*, Collegeville (MN) 1962ff.
BN	*Biblische Notizen*, Bamberg 1976ff.
BT	*Bible Translator*, London 1950ff.
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*, Albany (NY) 1971ff.
BV	*Biblical Viewpoint*, Greenville (SC) 1977ff.
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*, Paderborn 1957-1998.
CahÉv	*Cahiers Évangile*, Paris 1972ff.
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Washinton (DC) 1939.
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, Turnhout-Leuven 1954ff.

CivCatt   *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Roma - Firenze 1850ff.

ClergyRev   *Clergy Review*, London 1931-1986.

CSCO   Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium,
                   Paris - Louvain 1903ff.

CSEL   Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum,
                   Wien 1866ff.

CurResB   *Currents in Research. Biblical Studies*, Sheffield
                   1993ff.

Div   *Divinitas*, Roma 1957-1974.

EDB   Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna.

EDNT   Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (edited by
                   Horst Balz – Gerhard Schneider), vol. I-III, Grand
                   Rapids 1990-1993.

EphMar   *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, Madrid 1951ff.

EspritVie   *Esprit et Vie*, Langres (Haute Marne) 1890ff.

EstB   *Estudios Bíblicos*, Madrid 1941ff.

EstEcl   *Estudios Eclesiásticos*, Madrid 1922ff.

EstMar   *Estudios Marianos,* Madrid 1935ff.

ET   *The Expository Times*, Edinburgh 1889ff.

ÉtMar   *Études Mariales*, Paris 1935ff.

EV   *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, Bologna 1962ff.

EvQ   *Evangelical Quarterly*, Exeter (Devon) 1929ff.

Fs	Festschrift
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrunderte, LeipzigBerlin 1897ff.
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*, New Haven (CT), 1881ff.
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Sheffield, 1978ff.
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
Lat	*Lateranum*, Roma 1935ff.
Laur	*Laurentianum,* Roma 1960.
LEV	Libreria Editrice Vaticana
LV	*Lumen Vitae*, Elsene 1925ff.
Mar	*Marianum*, Roma 1939ff.
MarStud	*Marian Studies*, Dayton (Ohio) 1950ff.
MatEccl	*Mater Ecclesiae*, Roma 1965ff.
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
Mss	Manuscripts
NDM	Nuovo Dizionario di Mariologia
NDTB	Nuovo Dizionario di Teologia Biblica
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*, Leiden 1956ff.
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRT	*Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, Namur 1869ff.

NT	New Testament
NTS	*New Testament Studies*, Cambridge 1954ff.
OT	Old Testament
PG	J.-P. MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus.* series graeca, 161 voll., Paris 1875ff.
PIB	Pontificio Istituto Biblico
PL	J.-P. MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus.* series latina, 217 voll., Paris 1848ff.
PO	R. GRAFFIN (ed.), Patrologia Orientalis, Paris 1903ff.
PUG	Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma.
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Stuttgart 1950ff.
RB	*Revue Biblique*, Paris 1892ff.
RevThom	*Revue Thomiste*, Paris 1900ff.
RicBibRel	*Ricerche Bibliche e Religiose*, Genova 1966-1983.
RivBib	*Rivista Biblica*, Brescia 1953ff.
RQ	*Restoration Quarterly*, Abilenne (TX) 1957ff.
RSR	*Recherches de Science Religieuse*, Paris 1910ff.
SacPag	Sacra Pagina
Sal	*Salesianum*, Roma 1959ff.
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
ScEccl	*Sciences Ecclesisastiques*

ScEsp	*Science et Espirit*, Montréal 1948ff.
SCh	Sources Chrétiennes, Paris 1942ff.
ScrdeM	*Scripta de Maria*, Zaragoza 1978ff.
ScrTh	*Scripta Theologica*, Pamplona 1968ff.
SE	*Science et Esprit*, Montréal-Bruges 1949ff.
SJTh	*Scottish Journal of Theology*, Edinburgh.
SPCK	The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
SPIB	Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
Theot	*Theotokos*, Roma 1993ff.
ThHK	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
ThPQ	*Theologische Praktische Quartalschrift*, Linz 1853ff.
TS	*Theological Studies*, Washington 1940ff.
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, Leipzig-Berlin 1882ff.
TWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
VD	*Verbum Domini*, Roma 1921-1969.
VJTR	*Vidyayjoti Journal of Theological Review*, New Delhi, 1938ff.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

WTJ   *Westminster Theological Journal*, Philadelphia
              1938ff.

WUNT   Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen
              Testament

ZKT   *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, Innsbruck
              1877ff.

ZTK   *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, Freiburg
              1891ff.

FOREWORD

Denis Sahayaraj Kulandaisamy, a young and promising Indian Bible scholar, like the young Daniel, decided to descend "into the den of lions". In what sense?

It is known that John 1:13 is a crucial point for the textual criticism of the New Testament. This verse, in fact, admits two readings, a plural and the singular. The plural refers to Christians: "who [οἳ = plural] not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God were born (ἐγεννήθησαν)." The other, in the singular, refers to Christ: "who [ὅς = singular], not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God has been generated (ἐγεννήθη)". Hence the exegetes have two alternatives and have to choose one of these two readings! For many centuries the plural had been accepted without any problems. But in our times, the singular has found many defenders.

Denis gets into the intellectual battle between the two opposing groups of scholars. He gets into this realm, not as a neutral spectator, but as an authorized personnel who takes a position. Let us see the cornerstones of his arguments.

First, he reviews the studies of John 1:13 over a period of 117 years. At the end of this laborious work, he prefers the singular read-ing (ἐγεννήθη), on the basis of 21 arguments in its favour. This done, the author proceeds to examine the doctrinal implications of the singular reading. These he divides in two; first Christological and then (in the second instance, almost as a reflex) Mariological.

The Christological aspect is obviously primary, given that the verse speaks of the Incarnation. The Evangelist John bears witness al-

so to the virginal conception of Jesus in Mary's womb. That is to say, the Word was born "... not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man", that is, not by virtue of a human sexual impulse, but "... was born of God."

The Mariological aspect finds a further expansion in the first of three negations expressed in v. 13. The text reads: "... not of bloods, οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων." The plural form ("the bloods") sounds very strange! How can we understand such an expression? Denis presents a long list of authors who have contributed various exegetical interpretations. Among the most recent scholars, we find the hypothesis that links "the bloods" of John 1:13 with "the bloods" of the Hebrew text of Leviticus 12:4,7; 20:18 and Ezekiel 16:6,22. These Old Testament passages that contain the expression דָּמִים (i.e. "bloods") relate to childbirth. It is said that a woman's unclean "bloods have to be purified" (Lev 12:4). It speaks about the purification of "the flow of her bloods" (Lev 12:7), that is, the bloodshed in the act of giving birth (cfr. Lev 12:2 and Ezek 16:6,22).

In view of these references, the "bloods" mentioned in John 1:13 would allude to the "virgin birth" of Jesus through Mary. This birth is "virginal" in the sense that it has not been accompanied by bloodshed. The mystery of Jesus' virgin birth receives new light: according to a consistent strand of patristic theology, the virgin birth of Jesus is compared to "the mystery of his virginal rebirth" – i.e. His Resurrection from the womb of the tomb.

The virginity of Mary, in all its aspects, is a consequence of the divine nature of the Son. As John Paul II stated: it is the task of the theologian "to decipher the divine image that God Himself revealed through the facts of conception and the virgin birth of Christ and of Mary's perpetual virginity ... so that in no way it may trivialize the resulting message, relegating it to a marginal aspect of Christianity ...

Certainly the cultural climate of our time is not always sensitive to the values of Christian virginity. But this should not discourage the theologian in his commitment. At the time of Paul the dominant culture was not ready to accept the mystery of the Cross, but he, out of fidelity to Christ, made it the centerpiece of his message (cfr. 1 Cor 2:2; Gal 3:1; 6:14). The theologian must be animated by the serene confidence that the authentic evangelical values are valid for the contemporary man and woman, even when they are unaware of them or ignore them".

The virgin birth of Jesus is an oldest and most popular datum of Christian faith. With his work, Denis has followed the path suggested by Jn 1:13. Along the way he has placed guides for those who wish to explore further. Mary is not the center, but she is central to the faith. Around her, mother of the dispersed children of God (cfr. Jn 11:52 and 19:26-27a), the men and women of our time can better recognize the path to unity.

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4 May 2015
Feast of St. Peregrine Laziosi.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Gospel is unique in presenting the Incarnate Logos-Jesus. The Johannine Prologue has been a centre of attraction because of its highly theological insights, its central theme of the Incarnation of the Λόγος. Although Jn 1:14 is the most explicit statement about the Word becoming flesh in the Johannine Prologue, the Evan-gelist presents in advance the "how" of this great historical event of the Incarnation in Jn 1:13 itself.

Anyone who attempts to form a judgement about correct reading of the text of Jn 1:13 finds a confusing plenitude of problems. A number of scholars have tried to resolve this textual problem by means of various text-critical studies.

The importance of this verse lies in its Christological basis of the birth of the Incarnate Word. The research on this verse becomes really challenging because of the two different readings of the verb γεννάω in various manuscripts (hereafter abbreviated as Mss), uncials and cursives. Johannine scholars have no common agreement on this point. Though this problem has been already elaborately discussed by scholars such as A. von Harnack, J. Galot, A.V. Cernuda, P. Hofrichter and I. de la Potterie, this research paper is an attempt to evaluate the previous studies done on this textual problem, propose the correct reading of the text, exegetically analyse it and eventually develop its respective theological implications.

The problem of the primitive text of Jn 1:13

PLURAL	SINGULAR
οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ *ἐγεννήθησαν*	*ὅς* οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ *ἐγεννήθη*
who *were born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God	who *was born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God

In the following paragraphs, we are going to present the major thrust of the argument. We are going to deal with the two textual variants of the verb γεννάω of Jn 1:13. The two textual variants are ἐγεννήθη (was born) and ἐγεννήθησαν (were born). Should we read this verse in the singular form or in the plural? Is the original form ἐγεννήθησαν or ἐγεννήθη?

The Greek textual evidence for reading the plural is overwhelming. Not even a single Greek Ms supports the singular. But the singular ἐγεννήθη is read by an OL witness (OS^cur). The Church Fathers Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian and some others apply Jn 1:13 to the virgin birth of Christ. Some early writings such as the *Liber Comicus, Epistula Apostolorum* too apply this verse to Jesus. Some of the most important ancient texts with the singular reading are: "(i) one early Latin text, it^b; (ii) the Curetonian Syriac and six Mss of the Peshitta Syriac which read the verb in the singular but the relative οἳ in the plural; (iii) more significantly, the undoubted witness of Irenaeus and Tertullian, and the possible witness of Justin, and, more conjecturally, of Ignatius; (iv) some later Latin testimony from Origen, Ambrose, Augustin".[1] The number of modern exegetes who support the singular reading of the text is surprisingly increasing.

On the one hand we note that the number of Greek Mss that cite the plural is numerous, but on the other hand we see that some of the patristic commentaries, older than these Greek Mss, read it in singular. Also, a good number of modern scholars defend the singular reading of the text. Thus, we are in a dilemma as to whether to read it in the singular or in the plural. This will be the core of the problem we are going to deal with in this book, before we go on to the respective dogmatic implications.

A detailed study of the textual variants of this verse is very important and unavoidable, because the dogmatic implications completely depend upon the textual reading. If we accept the plural reading, then it would refer to the spiritual birth of Christians. If we read it in the singular, then it would refer to the virgin birth of Jesus.

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[1] J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin Birth or the birth of Christians? The text of John 1:13 once more", in *NovT* 27 (1985) 296-297.

Research Method

In this work, our intention is to establish the correct reading of the text of Jn 1:13, exegetically analyse it and unfold the theological message of the Evangelist. It is a text-based critical study looking for theological meanings. We will apply the historical-critical method to our text in our research procedure. Both the synchronic and diachronic approaches will be used in our investigation.

As the first step of the textual study, we will try to establish the correct form of the text. In this process, we will make an investigation of the recent works done on Jn 1:13 and we will examine the oldest versions and Mss of the text and also the recent modern versions of the New Testament. For the text-critical study, we will choose the 'thoroughgoing eclectic criticism'. What this method is all about and the reason why we have chosen it will be explained before we start the textual criticism. In our exegetical study of Jn 1:13, we will pay attention to the history of interpretation, patristic commentaries, grammatical analysis, and parallel thematic study either with relation to Johannine or other Biblical texts. Our research investigation has a very precise goal, namely, to discover the theological implications of the text through a systematic exegetical study.

Structure of the Book

This book is divided into three parts. In the first part, we will deal with the textual problem of Jn 1:13. We will make a survey of almost all the previous works done in the last century and we will again study the textual variants. We will present the arguments in favour of and against the singular and plural forms of this verb. We will refer to the patristic quotations of this verb and the commentaries made by various Fathers of the Church in the first few centuries. At the end of this part, we will make a definite decision regarding the textual problem and accordingly proceed with the exegesis of this v.13 and eventually its implications.

The second part will be the exegesis of this verse. Here we will apply both the diachronic and synchronic reading to the text. The diachronic analysis will deal with the prehistory of the written text and various theories regarding the textual origin. The synchronic reading

of the text will deal with the linguistic-syntactic analysis, vocabulary (lexicon), grammatical considerations, semantic textual analysis, semantics of the key words, motif and word field, structural analysis and exegetical interpretation of the text.

The third part will be dedicated to the theological implications of this verse. These implications will fully depend on the conclusion we arrive at the end of the first part. The plural reading of this text would refer to the spiritual birth of Christians whereas the singular reading would refer to the Incarnation of Jesus. Arriving at the singular textual reading, the dogmatic reflections of this verse will be twofold: Christological and Mariological.

The Christological implication of this verse is concerned with the divine Sonship of Jesus. The Mariological implication is concerned with the virginal motherhood of Mary. In the third part of the book, we will explain that Jn 1:13 is not only concerned with the virginal conception of Jesus but also with his virgin birth. And finally, as a result of our investigation, we will arrive at some theological conclusions.

Originality and Limitations of the Research

The proposal that the singular verb ἐγεννήθη (Jn 1:13) is the original reading is not something brand-new, but the reasons in favour of the singular (although not all) proposed at the end of our investigation have certain new characteristics.

A critical view of the previous studies done by scholars (1896-2013) over a period of 117 years is a unique feature of this work.

Another new characteristic of this work is that its systematic and strict application of a new method called 'thoroughgoing eclectic criticism' to Jn 1:13. This method has been adapted from J.K. Elliott. Why we have chosen this method and what this metod is all about will be explained later.

The conclusions proposed at the end of our investigation may not sound brand-new, compared with previous work done by some scholars such as P. Hofrichter, J. Galot and I. de la Potterie. But the new-

ness and the novelty of this work consists in the research process itself rather than in the conclusions. We admit that this work does not propose any surprising new conclusions but the originality of our work has to be perceived from the point of view of its methodological hermeneutics. Its original contribution has to be understood in terms of its critical evaluation of the previous studies and its proposal for a better collaboration between exegetical studies and dogmatic theology. It brings to light the complex reality of the text by way of demonstrating the striking division among scholars and the diversity of their opinions with regard to the correct reading of the text. The reluctance or hesitation of many scholars to accept the singular reading in their theological writings is also made evident in our work. Toward the conclusion of the book, we present a brief reflection for our Christian life today.

Dealing with the textual problem of Jn 1:13 is not an easy task. The complicated textual theories and the differences of opinion among the scholars tell us how problematic the text is. This work does not claim to have no limitations.

One of the limitations in defending the singular reading is that we do not have any Greek Mss with the singular. As far as external criticism is concerned, our arguments have to be based on indirect commentaries and some quotations from patristic literature, rather than solidly defending our position with the oldest Greek Mss.

An important limitation of our work is the lack of bibliography on the textual problem of Jn 1:13. It is true that in the sections dedicated to the *Status Quaestionis* we have given a long list of authors and their positions. But we must admit that none of these authors (except P. Hofrichter, J. Galot, and I. de la Potterie) have done an elaborate study about the text critical problem of this verse. So, we are limited with such a few monographs for our textual study.

Another limitation is that the results proposed by our work in favour of the singular may not satisfy or convince everyone who reads this book. Some might even consider our conclusions as a mere assumption or a guess and judge the results of our work as a mere hypothesis due to lack of Mss evidence in favour of the singular.

PART ONE

TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF JOHN 1:13

By *textual criticism*, we mean the "methodical and objective study which aims to retrieve the original form of a text or at least the form closest to the original".[2] It is a science that tries to recover the original form of the oldest Mss. Until the art of painting was discovered, the Greek text of the New Testament was disseminated in Mss. These originals have not been preserved but fortunately the transcripts of the Greek texts have survived. In the transmission of the texts over centuries, a lot of voluntary and involuntary changes have taken place and thus the biblical text has undergone corruptions. That is why we find a number of textual variants in the biblical texts. Hence the need to establish the original form of the text.

As has been presented in the general introduction of the book, Jn 1:13 has a very important textual variant (ἐγεννήθησαν / ἐγεννήθη). In this first part, we are going to reconstruct the original text by means of textual criticism.

Text-critical method

Various categories of principles, norms and methods of textual criticism have been proposed by a number of scholars in recent decades.[3] We have to admit that not all methods can be applied to all the texts. We have to make a careful of choice of a suitable method.[4]

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[2] L. VAGANAY – C.B. AMPHOUX, *An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991, 1.

[3] Here we would like to mention some of the important works on Textual Criticism: J.K. ELLIOTT, *Essays and Studies in the New Testament Textual Criticism* (Estudios di Filología Neotestamentaria, 3), El Almendro, Córdoba 1992; J.K. ELLIOTT – I. MOIR, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament,* Oxford University Press, New York – Oxford 1993[3]; J.H. GREENLEE, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism.* Revised Editin, Hendrickson Peabody, Massachusetts 1995; J. O'CALLAGHAN, *Introducción a la Crítica Textual del Neuvo Testament,* Claret, Barcelona 1997, especially chapter VI; S. PISANO,

S. Pisano, who taught me 'Textual Criticism' in the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, says that there are three different lines of thought among the text-critics of today. The following are the three types of approaches followed by the modern scholars of our time: 1) Moderate Eclecticism; 2) Integral Eclecticism; 3) Return to the Byzantine Text.[5]

With regard to our text, we know that we have only two textual variants (singular and plural). All the Greek Mss read the verb in the plural form and thus most scholars prefer the plural reading. But we are not satisfied with such a 'biased criterion' that is based only on the quantity of the Mss, ignoring all the other issues involved in the possible corruption or gradual evolution of the text. We prefer to make a 'holistic study' in our textual criticism. It means that our critical study will not be just limited to the examination of the Mss alone, but it will go beyond this to study all the other dimensions of the textual formation. We are going to carry out a critical study which would look for the *quality* of the original text and not merely the *quantity* of textual witnesses. Having these criteria in mind, we are going to choose the "thoroughgoing eclectic method" for our critical study.[6] In the following paragraphs we will explain what this method is all about, why

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Introduzione alla critica testuale dell'Antico e del Nuovo Testamento (Quarta edizione riveduta, ad uso degli studenti), Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Roma 2002; E.J. EPP, *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism*, Brill, Leiden 2005; S. CINGOLANI, *Dizionario di Critica Testuale del Nuovo Testamento. Storia, canone, apocrifi, paleografia*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano) 2008.

[4] For detailed information about various methods, refer to the list of books and articles mentioned in foot note n. 3.

[5] Cfr. S. PISANO, *Introduzione alla Critica Testuale*, 63. (We prefer to call the second approach by the original name given by its exponents: "Thoroughgoing Eclecticism", instead of "Integral Eclecticism").

[6] Regarding this method, S. Pisano writes: "Questo approccio è sotto il patrocinio di G.D. Kilpatrick e J.K. Elliott. Per loro non c'è una recensione o una famiglia o un tipo testuale che giustifichi una fiducia *a priori*. Bisogna piuttosto giudicare ogni caso in se stesso, con il principio che ogni variante che trova testimonianza in qualsiasi MS ha il diritto di essere presa in considerazione. Questo metodo ha il vantaggio di proporre spiegazioni per i casi dove i 'migliori' testimoni sono divisi […]" (S. PISANO, *Introduzione alla Critica testuale*, 63).

we have chosen this method and what the positive elements of this method are.

What is "Thoroughgoing Eclectic Criticism"?

"Thoroughgoing Eclectic Method" is a current method fol-lowed by the text-critics in evaluating textual variants and reconstruct-ing the correct text. It is also called 'rational eclectic method', or 'in-tegral eclectic method'. "Eclecticism implies no watertight division between the various disciplines: verbal criticism, external criticism and internal criticism, all have their role to play and they complement each other".[7] The exponents of this method are G.D. Kilpatrick and J.K. Elliott. Following the footsteps of G.D. Kilpatrick, J.K. Elliott has expounded this method in his numerous writings.[8]

This method was introduced in order to overcome overdepend-ence on manuscript evidence to decide the correct reading. Although this method begins with the study of various pieces of evidence from the Mss, it gives more importance to applying text-critical principles based on internal criteria and intrinsic probability. It does not mean that it excludes the study of Mss in the process of textual criticism; ra-ther it "is alert to the maxim that knowledge of manuscripts must pre-

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[7] L. VAGANAY – C.B. AMPHOUX, *An Introduction to New Testament*, 86.

[8] J.K. Elliott is a great scholar in the field of biblical textual criticism. He has more than forty years of experience in biblical text-critical studies. He has a doctorate from Oxford University and has worked with the famous text-critic Prof. G.D. Kilpatrick for many years. He has published a number of arti-cles and research papers on *Thoroughgoing Eclecticism*. He is convinced that this is the best method for biblical textual criticism. Some of his important writ-ings on *Thoroughgoing Eclecticism* are as follows: J.K. ELLIOTT, "Plaidoyer pour un éclectisme integral appliqué à la critique textuelle du Nuoveau Testa-ment", in *RB* 74 (1977) 5-25; IDEM, "In Defense of Thoroughgoing Eclecticism in New Testament Textual Criticism", in *RQ* 21 (1978) 95-115; IDEM, "Thor-oughgoing Eclecticism in New Testament Textual Criticism", in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis.* A volume in Honor of Bruce M. Metzger (edited by D. Ehrman – M.W. Holmes), Erdmans, Grand Rapids 1995, 321-335; IDEM, *New Testament Textual Criticism. The Application of Thoroughgoing Principles*, Brill, London – Boston 2010, 41-49.

cede knowledge of readings".[9] The thoroughgoing method is based on the principle that intrinsic evidence is as important as the Mss evidence.

In what way does this thoroughgoing method differ from other methods? Unlike other critics, the one who follows this method "applies the criteria in a consistent, thoroughgoing (but not doggedly mechanical) way. In theory this means that if the arguments on style, usage and other internal criteria point to a reading that may be supported by only a few manuscripts then that reading should nonetheless be accepted".[10]

Why thoroughgoing eclectic criticism?

Considering the kind of the problem we are facing in Jn 1:13, thoroughgoing eclectic criticism seems to be the most suitable method. This method is based on 'objectively defensible principles and criteria' and is therefore followed by many biblical scholars, especially in recent years. Moreover, it has a number of benefits:

> 1) It looks at textual problems independently of the manuscript support, and that can be refreshingly open and instructive. 2) It identifies an author's style, or first century usage, and can help us catalogue distinctive linguistic features […]. Such approaches sit comfortably with more recent investigations into narrative and audience-reception theories. 3) It takes seriously transcriptional probability. It makes readers aware of the reasons why and how scribes altered the texts they were copying. 4) It not merely seeks the original text […], but, perhaps more importantly, it also tries to find likely motives for the perceived changes throughout the tradition".[11]

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[9] J.K. ELLIOTT, *Essays and Studies*, 45.

[10] *Ibid*., 44.

[11] *Ibid*., 48-49.

We will follow strictly the principles and criteria proposed by this method in our textual study.

The process of textual criticism

We are going to follow three steps in the process of textual criticism. The first step is concerned with '*Status Quaestionis*', a critical overview of the text of Jn 1:13 in the modern versions and a survey of previous studies of the problem of Jn 1:13. Then we will proceed to the critical studyof the text, applying the 'thoroughgoing eclectic criticism'method. It will be carried out in two stages: external criticism and internal criticism. The external criticism will deal with the direct sources such as Mss, uncials and lectionaries, and also the indirect sources such as the early writings of the Church Fathers. The internal criticism will study the text itself, in order to find out which variant is more suitable in the context of Johannine theology.

I. STATUS QUAESTIONIS
   A SURVEY OF MODERN VERSIONS AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

We begin the first part of the book by examining how the modern versions of the New Testament present Jn 1:13. Then, we will make a survey of the previous studies done by some important scholars starting from A. Resch (1896). We will present the defenders of the singular reading and also the defenders of the plural reading. This survey will take us to the heart of the textual problem and will enable us to see the various reasons why these scholars defend the singular or the plural reading. Having presented and evaluated the previous studies done on the textual problem of Jn 1:13, we will turn to textual criticism, internal and external.

A. THE TEXT OF JN 1.13 IN THE MODERN VERSIONS
   OF THE NEW TESTAMENT[12]

1. ENGLISH:

The Tyndale New Testament (1534):

> "which were borne not of bloude nor of the will of the flesshe
> nor yet of the will of man: but of God";

Bishops' New Testament (1595):

> "which were borne, not of blood, nor of the wyll of the fleshe,
> nor yet of the wyll of man, but of God;

Geneva Bible (1599):

> "which are borne not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor
> of ye will of man, but of God;

The Webster Bible (1833):

> "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor
> of the will of man, but of God";

*The New Testament. A Literal Translation from the Syriac Peshito
Version*, published by James Murdock (1851):

> "who are born, not of blood, nor of the pleasure of the flesh,
> nor of the pleasure of man, but of God";

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[12] The following texts of the modern versions (English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish) have been taken from the Compact Disc Rom: *The Bible Works 7*. Software for Biblical Exegesis and Research, Norfolk (VA) 2006. We have also added to them a few more texts from some printed versions.

Young's Literal Translation (1862/1887/1898):

> "who -- not of blood nor of a will of flesh, nor of a will of man but -- of God were begotten";

The English Darby Bible 1884/1890. *A literal translation by John Nelson Darby* (1800-1882):

> "who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God";

English Revised Version (1885):

> "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God";

The Douay-Rheims American Edition (1899);
Very literal translation of the Latin Vulgate:

> "who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God";

American Standard Version (1901):

> "who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God";

The Holy Bible (London 1914), translated from the Latin Vulgate and diligently compared with other editions in diverse languages (Douay 1609; Rheims 1582):

> "who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God";

The Bible in Basic English (1949/1964):

> "whose birth was from God and not from blood, or from an impulse of the flesh and man's desire";

Revised Standard Version (1952):

> "who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God;

The New American Bible (1970):

> "who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God";

The New International Version (1973):

> "Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God";

The New American Standard Bible (1977):

> "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God";

The New King James Version (1982):

> "who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God";

The New Jerusalem Bible (1985):

> "who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself";

New Revised Standard Version (1989):

> "who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God";

God's Word to the Nations version (1995):

> "These people didn't become God's children in a physical way-
> from a human impulse or from a husband's desire *to have a
> child*. They were born from God";

Revised Webster Update (1995):

> "who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor
> of the will of man, but of God";

Complete Jewish Bible (1998):

> "not because of bloodline, physical impulse or human inten-
> tion, but because of God";

English standard Version (2001):

> "who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of
> the will of man, but of God";

Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004):

> "who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of
> the will of man, but of God";

New Living Translation. 2nd edition (2004):

> "They are reborn - not with a physical birth resulting from hu-
> man passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God".

2. FRENCH:

French Version Darby (1885):

> "lesquels sont nés, non pas de sang, ni de la volonté de la chair, ni de la volonté de l'homme, mais de Dieu";

The French Louis Segond Version (1910):

> "lesquels sont nés, non du sang, ni de la volonté de la chair, ni de la volonté de l'homme, mais de Dieu" ;

La Bible de Jérusalem (1956):

> " lui que ni sang, ni vouloir de chair, ni de vouloir d'homme, mais Dieu a engendré";[13]

La Bible de Jérusalem (1974):

> " lui que ni sang, ni vouloir de chair, ni de vouloir d'homme, mais Dieu a engendré";[14]

Nouvelle Édition Genéve (1979):

> "lesquels sont nés non du sang, ni de la volonté de la chair, ni de la volonté de l'homme, mais de Dieu";

La Bible de Jérusalem (1988):

> " lui que ne fut engendré ni du sang, ni d'un vouloir de chair, ni d'un vouloir d'homme, mais de Dieu";[15]

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[13] *La Sainte Bible*, traduite en français sous la direction de l'École biblique de Jérusalem, Cerf, Paris 1956, 1397. The footnote (l) of this verse says: "Allusion à la géneration éternelle du Verbe, mais sans doute aussi à la naissance virginale de Jésus, cfr. Mt 1 16,18-23 et Lc 1 26-38". The first print (1955) is not available to us.

[14] *La Bible de Jérusalem*, traduite en français sous la direction de l'École Biblique de Jérusalem, Cerf, Paris 1974², 1529.

Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible (1988):

> "Ceux-là ne sont pas nés du sang, ni d'un vouloir de chair, ni d'un vouloir d'homme, mais de Dieu";

French Bible en français courant (1997):

"Ils ne sont pas devenus enfants de Dieu par une naissance naturelle, par une volonté humaine; c'est Dieu qui leur a donné une nouvelle vie".

La Bible de Jérusalem (1998):

"eux qui ne furent engendrés ni du sang, ni d'un vouloir de chair, ni d'un vouloir d'homme, mais de Dieu";[16]

3. GERMAN:

Luther German Bible (1545):

> „welche nicht von dem Geblüt, noch von dem Willen des Fleisches, noch von dem Willen eines Mannes, sondern von Gott geboren sind";

Darby Unrevidierte Elberfelder (1905):
> „welche nicht aus Geblüt, noch aus dem Willen des Fleisches, noch aus dem Willen des Mannes, sondern aus Gott geboren sind";

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[15] *La Bible de Jérusalem*, traduite en français sous la direction de l'École Biblique de Jérusalem, nuovelle edition entièrement revue et augmentée, Cerf-Éditions Paulines, Paris 1988, 1529. The footnote (k) of this verse says: "Allusion à la géneration éternelle du Verbe, mais sans doute aussi à la naissance virginale de Jésus, cf. Mt 1 16,18-23 et Lc 1 26-38. - « ni du sang ni de la chair ». – La var. « eux » qui n'a pas été adoptée ici, est la leçon courante".

[16] *La Bible de Jérusalem*, Nouvelle edition revue et corrigée, Pocket, Cerf, Paris 1998, 1769. It is interesting to note that this version (1998) has the plural reading, unlike the previous versions (1955/1956/1974/1988).

The German Schlachter Version (1951):

> „welche nicht aus dem Geblüt, noch aus dem Willen des Fleisches, noch aus dem Willen des Mannes, sondern aus Gott geboren sind";

Einheitsübersetzung (1980):

> „die nicht aus dem Blut, nicht aus dem Willen des Fleisches, nicht aus dem Willen des Mannes, sondern aus Gott geboren sind";

Revidierte Luther Bibel (1984):

> „die nicht aus dem Blut noch aus dem Willen des Fleisches noch aus dem Willen eines Mannes, sondern von Gott geboren sind";

Elberfelder Bibel Revidierte Fassung (1993):

> „die nicht aus Geblüt, auch nicht aus dem Willen des Fleisches, auch nicht aus dem Willen des Mannes, sondern aus Gott geboren sind";

Muenchener Neues Testament (1998):

> „die nicht aus Blut und nicht aus Fleischeswillen und nicht aus Manneswillen, sondern aus Gott gezeugt wurden";

Die Bibel (2005):

> „die nicht aus dem Blut, nicht aus dem Willen des Fleisches, nicht aus dem Willen des Mannes, sondern aus Gott geboren sind".

4. ITALIAN:

La Sacra Bibbia (1949), traduzione di G. Bonaccorsi et al.:

> "i quali, non da sangue né da volontà di carne, nè da volontà di uomo, ma da Dio sono nati";

La Sacra Bibbia (1972[4]), tradotta dai testi originali e commentata (a cura e sotto la direzione di Mons. Salvatore Garofalo):

> "i quali non da sangue, né da volere della carne, né da volere d'uomo, ma da Dio sono nati";

 La Nuova Diodati (1991):

> "i quali non sono nati da sangue né da volontà di carne, né da volontà di uomo, ma sono nati da Dio";

La Sacra Bibbia Nuova Riveduta (1994):

> "i quali non sono nati da sangue, né da volontà di carne, né da volontà d'uomo, ma sono nati da Dio";

La Bibbia. Testo Integrale Conferenza Episcopale italiana (1995):

> "i quali non da sangue né da volere di carne, né da volere di uomo ma da Dio sono stati generati";

Nuovisima versione della Bibbia (1995):

> "i quali non da sangue né da volontà di carne né da volontà di uomo ma da Dio furono generati";

Bibbia Tabor (1999, 2000, 2001):

> "i quali non da sangue né da volontà di carne né da volontà di uomo ma da Dio furono generati";

Bibbia della CEI (2008):

> "i quali non da sangue né da volere di carne né da volere di uomo, ma da Dio sono stati generati".

5. PORTUGUESE:

Corrigida Fiel (1753/1995):

> "Os quais não nasceram do sangue, nem da vontade da carne, nem da vontade do homem, mas de Deus";

João Ferreira de Almeida, Revista e Corrigida (1969):

> "os quais não nasceram do sangue, nem da vontade da carne, nem da vontade do varão, mas de Deus";

João Ferreira de Almeida, Revista e Atualizada (1993[2]):

> "os quais não nasceram do sangue, nem da vontade da carne, nem da vontade do homem, mas de Deus";

Portuguese Modern Language Translation (2005):

> "Estes não nasceram de laços de sangue, nem da vontade da carne, nem da vontade do homem, mas nasceram de Deus".

6. SPANISH:

La Biblia Reina-Valera (1909):

> "Los cuales no son engendrados de sangre, ni de voluntad de carne, ni de voluntad de varón, mas de Dios";

La Biblia Reina-Valera Revisada (1960):

> "los cuales no son engendrados de sangre, ni de voluntad de carne, ni de voluntad de varón, sino de Dios";

La Santa Biblia, Nueva Versión Internacional (1979):

> "Éstos no nacen de la sangre, ni por deseos naturales, ni por voluntad humana, sino que nacen de Dios";

La Biblia de Las Américas (1986):

> "que no nacieron de sangre, ni de la voluntad de la carne, ni de la voluntad del hombre, sino de Dios";

La Santa Biblia Reina-Valera Actualizada (1989):

> "los cuales nacieron no de sangre, ni de la voluntad de la carne,
> ni de la voluntad de varón, sino de Dios";

La Santa Biblia Reina-Valera Actualizada (1995):

> "Estos no nacieron de sangre, ni por voluntad de carne, ni por voluntad de varón, sino de Dios";

Castilian Bible Version (2003):

> "los cuales, no de sangre, ni de voluntad humana, ni de voluntad de varón, sino de Dios nacieron".

B. OBSERVATIONS ON THE MODERN VERSIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

We have examined the list of the texts from modern versions in six European languages. This helps us understand which reading has been adopted by the translators and editors of the New Testament in the last five centuries.

Looking at the text of Jn 1:13 in the various modern versions of the Bible, it is very interesting to note that among all the versions

presented here, four versions of *Bible de Jérusalem*[17] read Jn 1:13 in the singular, whereas all the other versions read it in the plural. It means the translators and editors of this version have not simply followed the majority of the Greek texts that contain the plural form of the text. They have taken into consideration, not only the majority of Greek texts with the plural reading, but they have also studied the core of the textual problem and opted for the singular reading.

We note that the translation of Jn 1:13 is different from one version to another. The difference lies not only in the translation but also in the use of vocabularies. But we are not concerned about this point. Our main concern is only to examine whether the verb γεννάω has been translated in the singular or plural form.

That the majority of the modern versions read it in the plural does not mean that the plural is the original reading. The versions of the *Bible de Jérusalem* published in 1955, 1956, 1974 and 1988 kindle our curiosity about why they have adopted the singular reading and leads us into further research.

Let us now see make a survey of various scholars who have studied this problem in the last one hundred years.

C. A SURVEY OF PREVIOUS STUDIES (1896-2013)

Although research on the Prologue of the Gospel of John has not diminished in recent scholarship with various exegetical questions, the critical study of the text of Jn 1:13 has not been the subject of much study.[18] Making this statement, we are not ignoring the scholar-

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[17] Cfr. *La Bible de Jérusalem* published in 1955, 1956, 1974 and 1988. But the version published in 1998 read it in the plural.

[18] The only two monographs that deal with the textual problem of Jn 1:13 in detail are: J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu. Jean 1,13* (AnBib, 37), Institut Biblique Pontifical, Rome 1969; P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut sondern monogen aus Gott geboren.* Textkritische, dogmengeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung zu Joh 1,13-14 (Forschung zur Bibel, 31), Echter, Würzburg 1978.

ly research done by various exegetes, especially those who argue in favour of the singular reading of the text.[19]

The textual variation of Jn 1:13 is not a recent problem in Johannine scholarship; rather, it was dealt with in the 18th century itself.[20] We meet with two main currents of scholars, who could be characterized as the defenders of the singular reading and defenders of the plural reading. We are going to present various studies done by scholars, starting from A. Resch (1896) to the recent scholars of our modern time.

1. Defenders of the Singular

A. Resch (1896)

After the Church Fathers such as Tertullian († 230), A. Resch is the first among the late 19th century scholars to defend the singular reading of Jn 1:13.[21] He gives a list of fourteen patristic texts (both

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[19] The following is the list of some scholars who propose the singular reading of the text: A. RESCH, *Außerkanonische Paralleltexte zu den Evangelien III. Paralleltexte zu Johannes* (TU 10/4), J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig 1896; A. LOISY, *Le Quatrième Évangile*, Émile Nourry, Paris 1903, 174-183; TH. ZAHN, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, A. Deichert'sche Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 4), A Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Leipzig 1908, Excursus II, 711-714; F.C. BURNEY, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, Clarendon, Oxford 1922, 34f; A. VON HARNACK, "Zur Textkritik und Christologie der Schriften des Johannes", in *Studien zur Geschichte des Neuen Testaments und der Alten Kirche.* vol. 1, Zur neutestamentlichen Textkritik (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 19), De Gruyter, Leipzig-Berlin 1931, 115-127; F.-M. BRAUN, "Qui ex Deo natus est", in *Aux Sources de la Tradition Chrétienne.* Mélanges offerts à M. Maurice Goguel, Delachaux & Nestlé, Neuchâtel 1950, 11-31; M-É. BOISMARD, *St. John's Prologue*, Blackfriars Publications, London 1957, 33-45; M. VELLANICKAL, *The Divine Sonship of Christians in the Johannine Writings* (AnBib, 72), Biblical Institute Press, Rome 1977, 112-132. For a further list, cfr. P.HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 12, note 1; J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin birth … ", 296, note 1.

[20] For a short history of the textual problem of Jn 1:13, cfr. P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 11-13.

[21] Cfr. A. RESCH, *Außerkanonische Paralleltexte*, 57-60.

Latin and Greek) containing the singular reading. Apart from these quotations, he defends the singular reading, giving other references to the other non-canonical texts of the first four centuries. Publishing this work in 1896, he became the 'pioneer' who kindled the interest of 20th century Biblicists to study this textual problem of Jn 1:13.

F. Blass (1898)

After A. Resch, F. Blass is the next to defend the singular reading of Jn 1:13.[22] In spite of all the Greek Mss in favour of the plural, he based his arguments on the writings of Tertullian.[23] According to him, we cannot ignore the evidence given by a witness of such antiquity and such high standing as Tertullian (a singular reading without the pronoun). Tertullian's copy of Jn 1:13 did not contain the relative pronoun; moreover it read "he was born" instead of "(they) were born". Tertullian accuses the Valentinians of having changed the singular form of the verb into the plural. Blass refers also to Iranaeus, Ambrose, and Augustine who attest the singular reading.

F. Blass says that there are four different readings: 1) "He was born", 2) "who was born" (*qui natus est*, the Latin *b*, a Verona Ms of the fourth or fifth century), 3) "they were born", 4) "who were born". Considering the two readings with the pronoun as suspicious, he rules them out. We can leave out the pronoun in v. 13 for the following reasons: i) there are also others without it; ii) copyists were apt to add pronouns and conjunctions as they have done it elsewhere in John's Gospel; iii) In the same Prologue, there is no conjunction in vv. 2, 3, 4. Tertullian and Cyprian leave out the conjunction in vv. 5, 12. Without the relative pronoun, v. 13 read in the plural would make no sense. It would be "manifestly impossible". Therefore, it should be in the singular.

Verse 13 cannot refer to the 'sons of God' mentioned in v. 12, because "«sons of God» in v. 12 evidently bears a spiritual meaning, and cannot be understood otherwise; why then this strong assertion

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[22] Cfr. F. BLASS, *Philology of the Gospels*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd, New York, 1898, 234-237; Idem (ed.), *Evangelium secundum Iohannem cum variae lectionis delectu*, Teubner, Lipsiae 1902, 2.

[23] TERTULLIAN, *De Carne Christi*, 19,1-2 (CCL 2, 907).

that these spiritual sons are not born of blood, *nor* of the will of the flesh, *nor* of the will of man, but of God?"[24] As it cannot refer to the "sons of God", it should refer to Jesus Christ.[25]

A. Loisy (1903)

A. Loisy is in favour of the singular reading.[26] But he does not accept the virgin birth of Jesus, because he interprets John from the Gnostic point of view. His argument is based on the plural τά αἶματα. He deduces from this plural form that "the birth of the Incarnate Word in time was as foreign to the role of a human mother as to the action of a father according to the flesh. In the Evangelist's eyes, […] Jesus was an ordinary man, conceived according to the natural process. But John paid no heed to that, for what was important in his eyes was the divine sonship of the Savior".[27] J. Galot says that although A. Loisy accepts the singular reading, he seems to follow the Gnostic doctrine.[28]

Th. Zahn (1912)

Having made a careful investigation of the traditional belief of the early Church, Th. Zahn prefers the singular reading. He writes: "The singular gives us a clear idea and the plain confession of a truth then widespread (the Virgin-Birth of Christ), but the plural gives us

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[24] F. BLASS, *Philology of the Gospels*, 237.

[25] He explains how the original text underwent some changes later on: "Not by malice, as Tertullian suggests, but by mere inadvertence: «was born of God» was assimilated to the preceding «to become the *sons* of God.» Afterwards the pronoun came in, either in the singular or in the plural, because a sentence like this: «Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God He was born,» with its subject not indicated until as late as in the fifteenth Greek Word, was somewhat harsh and seemed to require the elucidation which was given by the pronoun" (*Ibid*., 237).

[26]Cfr. A. LOISY, *Le Quatrième Évangile*, 174-183.

[27] F.-M. BRAUN, *Mother of God's People*, Alba House, New York 1967, 39.

[28] Cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 98.

only a vague picture (eine Trivialitaet) and an empty grouping of words".[29]

A. von Harnack (1915)

A. von Harnack is one of the important scholars of the early 20th century who dealt with the textual problem of Jn 1:13.[30] Examining the early witnesses, he makes note of the absence of the relative pronoun *qui* in Tertullian's quote in *De Carne Christi* 19,1-2.[31] As J.W. Pryor comments that Harnack does not "go as far as Blass, who says that Tertullian did not read the relative, or of Zahn, who adds that neither did the Valentinians read it".[32] It is also important to note that D[*] and the Vercellensis[lat] do not read the relative pronoun.[33] The absence of the relative pronoun is a clear indication that v. 13 has no connection with the antecedent 'those who believe in his name' or 'the children of God' (v. 12).

The internal considerations suggested by him in favour of singular reading are as follows:

> (i) *v.* 13 is clearly a polemical statement. It is quite possible that when John wrote, the supernatural birth of Jesus was already being disputed. (ii) What Christian, when he reads 'not of blood … but of God' would not think of the birth of Christ? (iii) The negatives in the verse are not to be read so as to exclude 'jede menschliche Aktion'. John simply has in mind here the principal factors in the conception and birth of Christ.[34]

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[29] This citation has been taken from B.J. LE FROIS, "The Spiritual Motherhood of Mary in John 1:13", in *CBQ* 13 (1951) 429. Cfr. TH. ZAHN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (A. Deichert'sche Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, 4), A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuch Handlung, Leipzig 1912, 72ff, 700ff; IDEM, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1953, 288, note 7.

[30] Cfr. A. VON HARNACK, "Zur Textkritik", 115-127.

[31] Cfr. *Ibid*., 116.

[32] J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin Birth", 297.

[33] Cfr. A. VON HARNACK, "Zur Textkritik", 118.

[34] J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin Birth", 298.

According to him, the plural reading has to be excluded from the possibility of being an authentic text. We quote here the entire text although it is too long, because every argument proposed by him is very important for our study:

Ad. 1. Schon die bloße Tatsache, daß λαβόντες, nachdem bereits gesagt war, was sie erhalten haben, und nachdem sie – nachträglich – als οἱ πιστεύοντες näher charakterisiert waren, den Verfasser noch weiter beschäftgen, befremdet. In dem ganzem Prolog findet sich sonst keine Weitläufigkeit; hier liegt sie vor, und zwar nicht in bezug auf die Hauptperson, den Logos sondern in bezug auf Nebenpersonen.

Ad. 2. Die Anknüpfung ist unsicher und ungeschickt: bezieht sich das οἱ πιστεύοντες auf – und diese Annahme ist eigentliche unvermeidlich -, so entsteht der Widerspruch, daß das, was im vorigen Satz als Gabe erscheint (die Vollmacht der Gotteskindschaft), in diesem als bereits vollzogenes Erlebnis und somit als Charakteristik der Gläubigen dargestellt wird. Bezieht man οἱ über τοῖς πιστεύουσιν hinweg auf τέκνα θεοῦ – so muß man die Apposition hinweg ein prädikativer ausdruck näher erklärt wird. Man hat daher sogar daran gedacht, die Worte εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ zu streichen.

Ad. 3. Aber wen nman sich auch diese Schwierigkeit gefallen läßt, so bietet der Aorist ἐγεννήθησαν einen weiteren Anstoß. Man erwartet entweder das Präsens oder das Perfektum; der aorist ist hier augenscheinlich am wenigsten am Platze; denn erscheint der Satz nicht nahezu sinnlos: »Er gab ihnen Vollmacht, Gottes Kinder zu werden, die da nicht aus Blut, sondern aus Gott geboren wurden«?

Ad 4. Läßt man sich auch das alles gefallen – wie erklärt sich der polemische Ton? Wer behauptet denn, daß Gotteskinder aus der natürlichen Geburt entstehen, und wer bestreitet, daß sie aus Gott geboren werden? Bedarf dieser einfache Gedanke einer erregten Verteidigung? Daß es sich aber hier nicht um eine solche, sondern nur um eine breite, freudige Anerkennung handeln soll, ist recht unwahrscheinlich.

Ad. 5. Wenn in v. 13 von den gläubigen Gotteskindern und nicht vom Logos die rede ist, so befremdet es, daß in v. 14 trotz des Sunjektwechsels mit »καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο« fortgefahren wird.

»Raro consensu – ceteroquin nihil sit instabilius atque incertius quam coniunctiones apud Johannem – per καὶ coniunctionem adiungitur ad v. 13 versus 14; unde manifestum fit etiam in   v. 13 de unico vero filio dei neque de multis filiis scriptorem locutum esse«.

Ad. 6. Hier liegt wohl der größte sachliche Anstoß; wenn schon in
v. 13 von solchen die Rede sein soll, die den Grund ihres Wesens aus Gott
haben, also Gottgezeugte sind, so wird der Eindruck des folgenden
kapitalen Satzes, daß der Logos Fleisch geworden sei und nun als
Μονογενὴς παρὰ πατρός erscheint, außerordentlich geschwächt, ja es
tritt eine Verwirrung ein, aus der man sich nur durch langes
Nachdenken, einigermaßen zu befreien vermag und die zu beseitigen
der Verfasser nichts getan hat. So ungeschickt wie möglich wäre er
verfahren, wenn er der doch beabsichtigten Größe und Wucht des 14.
Verses die vielen aus Gott Geborenen vorangestellt und den
»Μονογενής« durch die οἳ ἐκ θεοῦ γεννηθέντες zu einem Problem
gemacht hätte![35]

According to A. von Harnack, although the plural reading has to be
excluded, the singular reading too has the following difficulties: "(i) it
also introduces an unexpected extended comment on the Logos; and
(ii) *v.* 13 cannot refer to the eternal generation of the Son, as its place
would then be with *vv*. 1-2; and it cannot easily refer to the Incarna-
tion as it would detract from the impact of *v.* 14".[36] Yet, he gives more
importance to the originality of the singular reading.

Seeing the omission of the relative pronoun in D[*] and it[a], he
relegates the text to the status of a marginal comment.[37] Commenting
on this point, E.C. Hoskyns says, "Harnack held that the whole of v.
13, without the relative and with the verb in singular, was originally a
gloss on *the Word became flesh*, a gloss which emanated from the Jo-
hannine circle and was added in order to introduce a definite reference
to the Virgin Birth. Later this gloss became part of the text of the
Gospel, and the relative was added. Finally, when the sentence was
connected with v. 12 rather than with v. 14, the whole was trans-
formed into plural".[38]

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[35] A. VON HARNACK, "Zur Textkritik", 121-123.

[36] J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin birth", 299.

[37] Cfr. *Ibid*.

[38] E.C. HOSKYNS, *The Fourth Gospel* (edited by F.N. DAVEY), Faber
and Faber, London 1947, 166. J.W. Pryor critically analyses all the six argu-
ments of Harnack and concludes that "as far as Harnack took the debate, he has
not at all established the case for the secondary nature of the plural. None of the
six objections carry weight and should lead one to the generally accepted text.

 C.F. Burney (1922)

        Assuming the Aramaic text to be the original, C.F. Burney defends the singular from the linguistic point of view:[39] He says that "the Latin variant ὅς .... ἐγεννήθη becomes considerably more plausible upon the assumption of an Aramaic original".[40]

דְּלָא מִן דְּמָא וְלָא מִן צְבוּת בִּסְרָא וְלָא מִן צְבוּת גַּבְרָא אִילָהֵן מִן אֱלָהָא אִיתְיְלִידוּ

As the particle ד is invariable, he says, "it might form the relative either to 'as many as received Him', or to 'He gave'. The question of the reading in Aramaic depends, then, upon the difference between the plural אִיתְיְלִידוּ 'they were born', and the singular אִיתְיְלִיד 'He was born' – a difference which involves solely the insertion or omission of the letter ו".[41] He argues that as the following v. 14 begins with καί (= ו), as a result of the dittography of this letter ו, the verb could have been read in the plural form אִיתיִלִידו. Moreover, the particle דְּ having no relative sense, it refers to Jesus, who inasmuch as born of God, gives them power to become children of God.[42]

        In his opinion, v. 13 would be surely a 'very strange sequence', if we read it οἳ … ἐγεννήθησαν. As has been indicated in v. 12, the spiritual sonship of the believers is the result of the power given to

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And his suggestions of *v. 13* as an original marginal comment has been seen to be unwarranted" (*Ibid*. 304).

[39] Cfr. C.F. BURNEY, *The Aramaic Origin*, 34-35.

[40] *Ibid*. 34.

[41] *Ibid*.

[42] "Very probably D* may not have had the relative sense of at all, but (as in v. 4) may have been intended to express the sense 'inasmuch as', thus giving the reason why the fact previously mentioned became possible – 'inasmuch as He was born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God'; i.e. He, being born not after the manner of flesh, but of God, was thus able to give to those received Him power to become sons of God" (*Ibid*., 34-35). To support this theory, he connects this interpretation with vv. 3-4, where the Logos is described to be the source of all physical life, so is the source of spiritual life to those who received Him.

them. Applying the simple logic of 'cause-effect', v. 13 becomes a condition or a prerequisite for the believers to become children of God (v. 12). It cannot be true, for the fact that the Evangelist has not written 'and so they were born' or 'so that they should be born'.[43]

G.H.C. MacGregor (1928)

In his commentary of the Fourth Gospel, the author interprets Jn 1:13 with its singular form of the verb. He analyses v. 13 from grammatical point of view and writes: "Unless the relative clause be taken rather unnaturally not with the preceding words 'those who believe' but by a construction *ad sensum* with 'children of God,' as descriptive of divine sonship in the ideal, the past tense of the verb (A.V. 'were born') would appear to imply that regeneration, instead of being the *result* of the right bestowed by the Logos on believers, is anterior to faith, and due to an inherent spirituality of nature. This would be a Gnostic but hardly a Johannine conception".[44] In his commentary, he also brings out the theory proposed by C.F. Burney but does not accept the thought of the Virgin birth in this verse.[45]

R.C.H. Lenski (1942)

In his commentary,[46] the author presents a number of reasons which prove the originality of the singular reading. They are interest-

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[43] Cfr. *Ibid*., 35.

[44] G.H.C. MACGREGOR, *The Gospel of John*, MNTC, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1942 (first print: 1928), 14-15.

[45] "He [Burney] would render 'he has given them power to become sons of God *in as much as he was born* ...' But even if this reading be accepted it is hardly true to say with Burney that 'the writer is drawing out the mystical import of the Virgin Birth,' for the words in question exclude the idea of human mother no less than of human father (cfr. Heb. 7:3). The thought of the Virgin birth is outside John's perspective altogether" (*Ibid*., 15).

[46] Cfr. R.C.H. LENSKI, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus (OH) 1942, 63-70.

ing and convincing. His arguments are based more on internal criticism than on external. Here are the important ones:[47]

1) The conjunction καί at the head of v. 14, is a clear indication that the Evangelist is connecting v. 13 with v. 14 which is nothing but the development of the same idea expressed in v. 13. He comes to this conclusion, noting the repetitive use of καί (nine times) in the preceding account, always in order to connect facts closely related to each other. If v. 13 were about the spiritual birth of Christians, how could he use the conjunction and connect it with the Incarnation of the Logos? These two themes are so diverse (even as to time), that no one would connect the two with καί. It is evident that v. 13 should speak about the birth of Jesus. So, v. 13 should have been written with the singular form of the verb.

2) The three strong negations are a sign that the Evangelist is opposing a wrong belief and he wants to put a right view in its place. R.C.H. Lenski asks a very interesting question: who in all the church supposed that regeneration was a physical act? So, there should have been no need for the Evangelist to insist that regeneration was a supernatural act. But it is more logical to accept that the Evangelist wrote these three strong denials in order to prove the Incarnation of the Logos.

3) He supports the theory that the original singular reading was made into plural by the Gnostic Valentinians to support their own particular doctrine. Then, later on, the plural form of the pronoun was added into the text.

E.C. Hoskyns (1947)

In 1947, E.C. Hoskyns published a summary of the opinions of various authors regarding the textual problem of Jn 1:13.[48] We cannot call Hoskyns a defender of the singular reading, but he admits that the

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[47] Cfr. *Ibid.*

[48] Cfr. E.C. HOSKYNS, *The Fourth Gospel*, 163- 166.

Evangelist deliberately employed language suggestive of the virgin birth. Thus the miracle of regeneration is patterned on and determined by the miracle of the Incarnation.[49] Although he does not accept the singular reading, he has an uncertain positive opinion about the originality of the singular reading. Regarding this point, I. de la Potterie writes: "sin atreverse a adoptar esta lectura, [Hoskyns] muestra por ella gran simpatía".[50]

M.-É. Boismard (1950)

Among Johannine scholars of the 20th century, M-É. Boismard was the first to publish a detailed list of all the witnesses of both the plural and singular readings of Jn 1:13.[51] In his book[52] on the Johannine Prologue, published in the year 1957, he adopts the singular reading of v. 13 and justifies it by way of a twofold explanation:[53]

First of all, he asks how the Word can empower men to become God's children if they were already begotten by God. Secondly, he says that the evidence of the singular reading found in the writings of ancient Fathers and ancient versions of the Bible cannot be ignored. We cannot undervalue the importance and the quality of this evidence. In his internal criticism, he writes: "the reading in the singular makes excellent sense and is perfectly in line with St. John's thought. It is precisely because Christ is the Son of God *par excellence* that he is able to give to those who receive him, who believe in him, to become themselves children of God".[54]

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[49] Cfr. *Ibid.*, 164-165.

[50] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *María-Virgen en el IV Evangelio*, Ediciones Fe Católica, Madrid 1979, 38.

[51] Cfr. M-É. BOISMARD, "Critique textuelle et citations patristiques", in *RB* 57 (1950) 401-408.

[52] Cfr. M-É. BOISMARD, *St. John's Prologue*, 35-45.

[53] Cfr. *Ibid.*, 36-39. See also IDEM, "Le Papyrus Bodmer II", in *RB* 64 (1957) 363-398.

[54] *Ibid.*, 38.

E.M. Nieto (1958)

E.M. Nieto says that if we accept the plural reading, then it will lead to a tautological error: "Se dice que el Verbo da el ser o el poder ser hijos de Dios a los que ya son hijos de Dios. ¿Pero cómo podrá ser esto? Si ya están de hecho constituídos en hijos de Dios, ¿cómo ahora el Verbo les va dar el serlo, o el poder serlo?".[55]

The external criticism of the text is also in favour of the singular reading. This argument is based on the *Epistola Apostolorum*, Codex b of Vetus Latina, the Curetorian Codex of the Syriac version, the writings of Justin, Tertullian, Hyppolitus and Jerome.[56] Apart from agreeing that Jn 1:13 speaks of the temporal birth of Jesus in v.13 of the Prologue, he proposes that the same verse also refers to the spiritual sonship of those who believe in the Word.[57]

K. Rahner (1960)

He is undecided and does not take any position. But he says that most probably the singular might be the original reading.[58]

F.-M. Braun (1967)

Without presenting a detailed critical analysis of the textual problem of Jn 1:13, F.-M. Braun adopts the singular reading to explain

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[55] E.M. NIETO, *Introducción al IV Evangelio y Exégesis del prólogo*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Ávila 1958, 71.

[56] Cfr. *Ibid*., 72.

[57] "Por una parte, parece que se trata de la temporal. El evangelista quiere dejar claro que el Verbo se encarnó milagrosamente en las entrañas purísimas de la Virgen. Se habla, pues de la concepción virginal del Verbo hecho hombre. […] Por otra parte, parece que se habla de la eterna. Se habla de la filiación natural del Verbo, de la que deriva la filiación adoptiva de los hombres. Esto se confirma si relacionamos la perícopa con el versículo 18, donde se describe el seno eterno del Padre" (*Ibid*., 74).

[58] Cfr. K. RAHNER, *Marie, Mère du Seigneur*, translated by R. Tandonnet and H. Holstein, Orante, Paris 1960, 84-85.

the mystery of the virginity of Mary.[59] He refuses A. Loisy's ideas
based on the Gnostic theory. Referring to the most ancient writings of
some Church Fathers such as Tertullian, Sulpicius Severus, Ambrose,
Augustine, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Metho-
dius of Olympus and Appolinaris of Laodicea, he proposes some valid
arguments in favour of the virgin birth of Jesus in Jn 1:13.[60]

J. Galot (1969)

J. Galot has contributed valid and convincing patristic evi-
dence for the singular reading of Jn 1:13.[61] His research contains a
very close examination of the writings of both the Latin and Greek Fa-
thers of the II-V centuries. In the second part of his work, he examines
the theological arguments for and against the singular and plural read-
ing.[62] As a result of his research, he presents thirteen reasons for the
singular reading of the text.[63] J.W. Pryor makes a summary of the
conclusions arrived at by J. Galot as follows:

> (i) Patristic evidence in the 2nd Century supports the singular reading.
>
> (ii) The first patristic evidence for the plural is Clement of Alexandria
> and Origen, and this lends support to the gnostic origin of the plural text,
> for these scholars came from an environment where Gnosticism exer-
> cised a considerable influence.
>
> (iii) Reasons given for the change from plural to singular are unconvinc-
> ing. As a proof against the Ebionites until Tertullian, Justin and Irenaeus
> only use it as a support.
>
> (iv) The change from singular to plural comes under gnostic influence
> sometime in the latter half of the 2nd Century, from 160-190. At first

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[59] Cfr. F.-M. BRAUN, *Mother of God's People*, 39-46.

[60] Cfr. *Ibid*. "Braun argues that the external witness of Irenaeus (and
perhaps of Justin) should be preferred above all other external authorities inas-
much as Irenaeus (and Justin) were closely connected with Ephesus, where the
Fourth Gospel may well have originated": J. MCHUGH, *The Mother of Jesus in
the New Testament*, Doubleday, New York 1975, 265.

[61] Cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 11-94.

[62] Cfr. *Ibid*. 95-122.

[63] Cfr. *Ibid*. 123-124.

gnostics accepted the singular reading as suiting the Valentinian view of Jesus' birth as in no part human. However, under the influence of the philosophy 'as Christ – so the Spiritual ones' the text came to be changed to suit the new understanding.

(v). On the basis of these conclusions, Galot gives his interpretation of the verse in context. The reference is to the Virgin Birth and not to the eternal generation of the Son. The triple negative form is anti-Ebionite in intent, and is not at all meant to exclude human collaboration. Thus v. 14 is a balance to v. 13. In reply to the argument that with the Virgin Birth already mentioned in v. 13 the force of v. 14 is lost, Galot replies that in fact already in verses 9, 10 and 11 we have had anticipations of the Logos' coming. These have never been felt to detract from v. 14. [...] Finally, the link with v. 12 is made clear. John has spoken of how the Logos gives authority to believers to become God's children. What is the rationale for this? '… lui-même a été engendré de Dieu. Sa naissance divine est le principe de la nôtre.'64

J. Galot is one of the few scholars who have contributed to the dogmatic meaning of Jn 1:13 read in the singular. His contribution to the new way of interpreting v. 13 in the singular is not limited to the Incarnation of Jesus, but also explains the virginity of Mary.65

T. Gallus (1969)

He writes in favour of the singular reading, basing his arguments on the external evidence such as the Codex Veronensis (b), the Liber Comicus, a manuscript in old Syriac and the patristic writings of Tertullian, and internal evidence such as the connection between v. 13 and v. 14, its coherence with the Johannine theology, etc. Defending

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64 J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin birth", 305-306. For more details about J. Galot's book, cfr. P. Zarrella, "Verginità di Maria nel parto in Giov. 1, 13. Nota su un libro recente di J. GALOT", in *Laur* 11 (1970) 109-117.

65 Cfr. J. GALOT, "Vierge entre les vierges", in *NRT* 79 (1957) 463-477; IDEM, "La virginité de Marie et la naissance de Jésus", in *NRT* 82 (1960) 449-469; IDEM, "[Gv 1,13 emendato] Maternità verginale di Maria e paternità divina", in *CivCatt* 139/3 (1988) 209-222; IDEM, "Maternité virginale de Marie et paternité divine. Que dit le Prologue de S. Jean 1,13? ", in *EspVie* 99 (1989) 57-64.

the singular reading, he gives a theological reflection about the virginity of Mary. [66]

D. Mollat (1973)

D. Mollat considers the singular as the authentic reading and says that this reading alludes to the virgin birth of Jesus. He justifies his choice in the following words:

> Tous les Mss grecs et l'ensemble des versions, à quelques exceptions près, ont le pluriel : « eux que… a engendrés ». Nous adoptons cependant la leçon au singulier du Veronensis, peut-être de Syrcur et Pesh (quelque Mss), du Liber Comicus, de l'Ep. Apostolorum, de Justin, Irénée, Tertullien et plusieurs autres Pères. En fait, Jn n'emploie le verbe « engendrer » à l'aoriste qu'à propos du Christ ; à propos des chrétiens il emploie le parfait. De plus, le don du « pouvoir de devenir enfants de Dieu » appelle une explication que ne contient pas le titre de Verbe. On doit en dire autant de la foi au « nom », qui chez Jean est toujours la foi au nom du Fils de Dieu. L'attribution par Tert. de la leçon au plur. aux Valentiniens correspond à leur tendance à appliquer aux « spirituels » ce qui était dit de Jésus. Cette leçon, cohérente avec la doctrine johannique de la renaissance de l'homme par l'Esprit, aura pu se répandre à partir d'Alexandrie.[67]

J. McHugh (1975)

He gives a thorough survey, with full references, of the evidence in favour of the singular reading. He gives a list of scholars who support the singular form of the verb and is in perfect agreement with

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[66] Cfr. T. GALLUS, *Jungfraumutter – "Mitterlöserin"*, Institutum Marianum, Regensburg 1969, 16-17.

[67] Cfr. D. MOLLAT, *L'Évangile et les Épîtres de Saint Jean*, Cerf, Paris 1960², 76. "Le mot grec signifie : le mâle ou le mari, chef de la communauté conjugale. Est donc exclue une génération selon les lois de la nature. Allusion à la génération éternelle du Verbe, mais sans doute aussi, vu l'insistance sur cette exclusion des «sangs», de la «chaire» et de la «volonté du mâle», à la naissance virginale de Jésus" (*Ibid.*, 76, note d).

their arguments. External and internal criticism have been given equal importance in his arguments in favour of the singular.[68]

L. Sabourin (1976)

He is convinced of the originality of the singular reading. He gives a number of arguments in his article,[69] based on both external and internal evidence. Agreeing with I. de la Potterie, he says that "the substitution of the plural for the singular is easier to explain than the other way around".[70] He concludes that "it is difficult to believe in the secondary origin of a text as dense and difficult as «ek Theou egennēthē», which does not refer directly to the virginal conception of Jesus".[71]

The following pieces of internal evidence are used by the author to defend the singular reading of the text:[72]

> The singular corresponds to the generation of Christ, which is a Johannine theme that appears in Jn 1.14,18; 3.16,18; 1 Jn 4.9; 5.18;
>
> When John describes the spiritual generation of Christians (cfr. 3.6,18; 1 Jn 2.29; 3.9; 4.7; 5.1,4,18a), he always uses the perfect tense, whereas he uses the aorist when he refers to the Incarnation (cfr. 1 Jn 5.18). The Evangelist's use of aorist tense in Jn 1.13 makes it evident that John is referring to the Incarnation of Christ in Jn 1.13. So, it should have been singular;
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> "«who was begotten of God» in Jn 1:13d refers both to the virginal generation of Christ through Mary and to his eternal generation as a Word, which the connection with v.12 suggests".[73]

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[68] Cfr. J. MCHUGH, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament*, 255-268.

[69] L. SABOURIN, "Who was begotten of God (Jn 1, 13)", in *BTB* 6 (1976) 86-90.

[70] *Ibid*., 87.

[71] *Ibid*., 88.

[72] *Ibid*., 88-90.

[73] *Ibid*., 90.

M. Warner (1976)

According to M. Warner, Jn 1:13 (plural) suggests that the believers' baptismal birth follows the model of Christ's virgin birth. She does not refute the possibility of reading it in singular. Reading Jn 1:13 with the singular form of the verb alludes to the virgin birth of Jesus. According to her, the controversy about the variant readings remains open even although this interpretation (singular verb) shows that the text-critical problem has been resolved. We want to cite her words here:

> The New Jerusalem Bible has even adopted a variant reading of this verse, which gives a clear statement of the virgin birth by altering the verb from the traditional plural to the singular. This translation is not upheld by manuscript evidence but by many references to the Fathers, including Ambrose and Augustine, and it has gained support among many contemporary theologians, Catholic and Protestant. The Jerusalem Bible reads: "But to all who did accept him, he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him *who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself* [John 1:12-13; italics added]. The interpretation smooths out some of the knottiness in John's powerfully gnomic text, but the controversy is by no means closed.[74]

M. Vellanickal (1977)

He is an Indian biblical scholar who specialized in Johannine studies. In his doctoral thesis, published by the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, he dedicates a complete chapter on Jn 1:12-13 and presents a detailed study of the textual problem of Jn 1:13 and the exegetical meaning of this verse.[75] He gives a very clear outline of the evidence from external and internal criticism and concludes that the singular is the original form of the text. The reasons he gives in favour of singular reading are exhaustive.

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[74] M. WARNER, *The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. Alone of all her sex*, Weiden and Nicolson, London 1976, 16.

[75] Cfr. M. VELLANICKAL, *The Divine Sonship*, 112-132.

P. Hofrichter (1978)

P. Hofrichter did his doctoral dissertation[76] on the text-critical problem of Jn 1:13 and its dogmatic implications and published it in the year 1978. He concludes his research in favour of the singular reading. He says that the plural relative pronoun, with which v. 13 begins, has come down to us from the Egyptian text-tradition. It is found in P^{66}, P^{77} and in Origen. He says that in the beginning there was no relative pronoun, and the verb was singular (ἐγεννήθη). Later on, a relative pronoun was introduced for a philological motive (i.e. atticization) in the second century. The verb being singular was considered to be ambiguous. So, the verb form was brought into line with the pronoun by rendering it ἐγεννήθησαν due to the strong influence of 1 Jn 5:18.

The Church Fathers attacked the Gnostics and Manicheans for having changed the singular into the plural. Some other Church Fathers, like Irenaeus and Justin, failed to quote the first phrase of the verse, probably for the following two reasons: i) it seems to exclude any kind of human procreation, ii) it could also be used as an anti-Jewish polemic as Jesus was called an illegitimate son and a Samaritan (cfr. Jn 8:41-48). According to P. Hofrichter, this verse (Jn 1:13) which was solely Christological was losing its Johannine sense in the course of time. In v. 13 John does not speak about the human birth of Jesus, but about the descent of an uncreated Logos into the world. In his opinion, the human birth of Jesus (in other words, Jesus' taking upon himself human flesh) is stated in v. 14. Moreover, there is a textual, contextual and metrical relationship between v. 13 and v. 14. Apart from his doctoral dissertation, he has also published more about the theological meaning of v. 13.[77]

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[76] Cfr. P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*.

[77] Cfr. P. HOFRICHTER, "Il Significato dei «sangui» in Gv 1, 13. Una chiave allo sviluppo dottrinale del cristianesimo primitivo" in V. FRANCESCO (a cura di), *Sangue e antropologia nella letteratura cristiana* (Centro Studi Sanguis Christi, 3), vol. II, Atti della III settimana (Roma, 29 novembre – 4 dicembre 1982), Edizioni Pia Unione Preziossimo Sangue, Roma 1983, 569-594; IDEM, "Ancora una volta sui «sangui» di Gv 1,13: significato e interpretazioni neotestamentari e gnostici", in V. FRANCESCO (a cura di), *Sangue e antropologia nella Liturgia* (Centro Studi Sanguis Christi, 4), vol. II, Atti della

I. de la Potterie (1978)

I. de la Potterie is one the important promoters of the singular reading of Jn 1:13. He has published many writings on the textual problem of Jn 1:13 and its theological significance for Christology and Mariology.[78] In his textual analysis, he gives more importance to internal criticism (arguments based on the text itself) to defend the singular reading. His arguments are very methodological, precise and highly theological. He derives from the singular reading of Jn 1:13 its Christological and Mariological meaning. According to him, Jn 1:13 is to be interpreted not only in favour of the virgin birth of Jesus but also of the virginal conception of Mary.

A. Vicent Cernuda (1982)

A. Vicent Cernuda has done some very scholarly research on the textual problem of Jn 1:13.[79] He analyses the Gnostic thought that

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IV settimana (Roma, 21-26 novembre 1983), Edizioni Pia Unione Preziossimo Sangue, Roma 1984, 605-624.

[78] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Exegesis quarti Evangelii. De Matre Dei in IV Evangelio*, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Roma 1976-1977; "La Mère de Jésus et la conception virginale du Fils de Dieu", in *Mar* 50 (1978) 41-90; Idem, "La concezione e la nascita verginale di Gesù secondo il quarto Vangelo", in *MatEccl* 14 (1978) 66-77; IDEM, *María-Virgen en el IV Evangelio. La Madre de Jesús y la Concepción virginal del Hijo de Dios*, Ediciones Fe Católica, Madrid 1979; IDEM, "Il parto verginale del verbo incarnato: «Non ex sanguinibus…, sed ex Deo natus est» (Gv. 1, 13)", in *Mar* 45 (1983) 127-174; IDEM, *Maria nel mistero dell'alleanza*, "Dabar" studi biblici e giudaistici 6, Marietti, Genova 1988, 93-143 (English Translation : *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant* St. Pauls, Bombay 1995, 107-155); IDEM, *La concepción virginal de Jesús según san Juan: el texto del Prólogo*, Vida y spiritualidad, Lima 1997; IDEM, "Gregorio Nisseno", in T. VEGLIANTI (a cura di) *Dizionario Teologico sul Sangue di Cristo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2007, 665.

[79] Cfr. A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La doble generación de Jesucristo según Jn.1,13.14", in *EstB* 40 (1982) 49-117; IDEM, "«Non da Sangui» - In mezzo all'incarnazione di Gv 1, 13-14", in F. VATTONI (a cura di), *Sangue e antropologia nella Liturgia* (Centro Studi Sanguis Christi, 4), vol. II, Atti della IV settimana (Roma, 21-26 novembre 1983), Edizioni Pia Unione Preziossimo

was dominant in the early Church, and he also refers to patristic litera-
ture and concludes that the singular should be the original reading.
His main arguments in favour of the singular reading are based princi-
pally on the writings of Ignatius, Justin and Iraeneus.

According to him, the Gnostics opposed the teaching of Ire-
naeus and transferred the exegesis from the Christological field to the
divine birth of the Spirituals. At the end of the second century, the
plural came into common use, because it was useful for orthodoxy,
while the old singular reading looked like a hierogamy. The text that
we have in plural reading is nothing but the corrupted form of the
original singular reading. Although he accepts the singular as the orig-
inal reading, he objects the temporal birth of Jesus in Jn 1:13.[80]

M. Mees (1985)

M. Mees is in favour of the singular reading but is not against
the plural reading. He says that from textual point of view, both the
readings are equally valuable because we find both in the writings of
the Church Fathers.[81]

A. Serra (1985)

A. Serra has published many articles and books on the Mariol-
ogy of the Fourth Gospel. Dealing with the textual problem of Jn
1:13,[82] he says that notwithstanding the overwhelming number of
Greek Mss with the plural reading, we should not immediately come
to the conclusion that the plural is the original reading. We cannot and
should not ignore the patristic commentaries that are much older than
these Greek Mss. He refers to the Greek Church Fathers such as Igna-

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Sangue, Roma 1984, 581-604; IDEM, "La huella cristológica de Jn 1,13 en el
siglo II y la insólita audacia de esta fórmula joanea", in *EstB* 43(1985) 275-320.

[80] For more details about these objections, cfr. A. VICENT CERNUDA,
"La doble generación de Jesucristo", 313-317.

[81] Cfr. M. MEES, "Joh 1, 12-13 nach frühchristlicher Überlieferung", in
BZ 29 (1985) 107-115.

[82] A. SERRA, "Vergine", in *NDM*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo
(Milano) 1988³, 1431-1438.

tius of Antioch, Justin, Hippolyte, Clement of Alexandria and Origen
to support his arguments in favour of the singular reading. Looking at
this problem from geographical point of view, he says that the singular
was the most popular reading and was very widespread in a vast geo-
graphical area such as Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Rome and Gaul.[83]
As a result of his research, he concludes that Jn 1:13 should be read in
thesingular.[84] It therefore refers to the virgin birth of Jesus.

S. Sabugal (1986)

Jn 1:13 has to be read in its singular form and it refers to the
redemptive Incarnation of Jesus Christ in Mary. The author says that
the three negations found in Jn 1:13 are certainly a very clear indica-
tion that it is about the virginal conception of Mary and the virgin
birth of Jesus Christ.[85]

G.R. Beasley-Murray (1987)

G.R. Beasley-Murray neither defends the singular, nor is he
against it. He writes in his commentary that "the decision is more dif-
ficult than is generally acknowledged", and thus leaves it open to the
decision of the readers.[86] Nevertheless, he seems to be more in favour
of the singular than the plural.[87]

I. Gebara – M.C. Bingemer (1987)

The Brazilian feminine theologians, Ivone Gebara and Maria
Clara Bingemer, writing about the biblical background for Mary's vir-

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[83] *Ibid.*, 1431.

[84] Cfr. *Ibid.*, 1432.

[85] Cfr. S. SABUGAL, *La humanización redentora del Hijo de Dios en
María*, in *Mar* 48 (1986) 600-637.

[86] G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John* (WBC, 36), Word Books Publisher,
Waco (TX) 1987, 2, note c.

[87] "Even if a reference to the *Virgin* Birth be questioned (there is no
clear reference to it in the Gospel), the idea of relating 'birth from God' (3:3) to
the Incarnation is entirely possible, and theologically sound" (*Ibid*. 13).

ginity, mention v. 13 of the Johannine Prologue as one of the possible biblical foundations for the virgin birth of Jesus through Mary, if it is read in the singular. We want to cite their words here: "There is a great deal of discussion about whether an expression in the Fourth Gospel (1:13) is to be understood in the singular: «they who were (he who was) begotten … not by carnal desire, nor by man's willing it, but by God».   If it is singular, the text may refer to the Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virginal womb of Mary, «begotten by God»".[88]

R. Robert (1987)

Writing about the Christological meaning of Jn 1:13 in his article[89] published in the year 1987, R. Robert explains the reason why the singular should be more ancient than the plural. According to him, there is no reason to imagine that the singular could not have existed in the primitive Church and that the evidence in the writings of the Church Fathers such as Tertullian and Iranaeus is sufficient to choose the singular reading as the most ancient one.[90]

M. Theobald (1988)

M. Theobald's arguments in favour of the singular reading are based on internal evidence. He does not give any importance to manuscript study, because we have no Mss older than the early third century. He defends the singular reading, referring to the grammatical and philological meaning of the text and its internal coherence with the theological thought of the Evangelist. According to him, the internal

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[88] I. GEBARA – M. BINGEMER, *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor* (Liberation and Theology, 7), translation from the Portuguese by Berryman Phillip, Orbis books, Maryknoll (NY) 1989, (Original in Portughese: *Maria, Mãe de Deus e Mãe dos Pobres*, CESEP, São Paulo 1987), 102.

[89] Cfr. R. ROBERT, "La leçon christologique en Jean 1:13", in *RevThom* 87 (1987) 5-22.

[90] *Ibid*. 11, note 3.

evidence from textual criticism is sufficient to support the singular reading.[91]

S.A. Panimolle (1988)

He interprets Jn 1:13 in its plural form, but at the same time he does not exclude the possibility of reading it in the singular. Accepting the singular reading, he writes that we can see in v. 13 the Johannine presentation of the virgin birth of Jesus.[92]

B. Escaffre Ladet (1993)

B. Escaffre Ladet has published an article in French dealing with the problem of whether the Gospel of John contains any reference to the virginal conception of Jesus.[93] In this article, he refers to the textual problem of Jn 1:13. He presents evidence for the plural and also for the singular reading of the text. He makes use of external and internal witnesses in his study. After a detailed analysis, although he does not seem to fully accept the singular as the original, he says that Jn 1:13 indicates that the idea of the virgin birth of Jesus from Mary is not hostile to the Fourth Evangelist.

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[91] M. THEOBALD, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos*. Studien zum Verhältnis des Johannesprologs zum Corpus des Evangeliums und zu 1 Joh (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, Neue Folge, 20), Aschendorff, Münster 1988, 239-247.

[92] S.A. PANIMOLLE, *Lettura pastorale del Vangelo di Giovanni.* vol. I (Lettura pastorale della Bibbia, 16), Dehoniane, Bologna 1988³, 45-47. "*In Gv 1,13 però è possibile anche la lezione al singolare;* in questa ipotesi il testo suona così: « il quale non dalla carne…, ma da Dio è stato generato». In tale interpretazione, abbiamo la proclamazione giovannea della nascita di Gesù. Il Verbo è stato generato non per fattori umani ma da Dio. Nel quarto vangelo però non siamo riusciti a trovare affermazioni analoghe sulla nascita verginale del verbo incarnato." (*Ibid.*, 47).

[93] B. ESCAFFRE LADET, *L'Évangile de Jean fait'il référence à la conceptión virginale?*, in *EphMar* 43 (1993) 349-365 [The Spanish translation of this article : "Concepción Virginal de Jesús en el Evangelio de Juan ? (Jn 1,12-13 ; 1,45 y 6,42 ; 7,41-42 ; 8,41)", in A. RODRIGUEZ (ed.), *María del Evangelio. Las primeras generaciones cristianas hablan de María*, Claretianas, Madrid 1994, 341-36].

S. M. Perrella (1994)

In his article, S.M. Perrella presents a fine summary of the theological discussions (1962-1994) regarding the virginity of Mary.[94] He presents I. de la Potterie's exegetical proposal in favour of the singular reading of Jn 1:13. Not being a Biblicist, he does not give any reasons from a text-critical point of view, but as a Mariologist he accepts the proposals of I. de la Potterie and A. Serra and sees an allusion to the virginal conception of Jesus and the virgin birth of Jesus in this Johannine text read in the singular.[95]

J. Ratzinger (1995)

J. Ratzinger says that we cannot discern the original reading because both the readings are equally ancient and thus have to be given equal importance. He is of the opinion that we should not choose one reading and neglect the other, because both are important to understand the correlation between the mystery of the Incarnation and our participation in the divine Sonship.[96]

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[94] Cfr. S.M. PERRELLA, "Il parto verginale di Maria nel dibattito teologico contemporaneo (1962-1994). Magistero-Esegesi-Teologia", in *Mar* 56 (1994) 95-213.

[95] Cfr. S.M. PERRELLA, *Maria Vergine e Madre. La verginità feconda di Maria tra fede, storia e teologia*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano) 2003, 101-105.

[96] J. RATZINGER, "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine…", in *Theot* 3 (1995) 299: "Ci sono due diverse tradizioni testuali, ed oggi non si può più discernere quale sia l'originaria. Entrambe appaiono praticamente della stessa antichità e con la stessa autorità. […] Questa duplice forma della tradizione è comprensibile, perché il versetto in ogni caso rimanda ad entrambi i soggetti. In questo senso dobbiamo in verità leggere sempre insieme entrambe le tradizioni testuali, perché solo insieme fanno emergere tutto il significato del testo. Se prendiamo come base l'abituale versione plurale, allora si parla dei battezzati, ai quali viene partecipata, a partire dal *Logos*, la nuova nascita divina. Ma il mistero del parto verginale di Gesù – l'origine di tale nostra nascita divina – vi traspare così chiaramente, che solo un preconcetto può negare questa correlazione. Ma anche se consideriamo la versione singolare

In his book published in 2012, he says that both the inter-
pretatuions are possible.[97] According to him, the virgin birth of Jesus
becomes the model of our baptismal rebirth. We want to quote here
his own words:

> Una parte della tradizione manoscritta legge questa frase [Gv 1, 12s]
> non al plurale, ma al singolare: «Colui che non da sangue […] è stato
> generato». In questo modo la frase diventerebbe un chiaro riferimento
> alla concezione e alla nascita verginali di Gesù. […] Come le genealogie
> alla fine si interrompono, perché Gesù non è stato generato da Giuseppe,
> bensì molto realmente è nato dalla Vergine Maria per opera dello Spirito
> Santo, così questo vale ora anche per noi: la nostra vera «genealogia» è
> la fede in Gesù, che ci dona una nuova provenienza, ci fa nascere «da
> Dio».[98]

M. Panthapallil (1996)

Mary Panthapallil, an Indian feminine theologian, in her doc-
toral dissertation,[99] dedicates a full section for the text-critical problem
of Jn 1.13 and its theological meaning. Defending the singular form of
the verb, she concludes that v. 13 describes the virginal conception
and virgin birth of Jesus. Thus, Mary is implicitly presented by the
Evangelist as a virgin and at the same time a mother. She shows the
strict relationship between Mary's virginity and the divine Sonship of
Jesus in Jn 1:13 as follows:

> At first sight. John in the Prologue does not speak of the Mother of Je-
> sus. In other words, the word 'mother' does not appear in Jn 1:12-13.
> But certainly, the fact remains that here there is someone who has been
> conceived and who is born, that a woman, therefore must be implicated.
> Even though she is not mentioned in the text, she must be present im-

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come quella originaria, rimane evidente la relazione con «tutti quelli che lo
hanno accolto»".

[97] Cfr. J. RATZINGER - BENEDETTO XVI, *L'infanzia di Gesù,* Rizzoli –
LEV, Milano – Città del Vaticano 2012, 20-21.

[98] *Ibid.*

[99] M. PANTHAPALLIL, *Mary, the type of the Church in the Johannine
writings. A Biblico-Theological Analysis*, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies
India Publications, Kottayam 1996, 155-168.

plicitly. There are certain indications. In the Johannine Writings, the aorist participle passive use of *gennan* (cf. *egennēthē* 1:13) describes conception or birth in the physical order (cf. Jn 8:41; 9:19, 20, 34 etc). Tha aorist shows an event that took place at a moment in time. Therefore John here refers to a historical event – the conception and birth of the Word made flesh. […] Besides, the negation 'nor of the will of man' (v. 13) also gives us the clue. The non-intervention of the 'man' is expressly underlined. […] Mary, the Mother of Jesus therefore, is fully present here, but implicitly, discreetly, without being perceived.[100]

ARCIC (2004)

The Anglo-Roman Catholic International Commission in its statement entitled "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ" says that although the Johannine Prologue does not explicitly mention the name of Mary, we can see an allusion to Mary's virginity in the context of Jesus' Incarnation. It is interesting to note that the Anglo-Roman Catholic ecumenical dialogue has gone to the extent of agreeing to the singular reading of the controversial text of Jn 1:13. We want to cite here article no. 22 of the document:

> Mary is not mentioned explicitly in the Prologue of John's Gospel. However, something of the significance of her role in salvation history may be discerned by placing her in the context of the considered theological truths that the evangelist articulates in unfolding the good news of the Incarnation. The theological emphasis on the divine initiative, that in the narratives of Matthew and Luke is expressed in the story of Jesus' birth, is paralleled in the Prologue of John by an emphasis on the predestinating will and grace of God by which all those who are brought to new birth are said to be born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (1:13). These are words that could be applied to the birth of Jesus himself.[101]

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[100] *Ibid.,* 164-165.

[101] ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION, *Mary: Grace and hope in Christ. The Seattle Statement of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission.* The text with Commentaries and Study Guide (edited by D. BOLEN – G. CAMERON), Continuum, London – New York 2006, 27-28.

But the Dombes group's document entitled *Mary in the plan of God and in the Communion of Saints* does not say anything about Jn 1:13.[102]

S. De Fiores (2006)

S. De Fiores, an eminent Mariologist, prefers the singular reading beacause he considers Jn 1:13 (singular) as precious evidence for the virginal conception and the virgin birth of Jesus. He agrees with various scholars who defend the singular and writes:

> Sembrerebbe strano che Giovanni, venendo dopo Matteo e Luca che tramandano la concezione verginale di Gesù, non ne facesse parola nel suo vangelo. In realtà parecchi studiosi scorgono nel versetto 13 del prologo, purché letto al singolare, una preziosa testimonianza della verginità di Maria nel concepire e partorire il Figlio di Dio.[103]

A. García Moreno (2006)

In his article[104], A. García Moreno argues that singular should be the original reading for the following reasons[105]: 1) The three negations used by the Evangelist make more sense in regard to the Incar-

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[102] Cfr. DOMBES GROUP, *Mary in the plan of God and in the Communion of Saints. toward a common Christian understanding*, Paulist Press, New York - Mahwah (NJ) 2002. Regarding this document, J.G. Roten writes: "The document by the Groupe des Dombes which presents an ecumenical reading on Mary from history and Scripture in the plan of God and in the communion of saints takes place a very cautious position respecting the virginity *in partu* and *post partum*. The text is, in fact, ambivalent. It allows for an interpretation that goes in the direction of acceptance and also towards rejection" (J.G. ROTEN, "Virginity between Fact and Meaning", in *MarStud* 58 [2007] 293).

[103] S. DE FIORES, "Bibbia", in IDEM, *Maria. Nuovissimo Dizionario*, vol. I, Dehoniane, Bologna 2006, 308; Cfr. IDEM, "Vergine", in IDEM, *Maria. Nuovissimo Dizionario*, vol. II, Dehoniane, Bologna 2006, 1782.

[104] A. GARCÍA MORENO, "Virginidad de María en el IV Evangelio", in *ScrdeM* 2 (2006) 55-73.

[105] *Ibid*., 67.

nation of Jesus rather than the spiritual birth of Christians. 2) The aorist form of the verb supports the historical birth of Jesus. The aorist cannot be used for the regeneration of Christians. 3) There is coherence with the preceding v. 12 only if the verb is in the singular form. Otherwise, v. 13 becomes meaningless in the context of v. 12. This is how he concludes his article:

> Cuanto hemos expuesto converge en la posibilidad de una lectura en singular del Jn 1, 13, habida cuenta de los testimonios más antiguos (s. II) y seguros que los manuscritos griegos (s. IV), sospechosos de haber sido influidos por las controversias gnósticas. La crítica literaria también apoya esta opción, ya que es más coherente con el contexto de Jn 1, 12 y 14. Desde la perspectiva teológica se destaca mejor el sentido de la Encarnación del Verbo que, al participar como Hijo de Dios de la naturaleza humana, posibilidad a los hombres el ser hijos de Dios. En cuanto a la mariología, con esa variante en singular se destaca la virginidad y el papel decisorio de María, "la *madre* de Jesús", en la Encarnación.[106]

H. Thyen (2007)

In his scholarly writing[107] on the textual problem of Jn 1:13, he refers to all the important scholars such as J. Galot, P. Hofrichter, M. Vellanickal, J. Schmid, J. Pryor, M. Theobald, A. von Harnack, etc. He agrees with these scholars and defends the singular reading of the text. His argument is based on the patristic evidence and the internal coherence of the text with Johannine theology.

A. Valentini (2013)

A. Valentini, a Montfort Biblical scholar, in one of his recent his articles,[108] gives a very systematic and detailed presentation of

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[106] *Ibid.*, 71.

[107] H. THYEN, "Das textkritische Problem von Joh 1,13", in IDEM, *Studien zum Corpus Iohanneum* (WUNT, 214), Mohr Siebek, Tübingen 2007, 418-424.

[108] A. VALENTINI, "Testo e trasmissione di Gv 1,13", in *Alla luce delle Scritture. Studi in onore di Giovanni Odasso* (a cura di M. Pina Scanu), Paideia Editrice, Brescia 2013, 135-149.

the textual problem of Jn 1:13. The article has four subtitles: i) External criticism; ii) Internal criticism; iii) Two readings and the textual transformation; iv) Text and Wirkungsgeschichte. After having dealt with the various problems regarding its external and internal criticisms and various possibilities for the transformation of the text, he gives some interesting and objective conclusions in the last part of his article.

He is of the opinon that both the readings make sense from theological point of view; they are not alternatives but complementary.[109] He concludes his article in favour of the singular reading, in the following words:

> Leggendo il testo al singolare, il senso cristologico è assolutamente prioritario e va ribadito con chiarezza: Gv 1, 13 intende affermare con vigore la novità della generazione del Verbo (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη), avvenuta in maniera unica, profondamente diversa rispetto alle comuni nascite umane, senza tuttavia alcun pregiudizio per la cocretezza dell'incarnazione. Con la particolare generazione del Verbo è connessa la singolare maternità della donna che in modo unico lo ha concepito e che lo ha rivestito della nostra carne. Quanto era stato rivelato con chiarezza e in forma narrativa da Luca (1,34-35) e da Matteo (1,18-25) circa la nascita del Figlio di Dio dalla Vergine, è presentato da Giovanni in maniera implicita ed essenziale, all'interno di un testo particolarmente denso, concernente l'incarnazione del verbo (v. 13) e la conseguente nascita spirituale dei credenti (v. 12).[110]

The virgin birth of Jesus that is explicitly mentioned by the Synoptic Gospels (cfr Lk 1:34-35; Mt 1:18-25) is presented by the Fourth Evangelist in a different way in the Prologue. A. Valentini's arguments are very scholarly and precise.

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[109] *Ibid.*, 149.

[110] *Ibid.,* 149.

2. *Scholars staying with the plural*

J. Lagrange (1927)

J. Lagrange opts for the plural reading in his commentary, but presents a few possible reasons in favour of the singular reading as well. Seeing the strong triple negation found in v. 13, he says that in these three strong negations it is easier to think of the description of the Incarnation rather than the regeneration of believers.[111]

A. Wikenhauser (1948)

According to A. Wikenhauser, although there is much older evidence from the writings of the Church Fathers (Justin, for example) for the singular reading, it cannot be the original reading. The reasons given by him are as follows:

> 1) No se encuentra en ningún códice griego; 2) su sentido no es del todo claro, porque se discute si el evangelista pretendía referirse al origen eterno del Logos engendrado por el Padre (Dupont), o a su nacimiento de la Virgen (F.M. Braun), o a las dos cosas (Mollat, Boismard); 3) la idea de la generación espiritual o del nacimiento de Dios (de lo alto) tiene gran importancia en los escritos de Juan; 4) resulta natural la sospecha de que la incertidumbre del texto provenga de preocupaciones cristológicas; si esta lectura fuera la original, sería inexplicable que hubiera desaparecido completamente, sin dejar ningua huella en los manuscritos griegos; 5) los testimonios favorables a la forma plural de la frase relativa son más antiguos que los favorables a la forma singular; el singular es una variante «occidental».[112]

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[111] J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Jean,* Troisième Edition, Gabalda, Paris 1927, 18-19: "De plus, on s'étonne que Jo. donne une description si détaillée des conditions d'une naissance ordinaire pour dire que ce ne sont point celles d'une naissance spirituelle et métaphorique. On comprendrait très bien au contraire cette insistence s'il fallait opposer une naissance *physique* supernaturelle à une naissance ordinaire".

[112] A. WIKENHAUSER, *El Evangelio Según San Juan*, Herder, Barcelona 1978, 74 (Original: *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* [Regensburger Neus Testament, 4], Pustet, Regensburg 1948).

B.J. Le Frois (1951)

According to him, v. 13 is a description of the virgin birth, but the plural is to be considered as certain. St. John describes the super-natural birth of the children of God in the very same terms of the vir-gin birth of Jesus. So, the virgin birth of Jesus and the spiritual birth of the children of God have a very intimate connection. He is in favour of the plural reading for the following reasons:

1) The more difficult reading should be the original one. Since the virgin birth of Jesus was very clear from the beginning, how could the plural reading have crept into the Prologue? If some change at all took place, it should be the plural which would have been made into the singular. So, he denies the opinion of Zahn that the singular was made into the plural. 2) The verb γεννάω has been used 18 times by John. In his first letter, he uses this verb 9 times with the meaning "to be born of God". When he composed the Gospel, he should have used this verb with this same meaning.[113]

P. Lamarche (1964)

In his article[114], P. Lamarche analyses the text in the context of Prologue and concludes that "le pluriel à cet endroit du Prologue est parfaitement en situation et se révèle plus riche de sens que le singu-lier".[115]

C.K. Barrett (1965)

Although C.K. Barrett accepts ἐγεννήθησαν as the authentic reading in his commentary,[116] he does not rule out the possibility of an alternative interpretation of Jn 1:13, that is, by considering it as the

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[113] Cfr. B.J. LE FROIS, "The Spiritual Motherhood of Mary in John 1:13", in *CBQ* 13 (1951) 422-431.

[114] Cfr. P. LAMARCHE, "Le Prologue de Jean", in *RSR* 52 (1964) 497-537.

[115] *Ibid.*, 510.

[116] *The Gospel According to St. John. An Introduction with commentary and Notes on the Greek Text,* SPCK, London 1965, 137-138.

description of the virgin birth of Jesus. He makes a very interesting suggestion about the textual problem of v. 13, arguing that "Jn deliberately described the baptismal rebirth of Christians in terms much more appropriate (the negatives) for the virgin birth of Christ himself. The difficulty of the text, and the early tendency to split it into a singular *or* a plural reading derives from the intention of Jn in combining a description of the plural birth in terms of the singular."[117]

The combination of early Western authorities in favour of the singular is strong but "not strong enough to overthrow the plural reading, which is demanded by the previous verse, and by the sense of the passage".[118] The virgin birth of Jesus might have been introduced here by the early Church because the virgin birth is nowhere mentioned in John and the three negations seem to correspond exactly to the virgin birth of Jesus. C.K. Barrett is of the opinion that "the reading which refers explicitly to the birth of Jesus is to be rejected; but it remains probable that John was alluding to Jesus' birth, and declaring that the birth of Christians, being bloodless and rooted in God's will alone, followed the pattern of the birth of Christ himself".[119]

R.E. Brown (1966)

R.E. Brown, in his commentary, presents the textual problem and gives his reasons for preferring the plural reading. He presents three reasons as follows:

> *First*, both the ancient Bodmer papyri read a plural. *Second,* texts in the process of transmission tend to become more, not less, Christological. Is it logical to suppose that scribal tradition on such a large scale would dilute a valuable reference to the virgin birth of Jesus if the singular were

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[117] D. CROSSAN, "The Marian significance of John 1, 12-13", in *Maria in Sacra Scriptura*. Acta Congressus Mariologici-Mariani in Republica Dominicana anno 1965 celebrati, vol. V: *De Beata Virgine Maria in Evangelio S. Ioannis et in Apocalypsi*, PAMI, Roma 1967, 102.

[118] C.K. BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St. John. An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, SPCK, London 1965, 137.

[119] *Ibid*., 137-138.

the original reading? *Third*, John and 1John never describe Jesus as hav-
ing been begotten by God.[120]

He does not accept the singular reading, because "this variant is not
attested in even one Greek ms. of the Gospel, and is plausibly a
change made in the patristic period in order to enhance the Christolog-
ical unity of the text. [...] John's knowledge of birth at Bethlehem is
unsure, and that has nothing to do with a knowledge of the virginal
conception".[121] The reasons proposed by the author are considered in-
sufficient to defend the plural reading, as we have seen in the writings
of the scholars who are in favour of singular reading.

D. Crossan (1967)

D. Crossan suggests a 'solution by combination' for the textual
problem of Jn 1:13.[122] In his article,[123] he is in line with C.K. Bar-
rett[124] who accepts the plural reading to be genuine, but argues that
John deliberately described the baptismal rebirth of Christians in
terms much more appropriate (the negatives) for the virgin birth of
Christ himself. According to him, John combines 'a description of the
plural birth in terms of the singular' in v. 13. In the chiastic parallel-
ism of the structure of the Prologue, Jn 1:12-13 is at the centre of the
Prologue and describes baptismal rebirth in terms of the virgin birth,
the Incarnation considered functionally rather than metaphysically. He
concludes his textual analysis, stating that "the virgin birth of Jesus
from Mary was archetypal forever of the baptismal rebirth of Chris-
tians".[125]

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[120] R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John* (Anchor Bible, 29)*,
I-XII, Doubleday, New York 1966, 12.

[121] R. E. BROWN, *The Birth of the Messiah*, Image books – Doubleday,
Garden City (NY) 1977, 520.

[122] Cfr. D. CROSSAN, "The Marian significance of John 1, 12-13", 101-
103.

[123] *Ibid.*, 99-107.

[124] Cfr. C.K. BARRETT, *The Gospel According to John,* 137-138.

[125] D. CROSSAN, "The Marian significance of John 1, 12-13", 107.

G. Segalla (1974)

In his doctoral dissertation,[126] defended at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in 1969, and published in 1974, he deals with the textual problem of Jn 1:13. He presents the arguments in favour of the singular and also in favour of the plural. Giving counter-arguments against the theories supporting the singular reading, he accepts the plural as the original reading. He is against the conclusions drawn by J. Galot[127] in favour of singular reading.

K. Barth (1976)

K. Barth does not agree with the singular reading found in the writings of Tertullian as a proof for its originality.[128] He argues against the theories that support singular reading, especially those proposed by Th. Zahn, F. Blass and A. Loisy:

> 1. Die Anklage Tertullians gegen die Valentinianer hat wenig wahrscheinlichkeit für sich. Welcher Leser des von Tertullian als gefälscht bezeichneten textes mußte das ἐγεννήθησαν mit oder ohne οἳ nicht auf die vorangehenden πιστεύοντες beziehen? Womit dann aber der Zweck der angeblichen Fälschung sofort verfehlt gewesen wäre! 2. Die von *Zahn* angeführen Kirchenväterstellen, in denen von *Christus*, als im Singularis, unter wörtlichen Anklängen an unsere Stelle geredet wird, brauchen (mit einer wenig wichtigen Ausnahme) nich notwendig Zitate zu sein. Sie können auch bloße freie anspielungen sein. Es lag ja nahe, im Blick auf die Jungfrauengeburt in den Wendungen unseres Verses von Christus zu reden, ohne daß man durch den wirklichen Sinn dieses Verses gedeckt war. 3. Die Codices mit Ausnahme von b stimmen alle für οἳ....ἐγεννήθησαν. 4. Derselbe Grund, der das vereinzelte Auftauchen von ἐγεννήθη oder « natus est» wahrscheinlich macht – die dogmatische Wichtigkeit und Fruchtbarkeit dieser Lesart-, macht seinfast allgemeines Verschwinden schwer verständlich. Hätten sich die alexandriner und nachher der ganze Osten und Westen ein Zeugnis für die Jungfrauengeburt Christi so leichthin, und ohne den häretischen Ursprung des Pluralis zu bemerken, entreißen lassen? 5.Ist es wahrscheinlich, daß der Evangelist

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[126] G. SEGALLA, *Volontà di Dio e dell'uomo in Giovan*ni *(Vangelo e lettere)*, Paideia, Brescia 1974, 237-244.

[127] Cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 123-124.

[128] K. BARTH, *Erklärung des Johannes-Evangeliums (Kapitel 1-8)*, Theologischer Verlag Zürich, Zürich 1976, 99.

hier so plötzlilch ein dem Zusammenhang doch wirchlich fremdes The-
ma aufgreifen und dann endgültig – nicht nur im Prolog, sindern auch
im Evangelium – wieder fallen lassen sollte? [...] V 13 unterstreicht
eben analysierend, was das heißt: τέκνα θεοῦ. Aus Gott, exklusive aus
Gott Existierende sind die Kinder Gottes.[129]

J.H. Bernard (1976)

In spite of accepting the evidence that supports the singular
reading, such as the O.L. version in *b* and the writings of Tertullian
(*De carne Christi* 19, 1-2), Irenaeus (*Adversus haereses* 3, 17; 20, 2)
and Justin Martyr (*Dialogue with Trypho* 61; cfr. *Apology* 1, 32; 20,
2), J.H. Bernard remains with the plural reading for the following rea-
sons: 1) The manuscript evidence in favour of plural reading is over-
whelming 2) the plural reading accords perfectly with the characteris-
tic teaching of the fourth Evangelist.[130]

S. Cipriani (1980)

In his article[131] on the blood of Christ in the Gospel of John,
S. Cipriani deals with Jn 1:12-13. He prefers the plural for the follow-
ing reasons: 1) The plural is the most commonly accepted reading, at-
tested by the majority of the codices, versions and the Church Fathers
and also followed by many modern critical versions; 2) The reason
why some Fathers of the Church read it in the singular is that the plu-
ral form דָּמִים is very rare in the Jewish mentality.[132] Therefore, the
singular reading found in some patristic writings cannot be considered
as evidence for the original reading in the singular.

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[129] *Ibid.*, 99-101.

[130] J.H. BERNARD, *The Gospel According to John*, in S.R. Driver et al.
(ed.), *The International Critical Commentary,* vol. 1, T.T. Clark, Edinburg,
1976, 17.

[131] S. CIPRIANI, "Il Sangue di Cristo in S. Giovanni", in *Asp* 27 (1980)
139-152.

[132] "In realtà, proprio perché infrequente, quel plurale è originario e va
mantenuto: esso dovrebbe riferirsi piutosto alle conoscenze fisiologiche del
tempo, secondo le quali si pensava che l'embrione fosse il risultato del sangue
della madre e del seme del padre. Già S. Agostino parlava di « mixtis
sanguinibus » dei suoi genitori" (*Ibid.*, 140-141).

R. Schnackenburg (1982)

Referring to various Mss and the writings of the Church Fathers, the author concludes that the plural should be the original reading. He says that it is not only the external evidence that proves the originality of the plural reading, but also the internal criticism.[133]

E. Haenchen (1984)

In his commentary, he defends the plural reading, stating that the singular reading in some of the texts is the work of a redactor. The singular reading is a "weak and late attestation". He goes further to the extent of oversimplifying the problem: "It is thus merely the awkwardness of the redactor that has caused theologians so much trouble. […] Once one treats this passage as an insertion, the structure of the hymn emerges and the work of the redactor becomes evident".[134]

B. Buby (1985)

B. Buby is a biblical scholar and Mariologist. In his book, he briefly presents the text-critical problem of Jn 1:13.[135] First he refers

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[133] R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. I, Crossroad, New York 1982, 264-265: "He [Tertullian] reproaches the Valentinians with using the plural to support their doctrine of "the secret seed of the elect and pneumatic". But he overlooks the point that the plural ascribes birth from God to all believers, so that the Valentinians would be deforming their own doctrine with this reading. Tertullian is therefore an indirect witness to the antiquity of the plural in Africa, and hence the text given by all Greek MSS cannot be a late innovation. According to internal criteria, the plural reading is to be preferred. It is easy to understand that an attestation of the virgin birth was sought in the Fourth Gospel at an early date, but it is hard to imagine the opposite case, that such a testimony would have been later eliminated. […]. The Virgin birth of Christ […] does not fit into the context, since ἐγεννήθη would anticipate the subsequent affirmation of the Incarnation (v. 14)".

[134] E. HAENCHEN, *John. A Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Chapters 1-6, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1984, 118-119.

[135] Cfr. B. BUBY, *Mary, the faithful disciple*, Paulist Press, New York – Mahwah 1985, 95-97.

to Edwyn Hoskins, who maintains the plural as the original reading. Then, he points out that the most ecumenical study of the text Jn 1:13 by scholars sees no reference to the virginal conception of Jesus. He accepts their opinion for the following two reasons. "1. The manuscripts are weighted to choose the plural. 2. The context seems to demand a plural referring to "believers" and not to the Word or Jesus".[136] He adds: "How fascinating it is even to explore the possibility of a reference to Mary in the Prologue".[137]

J.W. Pryor (1985)

Although J.W. Pryor does not intend to make an exhaustive study of the textual problem of Jn 1:13 in his article, he presents a critical view of the arguments proposed by A. von Harnack, J. Galot, and P. Hofrichter.[138] He presents a summary of the theories proposed by these three scholars, and makes a critical discussion of each thesis.[139] He is not content with any of the arguments in favour of singular reading. At the end of his article, he concludes that "there are insufficient grounds to overthrow the plural reading, on the basis either of external attestation or of internal considerations of style and theology. Puzzles remain […], but the problems in accepting the singular far outweigh those in staying with the plural".[140]

J. Swetnam (1987)[141]

He says that the primary and basic meaning of Jn 1:13 is nothing other than the spiritual birth of Christians. This birth is to be understood with its reference to the blood of Christ shed by him on the Cross. When we read Jn 1:13 in the context of v. 14, then we get a

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[136] *Ibid.*, 96.

[137] *Ibid.*

[138] J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin Birth", 296-318.

[139] *Ibid.*, 297-318.

[140] *Ibid*, 318.

[141] J. SWETNAM, "Alcuni suggerimenti sull'interpretazione di Gv 1,13", in F. VATTIONI (a cura di), *Sangue e antropologia. Riti e culto*, vol. II, Edizioni Pia Unione Preziossimo Sangue, Roma 1987, 697-702.

secondary meaning of the text: i.e. the virgin birth of Jesus. In his article, his arguments follow the same ideas proposed by E.C. Hoskyns: "[…] the singular *was born* is a corruption of the text, but a corruption that is neither unnatural nor unintelligent".[142]

F.J. Moloney (1989)

In his writings, F.J. Moloney refers to the scholars who defend the singular reading. But he is in favour of the plural reading. He says that even if he were to accept the singular reading, he would not accept a Johannine indication of the virgin birth in the singular reading of John 1.13.[143]

A. Feuillet (1990)

A. Feuillet holds to the plural reading for the following reasons : "The ensemble of Greek manuscripts has the plural, and the reading in the singular is attested to only by some Latin or Syriac versions and some patristic citations".[144]

X. Léon-Dufour (1990)

X. Léon-Dufour comments on v. 13 in the plural because the majority of the Mss read it in the plural. In his complementary note, he presents the possibility of reading it in the singular. However, his overall conclusion is in favour of the plural.[145]

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[142] E.C. HOSKYNS, *The Fourth Gospel*, 166, in J. SWETNAM, "Alcuni suggerimenti", 702.

[143] Cfr. F.J. MOLONEY, "Mary in the fourth Gospel: Woman and Mother", in *Sal* 51 (1989) 421-440; IDEM, *The Gospel of John* (Sacra Pagina, 4), The Liturgical Press, Collegeville (MN) 1998, 44.

[144] A. FEUILLET, "Le Sauveur messianique et sa mére dans les récits de l'enfance de Saint Matthieu et de Saint Luc", in *Div* 34 (1990) 118, in J.G. ROTEN, "Virginity between Fact and Meaning", 277.

[145] "Il vantaggio di questa traduzione [singular] è che il Logos rimane il soggetto della frase fino alla fine: colui che è stato generato da Dio. L'interpretazione è seducente. E molti critici l'hanno abbracciata sia pure con diverse motivazioni. Allo scopo di render la frase greca più intelligibile, la

L. Morris (1995)

He is in favour of the plural reading, in spite of accepting the
Latin Mss that read the text in the singular form.[146] He does not even
agree with Boismard who reconstructs the text of v. 13 in the singular
on the basis of patristic citations. He does not deny the patristic evi-
dence but remains against the originality of the singular reading: "The
value of quotations in the Fathers is not to be denied, but I do not see
how they justify us in rejecting the testimony of the MSS in this
case".[147]

Y.M. Blanchard (1997)

According to him, the plural reading should be the original
one.[148] He is of the opinion that the plural reading explains the spir-
itual birth of believers, a birth that is modelled on the Incarnation of
Christ. He says that we must take note of this duality and interconnec-
tion between the spiritual birth of believers and the Incarnation of
Christ.[149]

«lezione» al singolare giungeva a proposito a giustificare le coerenze di questi
versetti. Certi autori ritengono che le testimonianze patristiche siano preferibili
ai manoscritti a motivo della loro più alta antichità e per il fatto che il singolare
potrebbe essere stato modificato in plurale dagli gnostici valentiniani. In questa
direzione altri critici, sopratutto cattolici, sono andati oltre, scoprendovi una
testimonianza in favore della concezione verginale di Gesù. Al contrario, la
maggior parte dei critici, forti della tradizione unanime dei manoscritti, come
abbiamo detto, sostengono la lezione plurale e rispondono che la lezione
singolare proviene da una mentalità antiebionita che voleva dare fondamento più
solido alla concezione verginale di Cristo. Tutto considerato, la lezione al
plurale sembra preferibile" (X. LÉON-DUFOUR, *Lettura del Vangelo secondo
Giovanni*, vol. I, Edizioni Paoline, Torino 1990, 162-163).

[146] L.L. MORRIS, *The Gospel According to John.* The New International
Commentary on the New Testament. Revised Edition, Eerdmans Publishing
Company, Grand Rapids (MI) 1995, 88-89.

[147] *Ibid.*, 90, note 91.

[148] Cfr. Y.M. BLANCHARD, "Né d'un vouloir de chair? La conception
virginale au regard du quatrième évangile", in *ÉtMar* 53 (1997) 25-34.

[149] "Nos conclusions seront au nombre de quatre. 1. Il n'y a pas de rai-
son d'imputer au quatriéme évangile une reference explicite à la conception vir-
ginale de Jésus, encore moins une allusion à la virginité de Marie, considérée du

C. Bazzi (2000)

According to C. Bazzi, the plural is to be preferred because it is well documented and also is coherent in its context.[150]

E. Ghezzi (2006)

E. Ghezzi prefers the plural reading along the same lines as most modern authors because of the unanimous evidence of the Greek Mss. He accepts the theory proposed by R. Schnackenburg that vv. 12 and 13 were added later on and that these later additions or redactions were done by the disciples who had no grammatical or logical clarity.

Although he explains some of the arguments in favour of the singular as proposed by J. Galot and I. de la Potterie, he considers the plural to be the original reading.[151]

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point de vue de la personne de la mere de Jésus. 2. Une telle carence n'a rien de choquant et n'affaiblit nullement l'affirmation chrétienne de la conception virginale; c'est en effet le propre du canon des Écritures que de proposer une diversité de points de vue, en quelque sorte préalable à l'effort théologique de rationalisation et systematization du discours dogmatique. 3. La part de précompréhension théologique s'avère déterminante, alors même que l'approche des énoncés scripturaires se veut aussi objective que possible. Ainsi peut-on expliquer que les memes dossiers bibliques ou patristiques soient interprétés de façon opposée, selon que l'on considère comme essentiel ou non à la confession chrétienne le fait que le quatrième èvangile exprime ou non, en termes de conception virginale, le mystère de la naissance humaine du Fils de Dieu. 4. Si, avec les grands éditeurs de l'Antiquité, on s'en tient à la version au pluriel de Jean 1, 13, sans pour autant sous-estimer la tendance des Pères à appliquer au Christ en personne le type de naissance évoqué par le verset johannique, il devient possible d'affirmer que la reconnaissance de l'éternelle generation du Fils de Dieu découle en partie de l'expérience de la filiation adoptive, accordée aux disciples, au titre même de la foi. Un tel mouvement de remontée, en direction de la source théologique d'un mystère vécu selon l'économie, est tout à fait conforme au movement de pensée caractéristique de l'âge patristique" (*Ibid.*, 33-34).

[150] Cfr. C. BAZZI, *Vangelo di Giovanni*, 21.

S. Grasso (2008)

S. Grasso is in favour of the plural reading because the oldest
Greek Mss (Bodmer II [P⁶⁶] and Bodmer XV [P⁷⁵]) read the verb in
the plural.[152]

D. OBSERVATIONS AND REMARKS ON THE SURVEY

In our "status quaestionis", we examined the previous studies
done by scholars, starting from A. Resch (1896) up to M. Thyen
(2008). The time period covered is more than a century (112 years).
This survey has helped us to go deeper into the core problem of the
text. We are able to get a clear idea of the history of the problem. We
understand better how these modern scholars have dealt with this
problem from various perspectives and proposed their theses.

As we have seen, it is not a recent problem but this period is
mentioned in the writings of Tertullian himself. He tried to solve it by
accusing the Valentinians. Such an old problem was taken up again at
the close of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century by
A. Resch (1896), F. Blass (1902) and A. Loisy (1903). These were the
pioneers among the modern scholars who defend the singular reading.
Then, later on, it was studied by various others scholars too, but we do
not find any consensus among them.

There was an opinion that it is only the German scholars who
have contributed more to this textual critical study of Jn 1:13. Later
on, it was believed that only French scholars promoted the singular
reading as the original one. G. Segalla writes: "Come si vede, dal
1950 in poi è solo la scuola francese che porta avanti questa lezione.
Tutti gli altri commentari e i commentari qualificati più recenti,
tedeschi e inglesi, adottano la lezione plurale".[153] R.E. Brown also

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151 Cfr. E. GHEZZI, *Come abbiamo ascoltato Giovanni.* Studio
esegetico-pastorale sul quarto Vangelo, Edizioni Digigraf, Pontecchio Marconi
(BO) 2006, 140.

152 Cfr. S. GRASSO, *Il Vangelo di Giovanni*, 53-54.

153 G. SEGALLA, *Volontà di Dio e dell'uomo in Giovanni*, 238.

supports this idea: "The only major scholarly support for this reading today is among French-speaking Roman-Catholics".[154] But in our *Status Quaestionis*, we discovered that it is not true. There are also exegetes and theologians of various other nationalities and languages who accept the singular reading of the text: K. Rahner from Germany, T. Gallus from Hungary, J. McHugh from England, A. Serra from Italy, A. Vicent Cernuda from Spain, M. Vellanickal and M. Panthapallil from India, P. Hofrichter from Austria, etc. Thus, we can understand that the singular reading is supported by exegetes and theologians from all over the world.

If we carefully note the overall reasons in favour of the plural reading, the scholars' arguments are based on: 1) the overwhelming number of Greek Mss; 2) the idea that v. 13 explains v. 12 and the singular reading would destroy this explanatory character. Even although we have seen many other reasons proposed by the defenders of the plural reading, I think that these are the two main arguments. The other reasons are very weak and insufficient.

We also find objections to these two arguments in the writings of the defenders of the singular reading. The overwhelming number of Mss cannot be a valid reason to choose the plural to be the original reading. The quantity does not count. The quality of the Mss and/or the history of the textual variants have to be taken into serious consideration. Secondly, we have noted in our survey that many of the scholars are of the opinion that v. 13 goes well with the predominant theme of the Incarnation in the Fourth Gospel.

Our survey helps us notice that the defenders of the singular readings are experts in various fields. They deal with the textual problems from various points of view. The singular reading is supported by experts in Church history (A. von Harnack), Aramaic scholars (F.C. Burney), exegetes of the Fourth Gospel (Th. Zahn, R.C.H. Lenski, G.H.C. MacGregor, I. de la Potterie, M. Vellanickal, M. Theobald), a Biblical Mariologist (A. Serra). This shows that the supporters of the singular reading are not only Biblicists, but a number of experts in various others fields have also studied this problem and support the singular reading.

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[154] R.E. BROWN, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 520, note 9.

It is interesting to observe that a number of non-Catholic authors have also accepted the singular reading: F. Blass, Th. Zahn, C.F. Burney and G.H.C. MacGregor.

In our survey, we noted that the contribution of feminine exegetes/theologians to resolve the text-critical study of Jn 1:13 is almost non-existent. We found only three books written by women in favour of the singular reading of the text.[155]

From our survey, we have come to know that the age-old textual problem has not met with any definite solution, in spite of the research carried out by various experts. There is no consensus among the scholars. We notice an on-going battle between the defenders of the singular reading and those favouring the plural reading. One example: G. Segalla[156] vehemently opposes the views and a number of conclusions proposed by J. Galot in his book.[157]

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[155] Cfr. M. WARNER, *The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. Alone of all her sex*, Weiden and Nicolson, London 1976, 16; M. PANTHAPALLIL, *Mary, the type of the Church in the Johannine writings*, 156-168; I. GEBARA – M. BINGEMER, *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor*, 102. Most probably, one of the reasons why women theologians, especially feminist theologians are not in favour of the singular reading could be that Jn 1.13 read with the singular verb would allude to the virgin birth of Christ and the divine maternity of Mary. Examining the theological works written by women, especially the feminist theological writings, J.A. Riestra makes the following conclusion: "En el ámbito de los estudios feministas, la maternidad divina de María no es uno de los argumentos preferidos por las teólogas feministas, que tienden más bien a centrarse, al menos por ahora, en otros campos de la teología. La maternidad de la Virgen es a veces considerada como una justificación histórica de posiciones patriarcales que tienden a relegar a la mujer en el ámbito del hogar y en la dedicación a sus hijos. En este sentido, la maternidad divina promovería según algunas teólogas la sujeción de la mujer al hombre. Para otras estudiosas, la maetrnidad divina se inscribiría en la linea de las antiguas diosas madres de épocas anteriores al cristianismo. Según los casos, esto se ve como un modo alternativo de subrayar los aspectos maternos de un Dios teológicamente elaborado por hombres" (J.A. RIESTRA, "La maternidad divina de María en la mariología feminista", in *EstMar* 68 [2002] 275).

[156] Cfr. G. SEGALLA, *Volontà di Dio e dell'uomo in Giovanni*, 243, n. 25: "Egli [Galot] cerca di accumulare prove su prove, sia di critica esterna che di critica interna per avvalorare la lezione singolare, ma gli argomenti adotti fanno vedere ancora una volta le difficoltà in cui si dibattono i suoi sostenitori.

Thus we can conclude that the research carried out by various scholars starting from A. Resch (1896) to those of our modern time, has not reached any definite conclusion. The ideological battle and dispute over the originality of the text is still ongoing. The text-critical problem of Jn 1:13 still remains an open question. Keeping this in mind, we shall carry out our research.

I. EXTERNAL CRITICISM

In our external criticism, we will first present the Modern Versions of Jn :.13 and then present all the textual variants with the help of the 'critical apparatuses' of well-known editions such as: K. Aland, M. Black, B.M. Metzger, A. Wikgren, C. von Tischendorf, F. Blass, and the textual criticism of B.M. Metzger and R.L. Omanson. This will provide us with all the available textual variants from the different sources. In the external criticism, we will examine all the important Mss available to us. And we will also examine the indirect sources (the patristic evidence) that deal with our text. This textual study will help us determine the original reading of the text from external point of view.

A. CRITICAL APPARATUSES AND TEXT-CRITICAL COMMENTARIES

In this section, we are going to present the 'critical apparatuses' from some important editions of the Greek Bible and the text-critical commentaries of B.M. Metzger and R.L. Omanson. Why is

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[…] Nella critica *esterna*, le conclusioni (80-84) sono più ampie delle premese o conclusioni parziali critiche, dove si vede lo sforzo di presentare come testimoni certi anche quelli che sono incerti. Solo un esempio: quello di Giustino, che sarebbe molto forte. […] Tutto il resto, pur bello e interessante, poggia su queste fragili basi. […] Gli argomenti però non valgono per il numero, ma per la qualità. […] Tutto sommato, ci pare che proprio il fervore con cui sostenitori della lezione singolare difendono la loro tesi, accumulando deboli o falsi argomenti, dimostri ancor più la sua fragilità. E confermino quindi indirettamente la lezione plurale".

[157] J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 123-124.

critical apparatus so important for our text-critical study? The following are some of the main reasons why we present here the critical apparatuses at the start of our text-critical study: 1) The critical apparatuses provide us with all the possible variants; 2) They give us the sources and dates of these variants; 3) They help us dig into the details and allow us to weigh these textual witnesses and to make a decision. Thus, the data presented below are very essential for our text-critical study.[158]

1. Critical Apparatus of C. von Tischendorf (1869)

13 οι ουκ εξ - εγεννηθησαν et. (a om οι *qui*) c e f (ff [2] g ex silentio) q vg syr[cu] et[hr] cop etc Valentt ap Tert[car 19] („sic enim scriptum esse contendunt: *Non ex sanguine – nati sunt*". Male edi solet *natus est*, cf Sab ad h. 1) Or[int 2, 400] et [4, 99] Eus[esa 387] Ath[417] Cyr[hr 153] Chr[8, 69] Cyr[nest 70] et[utr] et[ioh 91 sq] Thdrt[3, 174] Hil[771] etc (alludit etiam Clem[460] δει γαρ - τον ουκ εξ αἱματον ουδε εξ θελημ. σαρκοσ, εν πνευματι δε αναγεννωμενον) ... b Ir[int 205] et [212] Tert[carn 19] et [24] οσ (*qui*) et εγεννηθη (*natus est*). Ir[int 205] sic: *non enim ex voluntate carnis neque ex voluntate viri sed ex voluntate dei verbum caro factum est; item [212] quoniam is qui non ex volutate carnis neque ex voluntate viri natus est Christus filius dei vivi; item [217] quoniam non ex voluntate viri erat qui nascebatur.* De Amb[ps 37] et Aug[confess] eandem scripturam (*qui* et *natus est*) agnoscendibus cf Sab; alibi uterque vulgarem scripturam confirmat. Ps-Ath[537] (lib. 2 de trin. ad Theophil) editum est in ed. Bened. *nati sunt* sed vdtr *natus est* legendum esse. |οι: D[*] a m | εξ αιματων: b q Tert[car 19] et [24] Hil[771] (Aug[confess] et[pecc merit]: at [epp] *ex sanguinibus*) *ex sanguine*, item Eus[esai 387] Epiph[654] (non item [435]; sed [850] om εξ αιμ. ουδε) εξ αιματος | ουδε (Δ ουδ) εκ (ℵ[c] D[corr] εκ, sed ℵ[*] D[*] om) δελημ. ανδροσ: B[*] (suppl [2 mg]) 17[*] Eus[esa] Ath[828] Chr[3,138] et [5,587] (at alibi habet. Ad ipsum locum [8,69] in textu habet, sed in comm. tantum ινα το ευτελεσ - του δι αιματων και δεληματοσ σαρκοσ) om. Pro *voluntate* tol [2] bis *voluptate.* | θεου: E του θεου | εγεννηθησαν: A B[*] (-νν-B[3]) Δ 69[*] 247. al[3 scriv] al pauc εγεννηθησαν.[159]

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[158] For explanations regarding the symbols and abbreviations used in the Critical Apparatuses, see K. ALAND, *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum. Locis parallelis Evangeliorum Apocryphorum et Patrum adhibitis*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart [13]1985, XIV-XXXII.

[159] C. TISCHENDORF, *Novum Testamentum Graece. Ad antiquissimos testes denuo recensuit.* Apparatum Criticum omni studio perfectum, Editio Octava Critica Maior. vol. I, Brockhaus, Lipsiae 1869, 743-744.

2. Critical Apparatus of F. Blass (1902)

oi] .. evgennh,qhsan pler., sed o[j .. evgennh,qh b; om. relat. D*a (Tert. de car. 19. 24?), singul. testantur Tert. diserte, Iren., et. Iust. al.; cf. praef. ÕÕ 1 evn ai/mati s^c; evx ai-matoj Euseb. Epiphan. (id. ai-ma,twn 435); parum probant lat. (singul. b q Tert. al.) ÕÕ 2 prius evx om. ¥* D*; ouvde. evk qel. avndro.j om. Chr. (qui ad partum, non ad generationem locum refert), v. et . 405C. III, 80 D. 115 A B. V, 487 E. X, 36 B. Õ evk qelh,matoj qeou/ Iust. Iren.? ÕÕ.[160]

3. Critical Apparatus of K. Aland – M. Black – C.M. Martini – B.M. Metzger – A. Wikgren (1968)

13 {A} äoi] ouvk … evgennh,qhsan. p66 ¥ B3 C Dc K L Wsupp X P Y 063 (P75 A B* D 28 1071 1365 evgennh,qhsan) f 1 f 13 33 565 700 892 1009 1010 1010 1079 1195 1216 1230 1241 1253 1344 1546 1646 2148vid Byz Lect l69 vid itaur, c, e, f, ff2, q vg syrp, h, pal copsa, bo arm geo Valentiniansacc. to Tertullian (Clement) Origenlat Eusebius Hilary Athanasius Cyril-Jerusalem Chrysostom Cyril Theodoret // ouvk … evgennh,qhsan. D* ita // o[j evgennh,qh. Itb (pMss syrc, p.Mss oi[[sic]) Irenaeuslat (Tertullian) Origenlat (Ambrose) (Sulpicius) Augustine Ps-Athanasiusvid.[161]

4. Critical Apparatus of K. Aland (1985)

13 ⌜ουκ *et* ⌜-ηθησαν D* a | qui (-Tert) non ... natus est b; Ir^lat (Tert) Ambr | *txt* P^66 *rell* (εγενη – P^75 B* A Δ *al*); C1 Or | ⌐B*| ⌜αλλα P^66 W.[162]

5. B.M. Metzger's Textual Criticism (1994)

1.13 οἳ οὐκ … ἐγεννήθησαν {A}
Several ancient witnesses, chiefly Latin (it^b Irenaeus^lat Tertullian Origen^lat Ambrose Augustine Ps-Athanasius), read the singular number,

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[160] F. BLASS, *Evangelium Secundum Iohannem*, 2.

[161] K. ALAND - M. BLACK - C.M. MARTINI - B.M. METZGER - A. WIKGREN (ed.), *The Greek New Testament*, United Bible Society, Münster 1968², 321.

[162] K. ALAND, *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*, 2.

"[He] who was born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (the Curetonian Syriac and six manuscripts of the Peshitta Syriac read the plural "those who" and the singular verb "was born").

All Greek manuscripts, as well as the other versional and patristic witnesses, attest the plural number. (Several minor variant readings occur within the verse: D* and itᵃ omit οἵ, thus leaving the verse without grammatical connection with the preceding sentence; other variants in the verse are mentioned in the following entry.)

Although a number of modern scholars (including Zahn, Resch, Blass, Loisy, Seeburg, Burney, Büchsel, Boismard, Dupont, and Braun) have argued for the originality of the singular number, it appeared to the Committee that, on the basis of the overwhelming consensus of all Greek manuscripts, the plural must be adopted, a reading, moreover, that is in accord with the characteristic teaching of John. The singular number may have arisen either from a desire to make the Fourth Gospel allude explicitly to the virgin birth or from the influence of the singular number of the immediately preceding αὐτοῦ.

1.13 οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός {A}

The presence of similar beginnings (οὐδὲ … οὐδέ) and similar endings (σαρκός … ἀνδρός) of the second and third clauses has occasioned the accidental omission of one or the other clause. The clause οὐδὲ … σαρκός was omitted in E* and several minuscule manuscripts, and the clause οὐδὲ … ἀνδρός was omitted in B* *al*. [163]

6. R.L. Omanson's Textual Criticism (2006)

Several ancient witnesses, chiefly Latin, read the singular number. "[He] who was born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." The singular would refer to Jesus' divine origin. The Curetonian Syriac and six manuscripts of the Peshitta Syriac read the plural "those who" and the singular verb "was born".

All Greek manuscripts, as well as the other versional patristic witnesses, have the plural number, which refers to people who become children of God as a result of God's initiative. (Several minor variant readings occur within the verse: a couple of manuscripts omit the article οἵ, thus leaving the verse without grammatical connection with the preceding

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[163] B.M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the New Testament.* A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition), German Bible Society, Stuttgart ²1994, 168-169.

sentence. Other variants in the verse are mentioned in the following entry.)

A number of modern scholars have argued that the singular number is original. But the overwhelming agreement of all Greek manuscripts favors the plural reading, which, moreover, agrees with the characteristic teaching of John. The singular number may have arisen from a desire to make the Fourth Gospel allude explicitly to the virgin birth or from the influence of the singular number of the immediately preceding pronoun αὐτοῦ. The singular number is adopted in the Jerusalem Bible (1966), but not in the New Jerusalem Bible (1985) nor in the 1988 revision of the Jerusalem Bible.

1.13 οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός (nor from the will of man) {A}

The second and third clauses have similar beginnings (οὐδὲ … οὐδέ) and similar endings (σαρκός … ἀνδρός), which caused copyists to omit accidentally one or the other clause. The clause οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός (nor from the will of the flesh) was omitted by the original copyist of manuscript E and by copyists of several other minuscule manuscripts, and the clause οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός was omitted by the original copyist of manuscript B.[164]

B. TEXTUAL VARIANTS IN THE MANUSCRIPTS

In every 'critical apparatus' presented above, we note that there are many variants and the text in no two sources is alike. M.-É. Boismard, in one of his articles, presents a long list of variants.[165] In the following 11 pages we are presenting a table containing the textual variants of Jn 1:13 from various sources. This table has been taken from P. Hofrichter[166] and reproduced here with some modifications. This table will help us understand how the text varies from one source to another. This table will be of great help to us in carrying out the external criticism.

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[164] R.L. OMANSON, *A Textual Guide to the New Testament*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft German Bible Society, Stuttgart 2006, 164-165.

[165] M-É. BOISMARD, "Critique textuelle", 403-407.

[166] P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 20-29.

PLURAL	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθησαν
P 66						
P 75						with one ν only
א						
B*						with one ν only
C						
A						with one ν only
D	▨					
Δ						with one ν only
E*			▨			
Θ						with one ν only
17*				▨		
28						with one ν only

PLURAL	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθησαν
42			▨			
69*						with one ν only
96*			▨			
114			▨			
247						with one ν only
983			▨			
1071						with one ν only
1365						with one ν only
1573			▨			

PLURAL	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθησαν
A	▒					
Coptic		not by the will of blood and flesh				with one ν only
Ethiopic		+ and not by the will of man				
Diatessaron (Codex Fuldensis)			▒			
Diatessaron		nit van der genughten des bloeds des fleesh		▒		
JUSTIN, *Dial* 135, 6		ἐξ αἵματος	καὶ σαρκός		ἐκ πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος	
TERTULLIAN, *De Carne Christi* 19,1	▒					

PLURAL	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθησαν
CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Strom*, 2, 13: 58, 2					ἐν πνεύματι δέ	ἀναγεννώμενον
EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, *In Is* 8, 18		αἵματος				
ATHANASIUS, *Contra Arianos*, 3, 259						
DIDYMUS THE BLIND, *Dial. de Trin.*, 1, 19						
HILARIUS, *De Trinitate* 1, 10			neque ex voluntate carnis	neque ex voluntate viri		

PLURAL	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθησαν
AMBROSE, *Quaest.*, 123		non ex voluntate carnis	et sanguinis	aut viri		
EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion*, 2, 1; 51, 12, 7		αἵματος	οὐδὲ ἐκ σαρκός			
Letter of the Synod of Ancyra. EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion*, 3,1; 73, 5, 1						
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Hom.* 68 = 67 *In Joh* 12,35					ἐκ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ χάριτος	
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *In Ps.* 147						
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *De util. lect. script.* 6						
CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *In Joel.* 35 ad 2,28						

PLURAL	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθησαν
CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *De adoratione in spiritu et veritate*, 15				▓		
PROKOP OF GAZA, *In Deut.* 32,5			▓			
PROKOP OF GAZA, *In Is.* 8		αἵματος	σαρκός			
BABAI THE GREAT, *Liber de unione*, 11			neque ex carne	▓		
ANDREW OF KRETA, *In Nat. BMV* 2						

SINGULAR	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθη
it[b]						
syr[c]						
syr[p]						
Liber Comicus						
IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Eph* 7,2		καὶ ἐξ Μαρίας			καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ	
Epistula Apostolorum 3, 14						
JUSTIN, 1 *Apol.* 32, 9.11		οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπείου σπέρματος			... θείας δυνάμεως	
JUSTIN, *Dial.* 54, 2		οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπου σπέρματος			+ δυνάμεως	
JUSTIN, *Dial.* 63, 2		οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπείου σπέρματος			+ θελήματος	

SINGULAR	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθη
IRENAEUS, *Adv. haer.* 3, 16,2	▓	▓	▓		+ voluntate	Verbum caro factum est
IRENAEUS, *Adv. haer.* 3, 19,2		▓			▓	
IRENAEUS, *Adv. haer.* 3, 21,5	▓	▓	▓		▓	
IRENAEUS, *Adv. haer.* 3, 21,7	▓	▓			+ voluntate	
IRENAEUS, *Adv. haer.* 5, 1,3	▓	▓			ex placito patris	manus eius vivum hominem perfecerunt

SINGULAR	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθη
TERTULLIAN, *De carne Christi* 19,2					+ voluntate	verbum caro factum est
ORIGENE, *In Matth* 1,18, fragm.11		ἐκ γυναικός			ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου	
METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS, *De resurrectione* 1, 26,1					ἀλλ' ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ δὴ νάμεως ὑψίστου καὶ ἐκ παρθένου	
AMBROSE, *Hymn. Intende qui regis Israel*				non ex virili semine	sed mystico spiramine	Verbum Dei factum est caro

SINGULAR	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθη
AMBROSE, *In Ps* . 37,5					sed de spiritu sancto ac vir- gine	
JEROME, *Epist.* 65, 8,2						
SULPICE SEVERUS, *Chronica*, 2, 3,7		non ex carne non ex sanguine				
AUGUSTIN, *Confessiones*, 7, 9,13						
CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *In Is* 1,5		μὴ ἐξ αἵματος	καὶ σαρκός			
CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *De Triniate* 14		ἐκ παναγνων αἱμάτων παρθενικῶν				τοῦ σώματος σύμπηξις

SINGULAR	οἵ	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός	ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ	ἐγεννήθη
Symbolum Quicumque	▨	ἐκ τῶν παρθενῶν ἀγνῶν αἱμάτων			▨	συμπάγεντος τοῦ σώματος
JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Expositio fidei*, 87 = 4, 14	▨	ἐκ τῶν ἁγνῶν καὶ ἀμολύντων αὐτῆς σαρκῶν καὶ αἱμάτων			ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς εὐδοκίας καὶ συνεργείας τοῦ ἁγ. πνεῦ.	συνέλημφε / σαρκοθῆναι καὶ ἀνθρωπισθῆναι

[104]

1. Witnesses of the Plural Reading

All the Greek Mss, Uncials and Cursives read v. 13 in the plural form. P[75], B[*], A, D[*], Δ, E[*], Θ, 17[*], 28, 42, 69[*], 96[*], 114, 247, 983, 1071, 1365, 1573, a, the Latin, Coptic, Armenian and Ethiopian Versions give the plural reading. D and a omit οἵ. E[*], 28, 96[*], 114, 983 and 1573 omit οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός. B[*]and 17[*] omit ὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός. Apart from these, we find reference to the plural reading in the writings of Justin,[167] Tertullian,[168] Clement of Alexandria[169] and Hilary[170]. P[75], B[*], A, Δ, Θ, 28, 69[*], 247 and 1071 have ἐγενήθησαν instead of ἐγεννήθησαν. As M. Vellanickal[171] observes, the following Ancient Ecclesiastical writers (mostly later than the third Century) give both the readings: Clement of Alexandria,[172] Hilary,[173] Ambrosiaster,[174] and Ambrose.[175]

2. Witnesses of the Singular Reading

The Latin Version b (Codex Veronensis), syr[c], syr[p], Liber Comicus,[176] and both the Coptic[177] and Ethiopian[178] Versions of the

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[167] *Dialogue* 135, 6 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 258; PG 6, 789B).

[168] *De Carne Christi* 19, 1 (SCh 216, 286; PL 2, 784B).

[169] *Stromata* 2, 13 (SCh 38, 81; PG 8, 995C).

[170] *De Trinitate* 1, 10 (PL 10, 32A).

[171] M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 114.

[172] *Stromata* 2, 13 (SCh 38, 81; PG 8, 995C).

[173] *De Trinitate* 1, 10 (PL 10, 32A).

[174] *Questio* 123 (CSEL 50, 381).

[175] *Expositio in Psalmum* 37, 5 (CSEL 64, 140).

[176] D.G. MORIN (ed.), *Liber Comicus sive Lectionarius Missae quo Toletana Ecclesia ante annos mille et ducentos utebatur*, Maredsoli 1893, in M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 114, note 114.

[177] C. SCHMIDT, *Gespräche Jesus mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung. Ein katholischapostolisches Senschreiben des 2. Jahrhunderts nach einem koptischen Papyrus des Institut de la mission Archéologique française au Caire, unter Mitarbeit von Herrn Pierre Lacan* (TU, Dritte Reihe, 13, Leipzig, 1919), in M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 114, note 115.

"Epistula Apostolorum" read Jn 1:13 in the singular. Besides these, many Church Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch,[179] Justin Martyr,[180] Iraeneus,[181] Origen,[182] Cyril of Alexandria,[183] Tertullian,[184] Ambrose,[185] Sulpicius Severus[186] witness the singular reading. We can also add Hyppolytus and Methodius of Olympus. Although they do not quote the singular text literally, they seem to have in mind the singular reading.[187]

We saw that all the Greek Mss, Uncials and Cursives read Jn 1:13 in the plural. But it is very important to note that there are some patristic witnesses who support the singular reading and these witnesses are much earlier than those Greek Mss. Even although these witnesses do not contain literal explicit citations of Jn 1:13 (singular), their ideas and vocabularies allude to the singular form of the text. We will take into consideration these important witnesses for our study in the following sections.

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[178] L. GUERRIER, *Le testament en Galilée de Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ. Texte éthiopien édité et traduit en français* (PD 9, 141-236), in M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 114, note 116.

[179] *Ad Smyrnenses* 1, 1 (SCh 10,154).

[180] *Apology* 1, 32, 7-11 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 48; PG 6, 380B); *Dialogue* 63, 2, 10 (E.J. GOODSPEED, 169; PG 6, 620C);   76, 2, 5 (E.J. GOODSPEED, 186; PG 6, 301C).

[181] *Adversus haereses* 3, 11, 3 (SCh 34, 184); 3, 16, 2 (SCh 34, 280); 3, 19, 2 (SCh 34, 333-334).

[182] *In Matthaeum* 1,18, fr. 11 (GCS Or.XII, 1, 20); 23,1-12 (GCS Or.XI, 23); *In Lucam* 11,2, fr. 174 (GCS Or. IX², 299; SCh 87, 524 [fr. 73]); *De orat.*, 22, 2-4 (GCS Or. II, 347-349).

[183] *In Joannem* 10, 1 (P.E. PUSEY, *Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in Joannis Evangelium*, vol. 2, 523).

[184] *De Carne Christi*, 19, 1-2 (CCL 2, 907).

[185] *Expositio in Psalmum* 37, 5; 48, 5 (CSEL 64, 140; 64, 364).

[186] *Chronicle* 2, 3, 7 (CSEL 1, 59).

[187] F.-M. BRAUN, "Qui ex Deo natus est", 11-31.

C. PATRISTIC COMMENTARIES ON JN 1:13

The writings of the Church Fathers (both Latin and Greek) are inevitable in our text-critical study, because they offer us important evidence for the original reading of the text of Jn 1:13, although some of them do not quote the exact text in their writings. Their evidence is much older than the Mss that are available to us. So, let us examine how the Church Fathers have used Jn 1:13 in their writings.

1. GREEK FATHERS

Ignatius of Antioch († c. 110)

In his letter to the Smyrnans, Ignatius writes: "He was truly of the seed of David according to the flesh, and the Son of God according to the will and power of God; that He was truly born of a virgin, was baptized by John, in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by Him".[188] Here Ignatius uses the expression "the will and power of God" in order to emphasize the supernatural character of the birth of Jesus. Using this expression, Ignatius throws light on the divine sonship of Jesus. In this passage, we can easily note a dominant allusion to Rom 1:3-4. J. Galot comments that although Rom 1:3-4 speaks of Christ's divine sonship as an appointment after the resurrection, Ignatius applies it to his birth itself.[189] Here, we have to examine how Ignatius interprets "the will and power of God". He re-interprets the text in the light of Lk 1:35.

Is there any hint of Jn 1:13? J.W. Pryor does not find any hint of Jn 1:13 in the reference to θέλημα.[190] But J. Galot strongly believes that Ignatius makes reference to Jn 1:13 when he writes about the virgin birth of Jesus.[191] Ignatius emphasises the contrast between the human birth of Jesus on this earth and his divine origin. This idea re-

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[188] *Ad Smyrnenses* 1,1 (SCh 10,154).

[189] Cfr. J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin birth", 307.

[190] *Ibid.*

[191] J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 14-17.

flects the Johannine presentation of Jesus' Incarnation in Jn 1:13: "was not born of the will of the flesh […] but of God". The same word θέλημα is used by Ignatius, as had been used by the Fourth Evangelist in Jn 1:13.

Here one may raise an objection that Ignatius does not specifically quote Jn 1:13 in his letter to the Smyrnans. But it is important to note that although he does not directly quote the exact words of Jn 1.13, he is certainly referring to Jn 1:13, and not to any other Gospel texts. According to J. Galot, there is no doubt that Ignatius is referring to Jn 1:13.[192] Thus, it is highly probable that Ignatius would have referred to Jn 1.13 in its singular form to speak of the virgin birth of Jesus. In his letter to the Magnesians (8, 2), Ignatius refers to Jn 1:13-14 in its singular form. A.Vicent Cernuda observes that the same type of vocabulary, style and structure give evidence that there is a strong parallelism between these two texts:

Mag 8, 2	*Jn* 1:13-14
Jesus Christ, Son of God,	[He] was born of God
Who is the Logos,	[because he is the Logos],
Proceeding forth from the silence.	for the Logos was made flesh.[193]

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[192] *Ibid*., 17.

[193] A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La huella cristológica de Jn 1,13", "La presunta sustantivación τὸ γεννώμενον en Lc 1,35b", in *EstB* 33 (1974) 287 (The English translation is mine). Besides these two texts (*Smyrn.* 1, 1 and *Mag.* 8, 2), A. Vicent Cernuda examines Eph. 7, 2 too. Here is the summary of the conclusion he draws from his research: "*Esm* 1,1 se ciñe a Jn 1,13 afirmando al *hijo de Dios* preexistente en el mismo descendiente de David; *Mag* 8,2 enhebra el Logos preexistente con el *hijo de Dios* que es Jesucristo, sin duda como eco fiel del mismo lugar joaneo; y por último, *Ef* 7,2 llama a Jesús *no nacido* humanamente en cuanto Dios, porque adhiere con concisa energía al intríngulis de Jn 1,13, cuya hiperbólica ironía recalcamos ya en otro lugar. En una palabra, estos tres discutidos lugares denotan que la concentrada perspectiva cristológica de Jn 1,13, que hoy cuesta trabajo reconocer, tuvo una gran expansión al principio y produjo copiosos frutos expresivos. Si éstos luego se han vuelto opacos y desorientadores, ha sido principalmente porque la fuente evangélica de donde manaban quedó pronto oscurecida, ciega, puesto que perdió su figura genuina al permutar su tenor singular por el canónico plural. Por inercia se aplicaba al entendimiento de estos tres lugares, unilateralmente, el dispositivo *analítico*, paulino o lucano, y lo cierto era que habían sido pensados, que habían germinado

The Logos, the preexisting son of God, proceeds from the eternal Father and takes flesh as a human being in the womb of Mary. This idea of the virgin birth of the Logos is a reflection of Jn 1:13. Although Ignatius does not directly quote Jn 1.13 in the passages we have analysed, he certainly refers to Jn 1:13 in the singular form.

Justin Martyr († c. 165)

Justin speaks of the Incarnation of Jesus in many of his writings. In both his First Apology and the Dialogue with Trypho, we find a number of references to the clear influence of Jn 1:13. On several occasions, the birth of Jesus is presented in terms of οὐκ … ἀλλά.[194] It is very evident from the following examples:

> ὡς τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπείου σπέρματος γεγεννημένου ἀλλ' ἐκ θελήματος θεοῦ.[195]

> τὸ τῆς ἀμπέλου αἷμα οὐκ ἄνθρωπος ἐγέννησεν ἀλλ' ὁ θεός.[196]

This typical Johannine formula οὐκ … ἀλλα has been clearly borrowed from Jn 1.13. If Justin makes use of this expression to speak about the birth of Christ, the Johannine text from which he has borrowed this formula should have been in the singular form. If Jn 1:13 were not in singular form, it could not have been used by Justin to speak about the birth of Christ.

In another important passage, Justin writes about the birth of Jesus, as follows:

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mentalmente en íntima dependencia de la forma cristológica *sintética* que proclamaba el Jn 1,13 original" (*Ibid*., 290).

[194] The expression οὐκ … ἀλλα, is a typical expression of John (never found in Matthew or Luke). This language style is repeatedly used by Justin Martyr (cfr. *Dialogue* 54, 2; 63, 2, 10; 76, 1 etc).

[195] *Dialogue* 63, 2, 10 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 169; PG 6, 620C).

[196] *Ibid.,* 76, 2, 5 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 186; PG 6, 301C).

For this "washing His robe in the blood of the grape" was predictive of the passion He was to endure, cleansing by His blood those who believe on Him. For what is called by the Divine Spirit through the prophet "His robe," are those men who believe in Him in whom abideth the seed of God, the Word. And what is spoken of as "the blood of the grape," signifies that He who should appear would have blood, though not of the seed of man, but of the power of God. And the first power after God the Father and Lord of all is the Word, who is also the Son; and of Him we will, in what follows, relate how He took flesh and became man. For as man did not make the blood of the vine, but God, so it was hereby intimated that the blood should not be of human seed, but of divine power, as we have said above. And Isaiah, another prophet, foretelling the same things in other words, spoke thus: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a flower shall spring from the root of Jesse; and His arm shall the nations trust. And a star of light has arisen, and a flower has sprung from the root of Jesse—this Christ. For by the power of God He was conceived by a virgin of the seed of Jacob, who was the father of Judah, who, as we have shown, was the father of the Jews; and Jesse was His forefather according to the oracle, and He was the son of Jacob and Judah according to lineal descent.[197]

In this passage, Justin writes very clearly that Jesus was not born of human seed but of God. It is almost an indirect commentary of Jn 1:13 in the singular. This is indirect evidence for the existence of the singular reading of Jn 1:13. Justin never specifically quotes Jn 1:13 in these above-mentioned passages. J. Galot explains this point:

L'absence de citation proprement dite est due à la nature de la démonstration de la naissance virginale, qui s'établit à partir d'arguments prophétiques de l'Ancien Testament et avec le recours au récit historique de Mathieu et de Luc, le texte de Jean n'offrant pas une telle narration.[198]

The Johannine theology of the Incarnation (Jn 1:13) is evident in these writings of Justin. Moreover, a closer examination of these

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[197] *Apology* 1, 32, 7-11 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 48; PG 6, 380B).

[198] J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 80.

passages shows that Justin makes use of Jn 1:13 in the service of his defence of the birth of Christ.

It is unlikely that Justin knew the plural reading of Jn 1:13, because he never refers to Jn 1:13 in its plural form when he speaks about the spiritual birth of Christians.

Irenaeus († c. 190)

Irenaeus lived in a context where there were strong dogmatic heresies concerning the truth of the Incarnation. This is clear from the following words of Irenaeus:

> Secundum illos autem neque *Verbum caro factum est* neque «Christus» neque «qui ex omnibus factus Saluator». Etenim «Verbum» et «Christum» nec aduenisse in hunc mundum uolunt; «Saluatorem» uero «non incarnatum neque passum; descendisse autem quasi columbam in eum Iesum qui factus est ex dispositione et cum adnuntiasset incognitum Patrem iterum adscendisse in Pleroma». «Incarnatum» autem et «passum» quidam quidem «eum qui ex dispositione sit» dicunt «Iesum», quem «per Mariam dicunt pertransisse quasi aquam per tubum »; alii uero «Demiurgi filium», in quem descendisse «eum Iesum qui ex dispositione sit»; alii rursum Iesum quidem «ex Ioseph et Maria natum» dicunt, et in eum «descendisse Christum qui de superioribus sit, sine carne et inpassibilem existentem».[199]

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[199] *Adversus haereses* 3, 11, 3 (SCh 34, 184): "According to these men, neither was the Word made flesh, nor Christ, nor the Saviour, who was produced from all [the Æons]. For they will have it, that the Word and Christ never came into this world; that the Saviour, too, never became incarnate, nor suffered, but that He descended like a dove upon the dispensational Jesus; and that, as soon as He had declared the unknown Father, He again ascended into the Pleroma. Some, however, make the assertion, that this dispensational Jesus did become incarnate, and suffered, whom they represent as having passed through Mary just as water through a tube; but others allege him to be the Son of the Demiurge, upon whom the dispensational Jesus descended; while others, again, say that Jesus was born from Joseph and Mary, and that the Christ from above descended upon him, being without flesh, and impassible".

This whole passage is concerning the Valentinians, except the last opinion which is about the Ebionites. The Gnostics distinguished between the Christ and Jesus. The Ebionites saw the Christ as a man born like all others. , Irenaeus writes against these heresies in order to defend the truth of the Incarnation of Jesus.

> «*Christi* autem generatio sic erat» et quoniam hic est *Emmanuel*, ne forte tantum eum hominem putaremus (*non* enim *ex uoluntate carnis nec ex uoluntate uiri*, sed ex uoluntate Dei *Verbum caro factum est*), neque alium quidem Iesum, alterum autem Christum suspicaremur fuisse, sed unum et eundem sciremus esse.[200]

In this passage, Irenaeus quotes Jn 1:13 in its singular form. He says that Jesus is "Emmanuel" and throws light on the union between Jesus and Christ. He quotes Mt 1:18 and comments on this verse, saying that the Virgin Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Writing about the revelation that Peter received from the Father and his profession of faith (Mt 16:17), Irenaeus explains how the Father made Peter understand that Jesus, the Son of God, was not born of the will of the flesh or by the will of the man: "Cognoscit autem illum is cui Pater qui est in caelis reuelauit, ut intellegat quoniam is qui non ex uoluntate carnis neque ex uoluntate uiri natus *Filius hominis,* hic est *Christus Filius Dei uiui*".[201]

Thus, it is clear that Irenaeus read Jn 1:13 in its singular form. The same point has been elaborately explained by J. Galot.[202]

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[200] *Adversus haereses* 3, 16, 2 (SCh 34, 280): "He is Emmanuel, lest per chance we might consider Him as a mere man: for "not by the will of the flesh nor by the will of man, but by the will of God was the Word made flesh;" and that we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same".

[201] *Adversus haereses* 3, 19, 2 (SCh 34, 333-334): "He to whom the Father who is in heaven has revealed Him, knows Him, so that he understands that He who was not born either by the will of the flesh, or by the will of man, is the Son of man, this is Christ, the Son of the living God."

[202] J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 29-40.

Clement of Alexandria († c. 215)

Clement reclaims Gnostic theology on behalf of Christianity. Speaking about repentance for sins and the moral requisites in order to enter into the rebirth of baptism, Clement refers to Jn 1:13. He quotes this verse in *Stromata* 2, 13: τὸν οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς", ἐν πνεύματι δὲ ἀναγεννώμενον.[203]

Although this reference regards the spiritual birth of Christians and their conversion, it also alludes to the birth of Jesus. The expression ἐν πνεύματι is a reflection of Rom 8:9 and 1 Cor 6:11. The quotation used by Clement of Alexandria is an allusion to the plural form of Jn 1:13 rather than the singular. Nevertheless, Clement speaks of the virgin birth of Jesus. This gives us an idea that Clement would not have failed to see the virgin birth of Jesus in Jn 1:13, although he quotes this verse in reference to the baptismal rebirth of Christians.

Origen († c. 253)

In his commentary on some biblical passages, such as Mt 1:18, Mt 23:9, Lk 11:2, Jn 3:6-8, and 1 Jn 3:9, Origen quotes Jn 1:13 with some modifications.[204] For example, when he comments on Jn 3:6 (τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σάρξ ἐστιν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστιν), he quotes Jn 1:13, using the word "σάρξ" instead of αἱμάτων, in order to show the contrast between those born of the flesh and those born of the Spirit. The quotation of Jn 1:13 has been modified with reference to Jn 3:6.[205]

Although Origen sometimes cites Jn 1:13 in the plural, he interprets it in the singular when he speaks about Christ. Here Origen makes a distinction between two births: 1) birth according to the flesh

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[203] SCh 38, 81: "Him who has been born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but in the Spirit". The English translation is mine.

[204] Cfr. *In Matthaeum* 1, 18, fr. 11 (GCS Or.XII, 1, 20); 23, 1-12 (GCS Or.XI, 23); *In Lucam* 11, 2, fr. 174 (GCS Or.IX², 299); *De orat.*, 22, 2-4 (GCS Or.II, 347-349).

[205] Cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 54.

and 2) birth according to the Spirit (to be born of God). That is why he interprets the same verse (Jn 1:13) in both these ways; he applies it to the virgin birth of Christ and also to the spiritual birth of Christians. If it is applicable to Christians, how much more should it be literally applicable to Christ himself! It leads us to conclude that Origen knew the text of Jn 1:13 with the singular reading.

We have another text to support this conclusion: οὗτος δὲ ὁ υἱὸς ἐκ θελήματος τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθείς.[206] Unlike the previous text (*In Matth.* 1,18, fr. 11), Origen here speaks about the eternal generation of the Son and not about his virgin birth. The Valentinians interpreted Jn 1:13 in a spiritual sense. Origen underlines on the word θελήμα and throws light on the fact that the Son was eternally generated by the divine will.

It is also to be noted, as J. Galot writes, that one of the first patristic witnesses for the plural is Origen, because he came from a background where Gnosticism was dominant and had a considerable influence.[207]

Methodius of Olympus († c. 311)

In his discourse on the resurrection, he partially quotes Jn 1:13 in order to explain the origin of Jesus' body.[208] Making a distinction between the resurrection of Christ and our resurrection, Methodius writes about the origin of Christ's body: τὸ τοῦ χριστοῦ σῶμα οὐκ ἦν ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός.[209]

There is no doubt that Methodius is referring to the singular text of Jn 1:13 here. If he had the text in the plural form, it would indi-

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[206] *De princ.* 4, 4, 1 (GCS Or.V, 349): "And He is the Son generated by the will of the Father".

[207] J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 82.

[208] Cfr. *De resurrectione* 1, 26, 1 (GCS 27, 253).

[209] *Ibid*.

cate the spiritual birth of Christians. The text in the plural form would make no sense in this context where Methodius is explaining about Christ's birth which is different from our birth. It is also made clear from the expression θελήματος ἀνδρός.[210]

Hegemonius (IV Century)

Hegemonius was a fourth century Christian author who is known for his writing, *Acta Archelai*.[211] It is the oldest and most significant anti-Manichaean polemical text. Hegemonius writes in his letter against a Manichean: …τὸν μονογενῆ τὸν ἐκ τῶν κόλπων τοῦ πατρὸς καταβάντα χριστὸν, Μαρίας τινὸς γυναικὸς ἔλεγον εἶναι υἱὸν, ἐξ αἵματος καὶ Σαρκὸς καὶ τῆς ἄλλης δυσωδίας τῶν γυναικῶν γεγεννῆσθαι.[212]

J. Galot comments on this text in the following words : "La référence à Jn 1:13 est d'autant plus transparente qu'elle est précédée d'une autre à Jn 1:18: «le Fils unique qui est descendu du Père». Elle indiquerait normalement une lecture de Jn 1:13 au singulier, mais suivant une interprétation spiritual qui exclut une véritable naissance charnelle et qui se fond sur l'opposition «au sang et à la chair». Le Manichéen aurait donc repris à son compte l'interprétation gnostique de Jn 1:13 avec la négation d'une naissance du Christ selon la chair".[213] Defending the virgin birth of Christ, Hegemonius should have referred to Jn 1:13 with the singular form of the verb. Thus, Hegemonius seems to have used the singular reading of Jn 1:13.

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[210] Cfr. P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 82-83; J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 57.

[211] J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 57-58.

[212] *Acta Archelai* 5, 5 (GCS 16, 7, 9-12). Here is the English translation of the text : "That the Christ, the unique Son who descended from the bosom of the Father, is the son of a certain woman called Mary, and that he was born of blood and the flesh and the fetid odours of women" (The English translation is mine).

[213] Cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 58.

Cyril of Alexandria († c. 444)

Writing about the motive of the Incarnation, Cyril of Alexandria quotes Jn 1:12-13, after having cited the texts that speak about the Redemption (Rom 8:3-4; Heb 2:14-15); then he concludes that the only Son of God made himself a man in order to redeem us from our sins and to regenerate us in the Spirit.[214] Cyril explains the Incarnation of Christ, using the expressions borrowed from Jn 1:13: οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς ἢ ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.[215]

And also when he comments over Is 8:3, he cites the complete text of Jn 1:13: οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς ἢ ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.[216] Although he cites the text in its plural form, he uses Jn 1:13 to explain the birth of Christ. From this, it is evident that Cyril of Alexandria is convinced that the expressions used in Jn 1:13 is more applicable to the birth of Christ than to the spiritual birth of Christians.

2. LATIN FATHERS

Tertullian († c. 230)

In his writings about the flesh of Christ, Tertullian reveals the Valentinian's use of Jn 1:13 in the plural and accuses them ("adulterators") of tampering with the original text which is singular.

> Quis est ergo non ex sanguine neque ex voluntate carnis neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex deo natus est? Hoc quidem capitulo ego potius utar, cum adulterators eius obduxero. Sic enim scriptum esse contendunt: 'Non ex sanguine nec ex carnis voluntate nec ex viri, sed ex deo nati

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[214] *In Joannem* 10, 1 (P.E. PUSEY, 523). Cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 61.

[215] *In Lucam*, 2, 22 (PG 72, 500).

[216] *In Is.*, 8, 3 (PG 70, 223).

sunt', quasi supra dictos credentes in nomine eius designet, ut ostendant esse semen illud arcanum electorum et spiritualium, quod sibi imbuunt. Quomodo autem ita erit, cum omnes, qui credunt in nomine eius, pro communi lege generis humani ex sanguine et ex carnis et ex viri voluntate nascantur, etiam Valentinus ipse? Adeo singulariter, ut de domino, scriptum est: sed ex deo natus est; merito, qua verbum dei, (et cum dei verbo spiritus et in spiritu dei virtus et quicquid dei est Christus), qua caro autem non ex sanguine nec ex carnis et viri voluntate, quia ex dei voluntate verbum caro factum est.[217]

For Tertullian, the plural form of this verse does not make any sense. He is writing against the Valentinians who "ascribe to Jesus a birth through a virgin without her contributing anything of her substance to his". This change is believed to have been made in the second century. Gnostics applied this original verse in singular to the divine birth of every spiritual person. As it was applied not only to just one spiritual person but to all the spirituals (i.e. to all those who believed in his name), it lead them to read it in the plural form and thus ἐγεννήθη became ἐγεννήθησαν. This textual transformation shows a certain doctrinal influence and manipulation of the Valentinians who wanted to apply this text to the spiritual birth of believers.

Ambrose († 397)

Ambrose uses both the plural and the singular versions of Jn 1:13 in his writings.[218] Occasionally using the singular reading, he links Jesus' virginal conception to his bloodless birth. "Nec in iniquitatibus conceptus et natus est in delictis, qui non ex sanguinibus neque ex voluntate carnis neque ex voluntate viri, sed de spiritu sancto natus ac virgine est".[219] Commenting on this, J.R. Meyer writes: "Ambrose uses a double form of John 1:13a, liberally interchanging «non ex sanguinibus» with «non ex sanguine» and using the *natus est/non ex*

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[217] *De Carne Christi*, 19, 1-2 (CCL 2, 907).

[218] For a detailed list, see J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 70-75.

[219] *Expositio in Psalmum* 37, 5 (CSEL 64, 140); 48, 5 (CSEL 64, 364).

sanguinibus link to highlight Jesus' divine filiation and immaculate is-
sue from Mary".[220]

Jerome († c. 420)

Referring to the Greek Mss, Jerome adopts the plural reading
in the Vulgate. Also in his commentary on Isaiah, he uses the plural
reading of Jn 1:13: "… Et non solum ego, sed et pueri quos mihi dedit
Dominus, alii viedeliect prophetae et filii prophetarum, qui non ex
voluntate carnis et sanguinis, sed ex Deo nati sunt. De quibus et Apos-
tolus loquebatur: "Filioli miei, quos iterum, parturio, donec Christus
formetur in vobis" (Ga 4:19)".[221]

But it is interesting to note that he quotes the singular form in
order to show that the beauty of Christ's nature is beyond
compare: "…Hic pulchritudo virtutum in sacro et venerando
corpore, non quo divinitas Christi hominibus comparata formosior
sit − haec enim non habet comparationem -, sed absque
passionibus crucis universis pulchrior est: virgo de virgine, "qui non
ex voluntate viri, sed ex deo natus est".[222] Commenting on this
choice made by Jerome, J. Galot writes:

> C'est en connaissance de cause que pour souligner la naissance virginale
> et la supériorité exceptionnelle de la beauté corporelle du Sauveur sur
> celle des autres hommes, il choisit la version qui porte le singulier. Une
> simple application du pluriel aurait enlevé toute force à cette présenta-
> tion du cas unique de Christ. Jerome atteste ainsi l'existence de la
> version antérieure avec le singulier, version qu'il se plaît ici à reproduire
> même après la révision de la vulgate, où il avait opté pour le pluriel.[223]

It is to be noted that although he adopted the plural reading in the
Vulgate, he knew the singular reading too.

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[220] J.R. MEYER, "Ambrose's exegesis of Luke 2,22-24", in *Mar* 62
(2000) 187.

[221] *In Esaiam* 3, 8, 18 (CCL 73, 118).

[222] *Epistulae* 65, 8 (CSEL 54, 625).

[223] J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 75.

Sulpicius Severus († c. 420)

Explaining the meaning of the stone that was cut off without the use of human hands in Daniel 2:34 (Daniel's interpretation about Nebuchadnezzar's dream), Sulpicius Severus quotes the singular reading of Jn 1:13 in his second book of Chronicles, written between 400 and 420.[224]

> In lapide vero sine manibus abscisso, qui aurum, argentum, aes, ferrum tesumque comminuit, Christi figura est. Is enim non conditione humana editus, siquidem non ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo natus est, mundum istum, in quo sunt regna terrarum, in nihilum rediget regnumque aliud incorruptum atque perpetuum, id est futurum saeculum, quod sanctis paratum est, confirmabit.[225]

Sulpicius Severus perceives in this symbol of the stone that was cut off without human hands an allusion to the virgin birth of Christ. He has borrowed this expression "non ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo natus est" from Jn 1:13.[226] It is a clear indication that Sulpicius read Jn 1:13 in the singular and applied it to interpret the virgin birth of Christ.

Augustine († c. 430)

In many of his writings, Augustine quotes Jn 1:13 in the plural form.[227] But he uses the singular reading in his *Confessions*: "Item legi ibi, quia verbum, deus, non ex carne, non ex sanguine, non ex voluntate carnis, sed ex deo natus est; sed quia verbum caro factum est et

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[224] Cfr. *Ibid.*, 75.

[225] *Chronicle* 2, 3, 7 (CSEL 1, 59).

[226] Cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 76.

[227] Here are the references for Augustine's quotations in the plural: *In Joannem* 2, 15 (CCL 36, 18-19): « non ex sanguinibus »; *Sermo* 121, 4 (*Opere di Sant'Agostino*, vol. XXXI/1, 50): «non ex sanguinibus»; *Sermo* 292, 7 (*Opere di Sant'Agostino*, vol. XXXIII, 218): «non ex carne, non ex sanguine, non ex voluntate carnis»); *contra Secundinium*, 5 (CSEL 25, 912): «non ex carne et sanguine aut ex voluntate viri aut ex voluntate carnis»; *In Ps*. 118, 16, 6 (CCL 40, 1718) : «non ex carne, non ex sanguine, non ex voluntate viri nec ex voluntate carnis»; *De peccatorum mer. et rem*., 2, 23, 27 (CSEL 60, 109) : «non ex carne, non ex sanguine, non ex voluntate viri nec ex voluntate carnis»).

habitavit inter nos, non ibi legi".[228] There is another text where he quotes the singular form: "Nos non solum ex carne et sanguine, verum etiam ex voluntate viri et voluntate carnis, ille autem tantum ex carne et sanguine, non ex voluntate viri neque ex voluntate carnis, sed ex deo natus est".[229]

D. MORE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

Examining the external evidence, we have noted that the plural reading is found in all the Greek Mss, uncials and cursives. With some exceptions, we have a massive amount of evidence for the plural reading in the ancient versions such as the Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian and Ethiopian. Apart from these, we find references to the plural reading in the writings of Tertullian,[230] Clement of Alexandria,[231] Hilary,[232] Ambrosiaster,[233] Ambrose[234] and Augustine[235].

The following versions read Jn 1:13 in the singular: b (Codex Veronensis), syr^c, syr^p, Liber Comicus,[236] and both the Coptic[237] and Ethiopian[238] versions of the "Epistula Apostolorum". Moreover, we

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[228] *Confessiones* 7, 9, 14 (*Opere di Sant'Agostino,* I, 196).

[229] *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 2, 23, 37 (CSEL 60, 109).

[230] *De Carne Christi* 19, 1 (SCh 216, 286).

[231] *Stromata* 2, 13 (SCh 38, 81).

[232] *De Trinitate* 1,10 (PL 10, 32A).

[233] *Quaestio* 123 (CSEL 50, 381).

[234] *Expositio in Psalmum* 37, 5 (CSEL 64, 140).

[235] *In Joannem*, 2,15 (CCL 36,18-19).

[236] *Liber Comicus sive Lectionarius Missae quo Toletana Ecclesia ante anoos mille et ducentos utebatur*, edited by D.G. MORIN, Maredsoli 1893, in M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 114, note 114.

[237] C. SCHMIDT, *Gespräche Jesus mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung*, in M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 114, note 115.

[238] L. GUERRIER, *Le testament en Galilée de Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ. Texte éthiopien édité et traduit en française* (PD 9, 141-236), in M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 114, note 116.

noticed that many witnesses in favour of the singular pre-date the great Mss such as Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus. Besides these, the writings of the Church Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch,[239] Justin Martyr,[240] Irenaeus,[241] Origen,[242] Cyril of Alexandria,[243] Tertullian,[244] Ambrose,[245] Sulpicius Servus[246] give us evidence for the singular reading being the original one. We can also add Hyppolytus and Methodius of Olympus to this list. Although they do not literally quote the singular text, they implicitly allude to the singular reading.[247] Even although we do not find any literal quotation of the exact text in the singular, their ideas and the vocabularies allude to the singular form of the text.

1. *Epistula Apostolorum (c. 160)*

The apocryphal work, called the *Epistula Apostolorum*, written by an anonymous author in Asia Minor, furnishes important evidence for the singular text of Jn 1:13.[248] Scholars date it between the second

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[239] *Ad Smyrnenses* 1, 1 (SCh 10, 154).

[240] *Apology* I, 32, 7-11 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 48; PG 6,380B); *Dialogue* 63, 2, 10 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 169; PG 6, 620C); 76, 2, 5 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 186; PG 6, 301C).

[241] *Adversus hereses* 3, 11, 3 (SCh 34, 184); 3, 16, 2 (SCh 34, 280); 3, 19, 2 (SCh 34, 333-334).

[242] *In Matthaeum* 1, 18, fr. 11 (GCS Or.XII, 1, 20); 23, 1-12 (GCS Or.XI, 23); *In Lucam* 11, 2, fr. 174 (GCS Or. IX^2, 299; SCh 87, 524 [fr. 73]); *De orat.*, 22, 2-4 (GCS Or. II, 347-349).

[243] *In Joannem* 10, 1 (P.E. PUSEY, *Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in Joanis Evangelium*, vol. 2, 523).

[244] *De Carne Christi*, 19, 1-2 (CCL 2, 907).

[245] *Expositio in Psalmum* 37, 5 (CSEL 64, 140); 48,5 (CSEL 64, 364).

[246] *Chronicle* 2, 3, 7 (CSEL 1, 59).

[247] F.-M. BRAUN, "Qui ex Deo natus est", in *Aux Sources de la Tradition Chrétienne*, 19.

[248] Cfr. C. SCHMIDT, *Gespräche Jesus mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung. Ein katholischapostolisches Senschreiben des 2. Jahrhunderts nach einem koptischen Papyrus des Institut de la mission Archéologique française au*

half of the second and the beginning of the third century.[249] C. Schmidt dates it between 160 and 170. In a context where various heretical ideas were widespread, the author writes a kind of profession of faith ascribed to the Eleven after the Resurrection: "In God, the Lord, the Son of God, do we believe, that he is the Word become flesh, that of Mary the holy Virgin he took a body begotten of the Holy Ghost, not of the will (lust) of the flesh but by the will of God; that he was wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem and made manifest".[250] Mentioning the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit, the author emphasizes that Jesus was born without the carnal desire of man, but was born of God. This idea is a clear reflection of Jn 1:13 in its singular form.

2. *Bodmer Papyri (P[66] and P[75])*

The Bodmer Papyri (P[66] and P[75]) are the oldest of all the Greek Mss that contain the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel.[251] They were found in 1952 at Jabal Abu Mana near Dishna (Egypt) and were published in 1956. They are dated about the year 200. Many interesting research papers and articles have been published on the importance of these two Mss. [252] Some scholars like R.E. Brown[253] consider P[66] and P[75] as the most reliable evidence because they are the oldest among all the Mss that are available and thus conclude that the plural is the original reading.

Caire, unter Mitarbeit von Herrn Pierre Lacan (TU, Dritte Reihe, 13), Leipzig 1919, 19.

[249] Cfr. M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 115.

[250] *Epistula Apostolorum* 3, 14. Cfr. B.J. LE FROIS, "The Spiritual Motherhood", 426, in M. JAMES, *Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford 1924, 485.

[251] Cfr. S. CINGOLANI, "Bodmer", in *Dizionario di Critica Testuale del Nuovo Testamento. Storia, canone, apocrifi, paleografia*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano) 2008, 44.

[252] Cfr. M-É. BOISMARD, "Le papyrus Bodmer II", 391-393; W.A. WORDSWORTH, "The Bodmer Papyrus and the Prologue of St. John's Gospel", in *NT* 2 (1957) 1-7.

[253] Cfr. R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 12.

It is true that P[66] and P[75] are the oldest among all the Greek Mss reading Jn 1:13 in plural, but we cannot simply ignore the writings of the Church Fathers, that are older than these Mss. Ignatius of Antioch († c.110)[254] and Justin Martyr († c.165)[255] make allusion to Jn 1:13 (singular). The writings of these two Fathers are certainly older than P[66]. Thus, in the face of such old writings that favour the singular reading, this papyrus (P[66]) cannot be considered as evidence to prove the originality of the plural reading. The same logic applies to P[75] as well.

3. Liber Comicus (C. 657-667 AD)

The *Liber Comicus Toletanus Teplensis* is the oldest known lectionary from the Iberian Peninsula dated to somewhere between the 7th and 9th centuries. It is designated by "t" or "56" in the Besaurion system. The Latin text of the New Testament is not the Vulgate but the Vetus Latina. This lectionary is attributed to St. Ildephonsus of Toledo († 667 AD). In this lectionary, Jn 1:13 reads only the first and the third negation. It has the singular reading: "qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex volumptate viri, sed ex Deo natus est".[256]

4. The Singular as the most ancient reading

All the Greek Mss in the plural form, with the exception of P[66] and P[75], are later than the 3rd century, whereas the patristic witnesses in favour of the singular reading belong to the 2nd century. Some of the earliest evidence in favour of the singular reading includes: the writings of Ignatius of Antioch[257] († c.110), Justin Martyr[258] († c.165),

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[254] *Ad Smyrnenses* 1,1 (SCh 10, 154).

[255] *Apology* 1, 32, 7-11 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 48; PG 6,380B); *Dialogue* 63, 2, 10 (E.J. GOODSPEED, 169; PG 6, 620C); 76, 2, 5 (E.J. GOODSPEED, 186; PG 6, 301C).

[256] F.J. PÉREZ DE URBEL et al. (ed.), *Liber Comicus*, Edición Crítica, vol. 1 (Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra, Series Liturgica 2), Madrid 1950, 7ff. Cfr. P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 113.

[257] Cfr. *Ad Smyrnenses* 1,1 (SCh 10, 154).

Epistula Apostolorum[259] (160-170 A.D.), Irenaeus[260] († c.190), Clement of Alexandria[261] († c.215) and Hypolytus[262] († c.235). These witnesses are extremely important, because they are much earlier than the Greek Mss. Although these witnesses for the singular reading are very few in number, compared to the a vast number of Greek Mss that have the plural reading, we rely upon them in choosing the singular as the original reading, because these witnesses are much earlier than the Greek Mss. In making this choice, we follow the criterion that the quality of the witnesses is more important than their quantity.

5.   *Singular Reading: Geographically widespread*

In our study of the external evidence, we have observed that the singular reading is not only the most ancient but also the more widespread. Examining the early witnesses from geographical point of view, A. Serra writes: "La più diffusa. Lo prova il fatto che essa è dislocata tutto all'intorno della raggiera del Mediterraneo. La troviamo, infatti, in Siria (*Lettera dei XII Apostoli*, Ignazio d'Antiochia), in Egitto (Origene), nell'Africa del nord (Tertulliano), a Roma (Ippolito, Giustino) e nelle Gallie (Ireneo)".[263]

Noting such a vast spread of the singular reading (already in the first and second centuries), we can say that the singular reading should have been earlier than the plural reading. One might ask how all the Greek Mss, later than the 3rd century, uphold the plural reading. We will discuss this problem in the next paragraph.

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[258] Cfr. *Apology* 1, 32, 7-11 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 48; PG 6, 380B); *Dialogue* 63, 2, 10 (E.J. GOODSPEED, 169; PG 6, 620C); 76, 2, 5 (E.J. GOODSPEED, 186; PG 6, 301C).

[259] Cfr. C. SCHMIDT, *Gespräche Jesus mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung*, 19.

[260] Cfr. *Adversus haereses* 3, 11, 3 (SCh 34, 184); 3, 11, 3 (SCh 34, 184); 3, 19, 2 (SCh 34, 333-334).

[261] Cfr. *Stromata* 2, 13 (SCh 38, 81).

[262] *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 6, 9 (PG 16, 3, 3207-3208).

[263] A. SERRA, "Vergine", 1431.

6. *Textual transformation from Plural to Singular?*

In order to defend one of these two reading as the original one, we have to explain why the other reading came into existence. If we suppose the plural to be the original reading, then why was it substituted by the singular? The following are some of the possible reasons for this change from the plural to the singular:[264]

1). The change from the plural to the singular could have been caused by the Anti-Ebionite polemics. Ebionites believed that Jesus was conceived and born in a manner that was common to every other human being. Thus, they did not believe in the virginal conception and virgin birth of Jesus. The singular form of the text would defend the virginal conception and the virgin birth of the Word. So, the plural would have been changed into the singular in order to fight against the belief of the Ebionites.[265]

2). Most probably, the copyists would have purposely made this correction in order to defend the virginal conception of Mary.[266]

Although this possible change has been held a valid hypothesis by some scholars (e.g. G. Segalla, A. Houssiau, J. Schmid, E. Haenchen, Burkitt)[267], the arguments are too weak to be taken into

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[264] Cfr. B. ESCAFFRE LADET, "L'Évangile de Jean fait' il référence à la conception virginale? ", 355-356.

[265] Cfr. A. HOUSSIAU, "Le milieu théologique de la leçon ΕΓΕΝΝΗΘΗ (Jo., I,13)", in *Sacra Pagina. Miscellanea biblica. Congressus Internationalis Catholici de Re Biblica*, vol. II, ediderunt J. COPPENS, A. DESCAMPS, É. MASSAUX (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 12), Gabalda, Paris 1959, 187.

[266] J. Galot is not in favour of this change from plural to singular. He is convinced of the originality of the singular (cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 86-87).

[267] G. SEGALLA, *Volontà di Dio e dell'uomo in Giovanni*, 243, n. 25: "Com'è sorta la lezione singolare dalla plurale? Diverse sono le soluzioni proposte: per una polemica antiebionita (Houssiau), per la difficoltà di comprendere il testo come stava, si semplificò, rendendolo più facile (J. Schmid); per un facile errore dei copisti, sia per il greco OI e OC simili (E. Haenchen), sia per il siriaco: differenza di una ụ (ˆ) nel verbo finale (Burkitt), e tanto più per il latino, dove 'qui' è uguale per il singolare e plurale".

serious consideration. They do not have strong evidence or proofs for such a change and thus sound like mere ideological speculations. Now let us also examine what biblical scholars say about the possible change from singular to plural.

7) Textual transformation from the singular to the plural?

One of the best witnesses for this change is to be found in the writings of Tertullian. [268] In his writings about the flesh of Christ, Tertullian shows how the Valentinian use Jn 1:13 in the plural and accuses them of tampering with the original text which is in the singular.[269] His testimony cannot be ignored. Besides this, Irenaeus accuses the Gnostics of having changed the the words of the text into the plural and its theological meaning.[270] This textual transformation shows a certain doctrinal influence and manipulation of the Valentinians who wanted to apply this text to the spiritual birth of believers.

Even if one refuses to accept such a voluntary change of the text in spite of the witness of Tertullian, it was perfectly natural that the Gnostic thought that was prevalent in that period could have influenced Christians to interpret v.13 to apply the spiritual birth of the Word to the spiritual birth of the believers. Given the context, we can understand that the plural was accepted by the Christians. M. Vellanickal gives the reason why this textual transformation (from the singular to the plural) had such great success in all the Greek Mss:

> The Church of Alexandria, where this change took place, had a decisive influence in the fixing up of the Greek text of the Gospel. So this change took place in a circumstance favourable to its acceptance and expansion in the whole Church of the Greek world. And as the change was quite comfortable to the doctrine of the divine sonship of Christians mentioned in the context, it continued to be the accepted text throughout the Centuries to this day.[271]

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[268] Cfr. *De Carne Christi*, 19,1-2 (CCL 2, 907).

[269] *Ibid.*

[270] IRENAEUS, as quoted in *Opera S. Isidori Hisp. Proleg.* (PL 81, 639).

[271] M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 132.

After a detailed study of the early witnesses, A. Vicent Cernuda also concludes that the singular is the *lectio difficilior* and thus the singular is the original reading: "La agonía, a fines del siglo II, de la variante singular no es, pues, otra cosa que la manifestación espectacular de que ella era y es la lectio difficilior".[272]

Although the majority of the Greek Mss have the plural reading, we are in favour of the singular as the original reading, because the transformation from the singular to the plural is much more probable than the change from the plural to the singular.

E. CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE EXTERNAL CRITICISM

Having seen the external witnesses of the Greek Mss, uncials, cursives and the writings of the Church Fathers of the early centuries, we noticed that all the Mss contain the plural form, but they are mostly later than the 3rd century. But the patristic witnesses that refer or allude to the singular are from the 2nd century, that is, earlier than the Greek Mss. It is to be noted that the writings of some Church Fathers, such as Ignatius of Antioch and Justin Martyr are older than the Greek Mss. Their writings cannot be ignored in our textual criticism; rather they have to be taken into serious consideration. They knew very well the belief of the early Church and how this text was interpreted. From their writings, we come to know that they were convinced that Jn 1:13 is not in the plural but in the singular. They quote it in the singular and must have had Greek codices or scrolls which had the singular reading.

In the face of these 2nd century patristic writings, the Greek Mss that are later than the 3rd century lose their validity in our critical argument. Hence the unanimity of the Greek Mss cannot be considered as a valid argument to prove the originality of the the plural.

And we saw that the arguments in favour of the textual transformation from the singular to the plural are more convincing than those in favour of the transformation from the plural to the singular. In our detailed study, we explained why and how the plural reading en-

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[272] A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La doble generación de Jesucristo según Jn.1,13.14", 116.

tered into Greek Mss. Moreover, we saw that the singular was already widespread in a vast geographical area.

According to the external criticism of the text, the most ancient patristic witnesses are all in favour of the singular reading. The arguments given above make it clear that the singular should be the original reading. So, from the point of view of external criticism, we opt for the singular reading of the text.

III. Internal Criticism

In the internal criticism, we are going to verify which reading will be the most likely one, analysing the following elements of v. 13: its context, semantics, grammatical coherence, internal structure in connection with the whole Prologue, its connection with the previous and following verses and the theme of "divine sonship" in the theology of the Fourth Gospel, etc. In other words, the internal criticism will analyse Jn 1:13 in itself and within the context of Johannine theology. At the end of internal criticism, we will decide which verbal form is more Johannine and thus the original.

A. Grammatical Reasons in Favour of the Singular

1. The difficulty with οἳ … ἐγεννήθησαν

From a grammatical point of view, we note a great difficulty in determining the antecedent of the pronoun οἵ. Those who read it in the plural, consider either τέκνα or πιστεύουσιν to be its antecedent. But both of them create grammatical problems.

In the first case, τέκνα is the plural form of a neuter noun, whereas οἵ is a masculine pronoun. They cannot go together. Here we have the difficulty of a predicative clause passing over a phrase in apposition. In the second case, seeing the present tense of πιστεύουσιν, one would expect either a present or a perfect tense. The aorist plural here is unsuitable. It seems to be out of place. The same logic applies to τέκνα as well. Thus the plural reading of Jn 1:13 (οἳ … ἐγεννήθησαν) creates two problems: a) The difficulty of determining the antecedent of οἵ; b). The unsuitability of the tense of

ἐγεννήθησαν.[273] Therefore, the plural cannot be the original reading. The singular is more probably the original.[274]

2. *The aorist of* γεννάσθαι *in v.13*

The New Testament employs the aorist tense (in the passive voice of the indicative mood) only for the physical birth (e.g.: Mt 1:20; 2:1; 19:12; 26:24; Mk 14:21; Jn 9:19; 16:21; 20:34; Act 2:8; 7:20; Rm 9:11; Heb 11:23). John uses the aorist form of the verb in Jn. 1:13. It signifies 'to be begotten'. The aorist tense of γεννάσθαι in the plural form   is never used by John while speaking of Christians. Whenever he wishes to speak about the spiritual birth of Christians, he always employs the *perfect* tense, not the aorist. Here are some examples:

Jn 3:6:   τὸ *γεγεννημένον* ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σάρξ ἐστιν, καὶ τὸ *γεγεννημένον* ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστιν.

Jn 3:8:   οὕτως ἐστὶν πᾶς ὁ *γεγεννημένος* ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος.

1 Jn 2:29:   πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ *γεγέννηται.*

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[273] "I tempi dei verbi, usati nei due versetti, rendono ancora più difficile la conciliazione: ἐγεννήθησαν è un aoristo, che normalmente indica una azione anteriore a quella indicata nel participio presente τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. Si sarebbe generati da Dio, già prima di credere" (P. ZARRELLA, "Verginità di Maria nel parto in Giov. 1, 13", 114).

[274] This argument was first introduced by A. von Harnack: "Bezieht man οἳ über τοῖς πιστεύουσιν hinweg auf τέκνα θεοῦ - so nicht wenige Ausleger -, so muß man die bedeutende Schwiegkeit in Kauf nehmen, daß über eine Apposition hinweg ein prädikativer Ausdruck näher erklärt wird. Man hat daher sogar daran gedacht, die Worte τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ zu streichen. Aber wenn man sich auch diese Schwierigkeit gefallen läßt, so bietet der Aorist ἐγεννήθησαν einen weiteren Anstoß. Man erwartet entweder das Präsens oder das Perfektum. Der Aorist ist hier am wenigsten am Platze" (A. VON HARNACK, "Zur Textkritik" 121).

1 Jn 3:9:   Πᾶς ὁ *γεγεννημένος* ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ *γεγέννηται*.

1 Jn 4:7:   πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ *γεγέννηται* καὶ γινώσκει τὸν θεόν.

1 Jn 5:1:   Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστὸς, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ *γεγέννηται*.

1 Jn 5:4:   ὅτι πᾶν τὸ *γεγεννημένον* ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον.

1 Jn 5:18:   Οἴδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ *γεγεννημένος* ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει, ἀλλ' ὁ *γεννηθεὶς* ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ αὐτόν καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ.

Among all these texts cited above, 1 Jn 5:18 is the most interesting as a parallel text cmpared with Jn 1:13, because it gives us a clear indication of how John used the perfect and aorist tense of this verb. "We know that whoever is '*born of God*' (γεγεννημένος: perfect tense; here 'whoever' is equivalent to a plural) no longer sins, but the '*Begotten of God*' (γεννηθείς: aorist tense in singular) protects him, and the Evil One does not touch him".[275] This is how John makes use of the verb in order to express his theological thought with precision and clarity. He uses the perfect tense for believers who are reborn again through baptism. He intentionally uses perfect in order to indicate an actual situation which is the result of a past action. But he uses the aorist form of the verb while speaking about the Incarnation of Christ, because it is a historical event of the past, which has taken place just once. The aorist tense is used to express a precise historical event that took place at a definte point of time.[276]

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[275] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 141.

[276] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, St. Pauls, Bombay 1995, 140-141.

Having analysed these examples from Johannine writings, we come to realize that John, when using the aorist form of the verb, would have written it in the singular. The use of the aorist tense indicates that here John is speaking about the Incarnation of Christ, not about the spiritual birth of Christians.

3. The personal pronoun αὐτοῦ in v. 12

As the personal pronoun αὐτου is in the singular form, it needs to be continued with the singular form of the relative pronoun ὅς, not with the plural form οἵ. If the pronoun is singular, then the verb should also be in the singular. The plural would raise serious grammatical problems.

4. Usage of verb forms in vv. 12-13

According to I. de la Potterie, the structure of vv. 12-13 that explains the relationship between faith and sonship will be logical only if we read it in singular aorist form. We quote his words here:

> Sarebbe più semplificata la struttura dei vv. 12-13, che esprimono il duplice dinamismo della fede e della filiazione, e l'ordine genetico delle azioni. Con la lezione al plural avremmo questo schema: *I credenti* lo accolsero (aoristo) *Cristo*, diede loro il potere di *diventare* figli di Dio, credono (presente), sono nati (aoristo) da Dio. Si può osservare il contrasto tra l'aoristo "sono nati" posto dopo il presente "credono" e dopo "diventare", che ha un aspetto futuro. Con la lezione al singolare avremmo invece:1) lo accolsero; 2) credono; 3) diede il potere di *diventare*.[277]

In other words, we can say that the present tense of πιστεύουσιν requires an atemporal present or perfect tense in Jn 1:13. But we have the aorist tense in Jn 1:13. This aorist tense suggests that the singular is much more fitting in Jn 1:13.

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[277] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Gregorio Nisseno", in *Dizionario Teologico sul Sangue di Cristo*, 665.

5. "καί epexegeticum" connecting v. 13 and v. 14

In v. 13, the Evangelist tells his readers how Jesus was con-
ceived and was given birth in a supernatural way. He then solemnly
declares this great event of the Incarnation in v. 14. That is why he us-
es the conjunction καί at the beginning of v. 14, as these two verses
are closely connected with the same theme of the birth of Jesus. The
conjunction καί at the beginning of v. 14 is a clear indication that the
λόγος was the subject of the immediately preceding one. The Evange-
list uses this conjunction in order to connect facts closely related to
each other.[278] John has used this connective nine times in the preced-
ing account for this same reason:

> o Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος,
>   *καὶ* ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν,
>   *καὶ* θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος (Jn 1:1)
>
> o πάντα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο,
>   *καὶ* χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἕν ὃ γέγονεν (Jn 1:3)
>
> o ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν,
>   *καὶ* ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.
>   *καὶ* τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει,
>   *καὶ* ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. (Jn 1:4-5)
>
> o ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν,
>   *καὶ* ὁ κόσμος δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο,
>   *καὶ* ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. (Jn 1:10)
>
> o εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν,
>   *καὶ* οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. (Jn 1:11)

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[278] This same idea has been supported by M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine
Sonship*, 118: "The use of καί in the beginning of a phrase in Jn always recalls
an idea that preceded. Thus, for example, the καὶ … μαρτυρία of Jn 1:19 recalls
the μαρτυρεῖ of Jn 1:15. […] Hence the καί in v. 14 also seems to recall what is
said in v. 13. This naturally points to a singular reading in v. 13".

Applying the same use of the conjunction καί in v.13 and v.14, we are convinced that both v. 13 and v. 14 are closely interconnected and they both deal with one and the same theme of the Incarnation:

> οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς
> οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.
> *Καὶ* ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο
> *καὶ* ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν,
> *καὶ* ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ … (Jn 1:13-14)

If v. 13 were not about the virgin birth of Christ (but about the spiritual birth of Christians), John would not have used the conjunction. Because the spiritual birth of Christians and the Incarnation of Jesus are two independent ideas. On this point, R.C.H. Lenski writes: "The two are so diverse, even as to time, that no writer, least of all John, would not connect the two with « and ». Regeneration and the incarnation are not even opposites, nor does John intimate any other relation between the two".[279] The fact that John has used this conjunction at the beginning of v. 14 is a clear sign that v. 14 recalls the idea of v. 13. So v. 13 should have been written with the singular form of the verb.

B. REASONS FROM JOHN'S USE OF VOCABULARY

1. The meaning of ὄνομα in v. 12

Reading v. 12, one may say that it is difficult to understand whose name they believe in. There are two possibilities. Some might think that it refers to θεοῦ in v. 12b, because stylistically it is the nearest and goes well with the context that deals with the theme of "becoming children of God". But according to various scholars such as M. Vellanickal,

> The use of ὄνομα in Jn does not allow us to refer this αὐτοῦ to θεοῦ. In Jn we see ὄνομα applied to God and Christ. When applied to God it is always connected with the name πατήρ and never with the name θεός. So in 1:12 the αὐτοῦ cannot refer to θεοῦ, because it would be a use quite

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[279] R.C.H. LENSKI, *The Interpretation*, 64.

foreign to Jn. Also it cannot refer to πατήρ here, because it is out of con-text. Hence it should refer to Christ-Logos, if we suppose a reading in the plural. But in Jn ὄνομα when applied to Christ, is never used with 'Logos'. Moreover, in Jn, it is always applied to Christ with particular reference to Him as Son of God (cf. 3:18; 20:31; I Jn 3:23; 5:13).[280]

Another reason why it cannot refer to 'Logos' is that, in John, "Log-os" is not a name. It designates a role. In the writings of John, the 'name' of Christ is always 'the Son' (cfr. Jn 1:18; 3:18; 20:31; 1 Jn 3:23; 5:13).

In the Prologue, the 'name' is spoken of for the first time in v. 12. We have proved that none of the previous verses (vv. 1-11) have any reference to the 'name'. So, we have to wait to determine what John will say of what 'name' it is a question of. The explanation is found only if we read v. 13 in the singular: "He gave the power to be-come children of God to those who believe in his name: *to him* not born of… *but who has been begotten by God*". This is more explicitly and solemnly declared in v. 14. Thus, our enquiry on the Johannine expression ὄνομα αὐτοῦ leads us to read Jn 1:13 in the singular form.

2. *The Supernatural Begetting*

In the writings of John, we see that he often speaks of both τέκνα θεοῦ (the children of God) and γεννήσθαι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (those who are begotten of God). If we carefully observe, we can note that John always uses τέκνα θεοῦ in the plural, and he uses γεννήσθαι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ always in the singular. We can illustrate this peculiarity with the following examples:

Those who are begotten by God:

1 Jn 2:29: πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ *γεγέννηται* (Singular, Perfect, Indicative).

1 Jn 3:9a: Πᾶς ὁ *γεγεννημένος* ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ (Singular, Perfect, Participle).

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[280] M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 119.

1 Jn 3:9b: καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ
γεγέννηται (Singular, Perfect, Indicative).

1 Jn 4:7: πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ **γεγέννηται**
καὶ γινώσκει τὸν θεόν (Singular, Perfect, Indicative).

1 Jn 5:18: Οἴδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ **γεγεννημένος** ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ
οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει, (Singular, Perfect, Participle).
ἀλλ' ὁ **γεννηθεὶς** ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ αὐτόν καὶ ὁ
πονηρὸς οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ (Sing, Aorist, Participle).

Children of God:

$$\left.\begin{array}{l} \text{Jn 1:12} \\ \text{Jn 11:52} \\ \text{1 Jn 3:1} \\ \text{1 Jn 3:10} \\ \text{1 Jn 5:2} \end{array}\right\} \quad \text{τέκνα θεοῦ} \qquad \text{Plural}$$

In the examples given above, we note the peculiar usage of singular
and plural for those who are begotten of God and for the children of
God respectively. This distinction is confirmed in 1 Jn 5:1-2. M. Vel-
lanickal observes this peculiarity of usage in some other texts too (Jn
3:3-8; 11:52) and he applies this reasoning to Jn 1:13: "If Jn 1:13 is
said of the believers (in the plural), it would be the only exception to
the regular Johannine usage with regard to the theme of believers'
sonship. This exception seems to be all the more strange, when we see
that in Jn 1:12 the usage of τέκνα θεοῦ is as usual in the plural".[281]
Hence, the expression ἐκ θεοῦ that has always been used with the
singular form of the verb γεννάω in the Johannine texts cited above
suggests that v.13 should also have been written in the singular.

John makes use of the same verb γεννάω to refer to the spiritu-
al birth of Christians and also to the historical birth of Christ. But

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[281] M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 121.

there is a peculiarity in the Johannine use of this verb. We want to present here a list of the Johannine texts where the verb γεννάω has been used in different moods and tenses:

	Verb	Mood	Tense	
Jn 3:3	γεννηθῇ	Subjunctive	Aorist	B
Jn 3:4	γεννηθῆναι	Infinitive	Aorist	e
Jn 3:5	γεννηθῇ	Subjunctive	Aorist	l
Jn 3:6	γεγεννημένον	Participle	Perfect	i
Jn 3:7	γεννηθῆναι	Infinitive	Aorist	e
Jn 3:8	γεγεννημένος	Participle	Perfect	v
1 Jn 2:29	γεγέννηται	Indicative	Perfect	e
1 Jn 3:9	γεγεννημένος	Participle	Perfect	r
1 Jn 3:9	γεγέννηται	Indicative	Perfect	s'
1 Jn 4:7	γεγέννηται	Indicative	Perfect	
1 Jn 5:1	γεγέννηται	Indicative	Perfect	B
1 Jn 5:1	γεγεννημένον	Participle	Perfect	i
1 Jn 5:4	γεγεννημένον	Participle	Perfect	r
1 Jn 5:18	γεγεννημένος	Participle	Perfect	t
				h
1 Jn 5:1	γεννήσαντα	Participle	Aorist	
1 Jn 5:18	γεννηθείς	Participle	Aorist	Jesus'
Jn 1:13	ἐγεννήθη	Indicative	Aorist	Birth

We note that although the Evangelist uses the same verb γεννάω for the spiritual birth of believers and the birth of Jesus, there is a great difference in the use of the mood and tense of the verb. John always uses the perfect tense for the birth of Christians (except in Jn 3:4,5,7). It shows that he "considers the divine birth of believers in its actual influence on the life of the believer",[282] because it is not a historical event. Even when he uses the aorist tense in Jn 3:4,5,7, he uses the subjunctive or infinitive mood, not the indicative. This is a clear indication that it is not a historical event, but rather refers to the profound change of life of believers.

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[282] *Ibid.*, 122.

On the contrary, when he speaks about the birth of Christ, he always uses the aorist form of the verb in order to make to make it clear that it is a historical event. He does not use the subjunctive or infinitive form of the verb, rather he uses either a participle or the indicative mood. The use of the verb γεννάω in Jn 1:13 (which is an aorist infinitive) is a very clear sign that here he speaks about the historical fact of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.[283]

C. THE CONTEXT

The Evangelist presents the Incarnation of Jesus as one of the fundamental themes of the Prologue. In this context, we now focus our attention on v. 13 of the Prologue. The strong negations have to be considered and studied in the context of v. 14. According to A. Loisy, the threefold negation found in v. 13 prepares the reader for the culminating and solemn affirmation of the Incarnation in v. 14. He writes:

> L'explication est donc purement négative et revient à dire que « devenir enfants de Dieu » est « naître de Dieu » ; elle répète avec emphase, et sans rien éclaircir, ce qui avait été d'abord énoncé simplement. On aurait attendu plutôt un développement sur la personne du Logos manifesté, pour déterminer sa situation à l'égard de ceux qui par lui deviennent fils de Dieu, et pour préparer la définition solennelle et précise de l'incarnation. Au point de vue rythmique, la strophe (1,11-12) qui finit par les mots : « devenir fils de Dieu » semblerait amorcer une strophe sur le Logos, et comme une conjonction rattache la définition de l'incarnation (1, 14) à ce qui précède, il semblerait que la proposition précédente (la dernière de 1, 13) eût dû

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[283] I. de la Potterie proposes the same argument in the following words: "La lezione al singolare sarebbe inoltre confermata dall'uso γεννασθαι del tempo presso Giovanni, che impiega l'aoristo indicativo passivo soltanto per la generazione fisica, come del resto è usato in tutto il NT (cfr Mt 1, 20; 2, 1; 19, 12; 26, 24; Mc 14, 21; Gv 9, 19; 16, 21; 20, 34; At 2, 8; 7, 20; Rm 9, 11; Eb 11,23). Per la rigenerazione spirituale Giovanni, all'indicativo o al participio, usa il perfetto; l'aoristo si trova soltanto nel congiuntivo o nell'infinito, invece per Cristo adopera l'aoristo con riferimento all'incarnazione (cfr Gv 5, 18)": I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Gregorio Nisseno", 665.

préparer la reprise; mais celle-ci: « Et le Logos s'est fait chair », n'est point amenée par le contexte.[284]

Verse 13 would be a useless and meaningless repetition of v. 12, if we consider v. 12 as the description of the spiritual birth of believers. When we apply it to the birth of Christ, it fits well in the context which prepares the solemn declaration of the Incarnation of Christ mentioned in the following verse. To place v. 13 (plural) alongside v. 14 would look too clumsy to be credible. So, the context favours the singular reading of v. 13.

D. JN 1:13 WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROLOGUE

A number of scholars have proposed various structures of Jn 1:1-18, taking into consideration vocabulary, inclusion and parallelism.[285] All these structures proposed by scholars can be divided into two categories: 1) Concentric structure; 2) Spiral Structure. We will present a detailed study about the structure of the Prologue in the second part when dealing with the exegetical commentary on Jn 1:13. Here we are going to argue that the singular reading of Jn 1:13 is favoured by both the concentric structure and the spiral structure of the Prologue. In our study, we will adapt the concentric structure as proposed by M. Vellanickal[286] and the spiral structure as proposed by I.de la Potterie[287] to see what role v. 13 plays within the entire structure of

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[284] A. LOISY, *Le Quatrième Évangile*, 101-102.

[285] Cfr. M-É. BOISMARD, *Le prologue de saint Jean*, 103-108; P. LAMARCHE, "Le prologue", 497-537; H. RIDDERBOS, "The Structure and Scope of the Prologue of the Gospel of John", in *NovT* 8 (1966) 180-201; A. FEUILLET, *Le prologue du quatrième évangile*, Desclée De Brouwer, Paris 1968, 76-95; S.A. PANIMOLLE, *Il dono della Legge e la grazia della verità (Gv 1, 17)*. (Teologia Oggi, 21), AVE, Roma 1973, 71-105; R.A. CULPEPPER, "The Pivot of John's Prologue", in *NTS* 27 (1980) 1-31; M. GIRARD, "Analyse structurelle de Jn 1, 1-18 : l'unité des Testaments dans la structure bipolaire du prologue de Jean", in *ScEsp* 36 (1983) 5-31; CH. H. GIBLIN, "Two Complementary Literary Structures in John 1, 1-18", in *JBL* 104 (1985), 87-103; I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Studi di Cristologia Giovannea* (Studi biblici e giudaici, 4), Marietti, Genova 1992³, 31-57.

[286] Cfr. M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 124-126.

[287] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Studi di Cristologia*, 34-46.

the Prologue. It will help us decide whether it is the plural or the singular that is more coherent and helps the entire Prologue's structural harmony.

According to M. Vellanickal, the Prologue has been composed with five decisive words. These words determine the literary structure of the Prologue and the development of his arguments. The following are the five key words that help us find out the structure of the Prologue: 1) ἦν (ὢν), 2) ἐγένετο, 3) λαμβάνειν, 4) μαρτυρεῖν, and 5) ἔρχομαι. In the following diagram, we can note how these key verbs form a parallelism and thus clarify the concentric structure of the Prologue.

A   ἦν   (vv. 1-2)   (v. 18)   ὢν A'

  B ἐγένετο   (v. 3)   (v. 17)   ἐγένετο B'

    C οὐ κατέλαβεν (vv. 4-5) (v.16)   ἐλάβομεν C'

      D μαρτυρήσῃ (vv. 6-8) (v. 15)   μαρτυρεῖ D'

        E ἐρχόμενον (vv. 9-10) (v. 14) σὰρξ ἐγένετο E'

          F ἦλθεν...   (v. 11)   (vv.12-13) ἐγεννήθη F'
                οὐ παρέλαβον   ἔλαβον αὐτόν

In the structure of the Prologue, vv. 1-2 and v. 18 are connected by the verbs ἦν and ὢν, both referring to the relationship of the Logos to the Father. The verb ἐγένετο that connects v.3 with v.17 speaks about the role of Jesus in the economy of salvation. The verb λαμβάνειν in vv. 4-5 and v. 16 refers to the response on the part of man. The key verb μαρτυρεῖν connects vv. 6-8 and v.15. As observed by M. Vellanickal, what is much more interesting in this structure is that "in this concentric structure the ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον of v. 9 (E) and εἰς τὰ ἴδια

ἦλθεν of v. 11 (F) are parallels to σὰρξ ἐγένετο of v. 14 (E') and ὅς ἐγεννήθη of v. 13 (F') respectively".[288]

Here we note that it is not only the words that form the concentric structure but also the respective themes have a clear parallelism. "He was in the world" (v. 10) is parallel to "He dwelt among us" (v. 14). So, his coming into this world is parallel to his Incarnation. This can be applied to the parallelism between v. 11 and vv. 12-13. His coming to his own (v. 11) is parallel to his Incarnation (v. 13). Thus, the structure that we are examining is confirmed by both the use of vocabularies and by the respective themes. Hence, we should read Jn 1:13 in singular, as it refers to the Incarnation of Jesus.

We have another structure proposed by S.A. Panimolle.[289] His proposal is not a chiastic or concentric structure (a, b, c, d, e, f / f', e', d', c', b', a') but a spiral structure (a, b, c / a' b' c') developing its themes on three different levels, each level containing a symmetric parallelism. He distinguishes three different levels of thoughts, each one having its own three movements. This spiral structure has been presented as follows:[290]

1) A (1-2)	B (3)	C (4-5)
2) A' (6-8)	B' (9-11)	C' (12-14)
3) A'' (15)	B'' (16-17)	C'' (18)

We are not going to analyse this structure in a detailed manner, because we will do that in the next part, which will deal with the structure of the Prologue and the exegetical meaning of v.13 in the context of the various structures proposed. Here, we limit ourselves to note the most important point of this spiral structure. The theme of Jesus' coming into the world is the central and culminating element of all the three levels of spiral divisions (cfr. v. 4-5; vv. 12-14; v. 18). Considering v.13 in the context of C-C'-C'' we can clearly note that v. 13 speaks about the Incarnation of Jesus. Thus, the spiral structure too

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[288] Cfr. M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 125.

[289] Cfr. S.A. PANIMOLLE, *Il dono della Legge*, 96-97.

[290] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Studi di Cristologia*, 35.

supports the view that v. 13 speaks about the Incarnation of Christ. Thus, we should read v. 13 in its singular form.

E. REASONS OF STYLE

Here we are going to provide two reasons in favour of the singular as far as the written style is concerned.

1. Extensive Comment

Verse 13 is one of the longest comments that we find in the whole Prologue. The Evangelist uses 17 words to explain the preceding noun (already mentioned in v.12). It is clear that v. 13 is an extensive comment on v. 12. Regarding this point, A. von Harnack writes:

> Schon die bloβe Tatsache, daβ οἰ λαβόντες, nachdem bereits gesagt war, was sie erhalten haben, und nach dem sie – nachträglich – als οἰ πιστεύοντες näher charakterisiert waren, den Verfasser noch weiter beschäftigen, befremdet. In dem ganzen Prolog findet sich sonst keine Weitläufigkeit; hier liegt sie vor, und zwar nicht in bezug auf die Hauptperson, den Logos, sondern in bezug auf Nebenpersonen.[291]

This extensive commentary found in v. 13 seems be more meaningful when applied to the Logos, rather than to the mere 'nebenpersonen'.

2. The Polemical thrust of v. 13

The three strong negations indicate the polemical thrust of this verse. If the Evangelist were to explain the spiritual birth of believers, why use such a strong polemical style in v. 13? These three negations would be very strange, if attributed to the supernatural birth of believers, because the spiritual birth of believers does not exclude the ordinary laws of human birth, rather it presupposes it. The polemical style applied here in v.13 does not distinguish the spiritual from the human birth, but rather denies the ordinary laws of human birth. On the contrary, the polemical style used here would go well with the Incarnation of Christ, because he was not born according to the laws of human

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[291] A. VON HARNACK, "Zur Textkritik", 121.

birth. I. de la Potterie explains this point as follows: "These three ne-
gations evidently have a polemic quality about them. John is alluding
here to doctrinal deviations. This polemic note, these three possibili-
ties that the Evangelist envisions only to exclude them energetically,
do not have any meaning unless it is a question of a *physical birth*,
certain characteristics of which are denied. If this is the Incarnation of
Christ, this explanation makes sense".[292] From this argument, we can
deduce that these negations were used by the Evangelist to explain the
birth of Jesus. Thus, the polemical style of v. 13 favours the singular
reading.

F. JN 1:13 AND JOHANNINE THEOLOGY

In our internal criticism, let us now see which reading of Jn
1:13 fits well into the Johannine thought of the Fourth Gospel. The re-
lationship between Jn 1:13 and the mainstream of Johannine theology
can give us some indications to decide which reading should be the
most likely one.

1. The origin of Christ from God

Reading the Fourth Gospel, one can easily note that the divine
origin of Christ is a predominant theme of Johannine theology. In the
Prologue, the Evangelist repeatedly speaks about the coming of Christ
into this world and his divine origin. In v.1 he says that he was with
God and in v. 11 he says "he came unto his own". Connecting v. 1
with v. 11, we understand that he came from the Father. In Jn 6.38, Je-
sus says: "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the
will of him that sent me". Thus his divine origin and his earthly mis-
sion are linked with each other.

During a dispute with the people in the temple area, Jesus de-
clares his divine origin in the following words: "You know me and
you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on my own. No,
there is truly One who sent me, and Him you do not know. I know
Him because it is from Him that I come and He sent me" (7:28). The

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[292] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 143.

Evangelist narrates that Jesus' claim to divine origin provoked the attempt to arrest him (7:30).

Another important passage where the Evangelist speaks about the heavenly origin of Jesus is found in the context of an indirect accusation of prostitution brought forward by the Jews (8:31-47). Jesus claims his divine origin saying: "I tell what I have seen in the Father's presence; therefore, you should do what you heard from the Father" (8:38); "from God I came forth and am here. Not on my own have I come, but He sent me" (8:42).

Not only does the Evangelist speak of Jesus' divine origin in his Gospel, but also uses the terms "Christ" and "Son of God" interchangeably to identify the person of Jesus and his origin from God. That these two terms have been used by the Evangelist with equivalent value is evident from the following verses:

Jn 1:49: "Nathanael answered him: «Rabbi, you are the Son of God»".

Jn 11:27: "She said to him: «Yes, Lord. I believe that you are Christ, the Son of God»".

Jn 20:31: "These things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God".

1 Jn 5:1: "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him".

1 Jn 5.5: "And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

The verses cited above show that the divine origin of Jesus is a main theme in the writings of John. As we have seen in Jn 20.31, the Evangelist himself says that the main purpose of his Gospel is to make his readers believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God.

2. The parallel scheme of Johannine theology

In the Fourth Gospel, the Evangelist speaks of Christian discipleship always in analogy with the life of Christ. According to him, our life should be an imitation, a resemblance, of Christ's life. Applying this principle to divine sonship, we can say that we become chil-

dren of God in the measure that we believe in Him as the Son of God. Christ is the model on which we have to base our Christian life. According to Johannine theology, Jesus' relationship with the Father is the basis of our relationship with God. We have many examples to prove this parallel scheme which is typically Johannine:

Jn 6:57: "As the living Father sent me and I draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will also draw life from me".

Jn 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, will have life";

Jn 12:36: "As long as you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may be children of the light";

Jn 14:12: "Whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father".

Jn 15:9: "As the Father loves me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love".

Jn 17:23: "I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me".

All these examples tell us that Christ is the model on which our Christian life has to be based. The same correspondence between Christ and believers is perfect, if we read Jn 1:13 in the singular. His divine Sonship is the model for our becoming God's children. His divine Sonship is the basis for our call to become children of God. Inasmuch as we receive him or accept him through faith as the only Son of God, his Sonship is passed on to us. If we read Jn 1:13 in the plural, this analogy between Christ's birth and the spiritual birth of believers will disappear. Moreover, we will not have Jesus as our "model" in becoming children of God. So, only the singular reading can go hand in hand with the typical Johannine scheme of parallelism. Seeing this

analogy very evident in Jn. 1.13, many biblical scholars insist that this verse should be read in the singular.[293]

G. CONCLUDING REMARKS OF THE INTERNAL CRITICISM

In the internal criticism carried out according to the methods proposed by our 'thoroughgoing eclecticism', we analysed the various elements of the text: the grammar (the aorist tense, use of the personal pronoun and verb forms), John's use of vocabulary, the structure, the context, the Johannine style, the polemical thrust of the verse, the coherence between v. 13 and Johannine theology and so on. The internal criticism that we did from various perspectives has helped us to understand that v. 13 should be read in the singular. The internal evidence that we have is sufficient to decide for the singular reading.

H. SUMMARY OF REASONS IN FAVOUR OF THE SINGULAR READING

At this concluding stage of our text-critical study, we are going to decide on the correct reading of the text. Our 'thoroughgoing eclectic criticism' has helped us explore smallest details of the text. We analysed the textual variants from both the external and internal points of view. Both types of criticism (external and internal) have given us positive indications to opt for the singular. The external criticism has given us clues and indications about the originality of the singular. The internal criticism has also been in favour of the singular. At the close of this textual criticism, we want to summarize the results of our study and list the important reasons for the singular to be the original reading.

1) Although the Greek Mss evidence for the plural reading is overwhelming, some patristic writings that are much older than these Mss read or comment on this verse in the singular.

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[293] Cfr. M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 118; J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 107-108; I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 142-143.

These oldest patristic witnesses outweigh the Mss evidence for the plural reading. The older witnesses are more reliable than the later ones.

2) Relying upon the *quality* of witnesses is more important than relying upon the mere *quantity* of witnesses. Here what we mean by *quantity* is the number of Greek Mss in favour of the plural. What we mean by *quality* is the reliable patristic witness of Irenaeus, Tertullian and so on. Their reliability is guaranteed by their early date.

3) Apart from the evidence from the writings of the Church Fathers, we have the *Epistula Apostolorum* (c. 160 AD) written in Asia Minor and the *Liber comicus*, the oldest lectionary from the Iberian Peninsula, attributed to St. Ildephonsus († 667 AD). Both of them read Jn 1:13 in the singular. It is to be noted that the *Epistula Apostolorum* is much older than the oldest Greek Mss available to us.

4) As has been asserted by the Church Fathers in their writings, it is highly probable that the Gnostics and Manicheans could have changed the singular text into the plural for doctrinal reasons. For example, Tertullian accuses the Valentinians of tampering with the original text.

5) Jn 1:13 is clearly a polemical statement. The polemic would not make any sense if it is against the ordinary physical birth of the believers, because they were born according to the natural laws of birth. It would make sense only if it is applied to the virgin birth of Jesus. All these three strong negations would fit more readily into a polemical context against the theme of the Incarnation, rather than the theme of the spiritual birth of believers.

6) The textual transformation from the singular to the plural seems more probable than the transformation from the plural to the singular.

7) The aorist tense in the passive voice of the indicative mood is used by John only in reference to physical birth (cfr. Jn 9:19;

16:21; 20:34). When John describes the spiritual generation of Christians (cfr. Jn 3:6,18; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18a), he always uses the perfect tense, whereas he uses the aorist when he refers to the Incarnation (cfr. 1 Jn 5:18). The Evangelist's use of the aorist tense in Jn 1:13 makes it evident that John is refering to the Incarnation of Christ.

8) The personal pronoun αὐτου in the singular form (v.12), re-quires the singular form ὅς at the start of v. 13, and not the plural form οἵ. Thus the verb should also be in the singular form in v. 13.

9) If we read v.13 in the plural, we will face the difficulty of determining the antecedent of οἵ. The word τέκνα cannot be the antecedent of οἵ, because τέκνα is the plural form of a neuter noun, whereas οἵ is a masculine noun. Nor can πιστεύουσιν be its antecedent because it is in the present tense and it has to be followed by a present tense or a perfect tense, whereas ἐγεννήθησαν is in the aorist tense. So the plural reading creates these two grammatical problems. Thus, the singular should be the original.

10) The « *epexegeticum* καί » at the start of v. 14 is used by the Evangelist to develop the same theme already introduced in v. 13, that is, the Incarnation of Jesus. If v. 13 were about the spiritual birth of Christians, what need would there be to use this conjunction at the start of v. 14?

11) If the extensive comment in v. 13 is about believers, it is strange and goes against the flow of the Prologue. This long comment would better suit the "Logos" rather than believers, because the "Logos" is the central focus in the whole of the Prologue.

12) Jn 1:13 speaks about a birth which goes against the ordinary laws of natural birth. The exclusion of ordinary laws can be applied only to the supernatural birth of Christ. It does not make any sense if we apply it to the baptismal birth of Chris-

tians, because no believer is exempted from the ordinary laws of birth.

13) The divine origin of Christ is a main theme in the writings of John. This is evident from Jn 1:49; 11:27; 20:31; 1Jn 5:1; 1Jn 5:5. This shows that in the Prologue, whose main focus is the theme of the Incarnation, the Evangelist should most probably have spoken about the divine origin of Christ rather than the baptismal birth of Christians.

14) In John's Gospel, we note that the relationship between Christ and believers is based or modeled on Christ's relationship with God the Father. The parallel theme of Johannine theology will be lost if we read it in the plural. The singular goes well with this Johannine line of thought.

15) In the first century, the singular reading was geographically more widespread than the plural reading. This fact indicates that the singular should have been older than the plural.

16) The singular corresponds to the temporal generation of Christ, which is a fundamental Johannine theme in Jn 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1Jn 4:9; 5:18. It best fits into the mainstream of Johannine theology.

17) If we read Jn 1:13 in the plural form, then its harmony and structural link with v. 14 and v. 18 will be completely lost. The theme of the Incarnation introduced in v. 13 is solemnly declared in v. 14 and again reconfirmed by the Evangelist as the only-begotten Son, by the expression ὁ μονογενής.

18) The plural reading of v. 13 would create a tautological problem. If they are 'born of God', it means they are already children of God. Then, how can and why should God give them power to become children of God, if they are already born 'children of God'? Verse 13 read in the plural would become inconsistent with v. 12. The singular should be the original.

19)   Taking into consideration both the twofold concentric structure and the threefold spiral structure of the Prologue, we noticed that v. 13 is at the core of the Prologue and that its connection with the other structural elements of the Prologue indicates that v. 13 speaks about the Incarnation of Christ. If so, then the verb should be read in the singular.

20)   To understand the correct meaning of v. 13, it has to be read in its immediate context (vv. 11-14). The strong structural and lexical link that exists within this pericope makes it an individual unit and serves as the immediate context of v. 13. As the starting verse (v. 11) begins with the theme of the Incarnation (ἦλθεν), the concluding verse (v. 14) also ends with the theme of the Incarnation (ἐγεννήθη). It is more logical that v. 13, which is at the centre of this periscope, has to be read in the same context where the Incarnation of Christ is the main theme. Thus v. 13 speaks about the birth of Jesus. So the singular should be the original reading.

21)   It is the singular reading which is in more conformity with the style and theology of John, rather than the plural. No Christian who reads v.13 would fail to think of the Incarnation of Christ. Even when one reads it in the plural, the phrases and expressions would remind him of the virgin birth of Christ, rather than the spiritual birth of Christians. If the description of supernatural birth of believers itself is so meaningful, then how much more should it be true for the virgin birth of Christ, thE only Son of God.

PART TWO

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF JOHN 1:12-13

In the first part we dealt with the textual problem of Jn 1:13 and concluded that the verb γεννάω has to be read in the singular. Having established the correct text of Jn 1:13, we are now going to exegetically analyze it.

I. EXEGETICAL METHODOLOGY

Before we carry out the analysis of the text, we have to be sure of the exegetical method we are going to apply. Although a number of methods have been proposed by various scholars, we prefer the historical-critical method proposed by the Pontifical Biblical Commission.[294]

A. Why Historical-Critical Method?

No method is fully adequate to understand the biblical text in all its richness and diversity of meanings. Among all the methods available, we consider the historical-critical method the most suitable one, although it too has got its own limitations. We choose the historical-critical method for the following reasons:

1) The Pontifical Biblical Commission highly recommends this method and says: "the historical-critical method is the indispensable method for scientific study of the meaning of ancient texts. Holy Scripture, inasmuch as it is the 'Word of God in human language,' has been composed by human in all its various parts and in all the sources that lie behind them. Because of this, its proper understanding not only admits the use of this method but actually requires it".[295] We completely agree with this recommendation of the Biblical Commission and find this method an indispensable one for the exegetical analysis of our text.

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[294] PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, Pauline, Boston 1993, 35-42.

[295] *Ibid*., 35.

2) This is the method most used in recent biblical studies.

3) It gives equal importance to both diachronic and synchronic readings of the text. In other words, it is both 'historical' and 'critical': not only does it seek to shed light upon the diachronic processes of the text but also operates with scientific criteria in the textual analysis so as to help us gain better grasp of the real meaning of the text.

B. Exegetical Procedure

'Textual Criticism' is the first step of the exegetical analysis.[296] We made a text-critical study in the first part and we concluded that the singular should be the original reading. Now we proceed with the further steps suggested by the historical-critical method of exegesis.

In our exegetical analysis, we will first determine the delimitations of the text and then divide it into small units so as to facilitate the analysis. Then the immediate and remote contexts and of the text will be determined. The next step will be the source analysis of the text. Then the text will be submitted to a linguistic-grammatical analysis. The words of the text will be lexically explained. After that, we will try to fix the text within the structure of the Prologue. We will present different structures proposed by various authors and will explain the structure that we will choose to adopt in our study. The next important step will be to explain the exegetical meaning of each small unit of v. 13. Towards the end of our exegetical study, we will connect v. 13 with other Johannine texts and establish the exegetical meaning of this verse in the whole context of the fourth Gospel.

II. DELIMITATION OF THE TEXT

Let us now determine the beginning and end of the textual unit. We cannot just abruptly disconnect v.13 from its context and independently interpret it. We must examine the vocabularies and the themes in its surrounding context and accordingly delimit the text. So, we have to

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[296] *Ibid.*, 39.

first establish the textual unit as a separate but complete block from two points of view: lexical and thematic. Let us consider the following textual block as a whole:

εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, ὃς οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη. Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (Jn 1:11-14).

We are going to show that v. 13 is connected to the preceding verses 11-12 and also closely linked with the following v. 14. We are going to justify this delimitation from the use of key words and the thematic coherence of this textual unit. It is made evident in the diagram presented below:
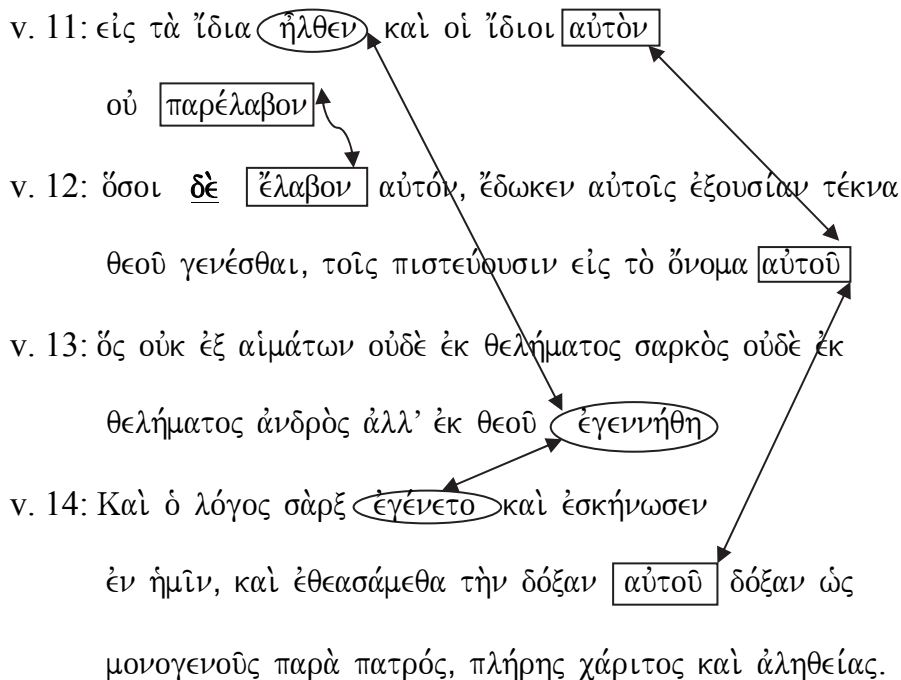
Verse 13 speaks about the Incarnation of Jesus. This theme of Jesus' coming into this world begins with v. 11 (εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν). So, v. 13 has a thematic connection with v. 11. Moreover v. 11 is closely connected with v. 12 because there is a contrast between those who did not accept him and those who accepted him. We should take note of the verbs used in these two verses: παραλαμβάνω in v. 11 and λαμβάνω in v. 12. The coordinating conjunction δέ is also a clear indication that v. 11 and v. 12 are closely linked. It is evident that v. 13 is closely connected to v. 12 by the relative pronoun ὅς (v. 13) that has its antecedent pronoun αὐτοῦ (v. 12). The theme of Incarnation is found at the beginning of this pericope in v. 11 (εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν) and this theme is again solemnly proclaimed (ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο) in v.14. The long sentence vv. 12-13 is at the centre of this pericope where the verb ἐγεννήθη speaks about the birth of Christ.

Thus, v. 13 has to be studied in the immediate context of vv. 11-14. So, we will do the exegetical analysis of v. 13, in connection with these verses closely linked to it.

III. REMOTE AND IMMEDIATE CONTEXT OF THE TEXT

Consideration of the context is very important in the exegetical analysis of any text. Now we are going to determine the immediate and the remote context of v. 13. As W. Egger says: "the meaning of words, sentences, and parts of texts is substantially shaped by the context. That is why we must pay heed to the connection between a part of the text and the text as a whole. Otherwise the part of the text will be easily misunderstood. Right from the start, therefore, we must determine […] what place a part of the text has in the thematic progression of the text as whole".[297]

We have already seen that v. 13 is found in the immediate context of the pericope Jn 1:11-14. We determined this pericope as its immediate context for various reasons such as: the evident connection between key words, grammatical connection and thematic coherence.

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[297] W. EGGER, *How to read the New Testament*, 48.

The remote context is the entire Prologue (Jn 1:1-18). The exegetical and theological meaning of v. 13 has to be looked for in the context of the entire Prologue. Instead of analyzing v.13 as a separate text, we will exegetically examine v.13 in its immediate context. We will also study the place and role of v. 13 in the structure of the entire Prologue.

IV. WISDOM BACKGROUND AND LITERARY GENRE

What type of literary genre does the Prologue belong to? Is there any passage from the Old Testament that is close to the Johannine Prologue? Many scholars have tried to find out the literary genre of the Prologue in connection with the types of genre found in the OT. The literary design of the Prologue can be easily understood if we compare it with the literary style and thematic elements of certain hymns to Wisdom found in the Wisdom books of the World Testament. Prov 8:22-31 and Sir 24:3-27 are considered to be the background to the Johannine Prologue.[298]

In the book of Proverbs, Wisdom sings her own eulogy. She solemnly proclaims the close relationship that unites her with God, and also sings about her former presence with God in the work of creation.

> The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
> the first of his acts of long ago.
> Ages ago, I was set up,
> at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
> When there were no depths, I was brought forth,
> when there were no springs abounding with water.
> Before the mountains had been shaped,
> before the hills, I was brought forth,
> when he had not yet made earth and fields,
> or the world's first bits of soil.
> When he established the heavens, I was there,
> when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
> when he made firm the skies above,
> when he established the fountains of the deep,

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[298] Cf. J. GUILLET, *Jésus-Christ dans l'Évangile de Jean* (CahÉv, 31), Cerf, Paris 1980, 20-21.

> when he assigned to the sea its limit,
> so that the waters might not transgress his command,
> when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
> then I was beside him, like a master worker;
> and I was his delight, rejoicing before him always,
> rejoicing in his inhabited world
> and delighting in the human race (Prov 8:22-31).

In another wisdom hymn (Sir 24:3-27), Wisdom extols her closeness with God, her creative activity and her dwelling among the people. R. Fabris presents a list of lexical connections between the Prologue and the wisdom texts as follows: [299]

Gv 1,1-14	*Testi sapienziali*
A. *In principio* era la parola (1,1)	A. «Il Signore mi ha creato principio, *archên*, delle sue opere…» (Pr 8,22);
B. La Parola era con Dio, *pròs tòn theòn* (1,2);	B. «Allora io ero con lui, *par' autô...*» (Pr 8,30; cf. Sp 9,4);
C. Tutto per mezzo di lui avvenne (1,3);	C. «Il Signore ha fondato la terra con la sapienza» (Pr 3,19a; cf. Sp 9,2);
D. Ciò che avvenne in lui era vita (1,4);	D. «I miei sentieri sono sentieri di vita» (Pr 8,35);
E. La luce splende nella tenebra (1,5)	E. «Paragonata alla luce, risulta superiore» (Sp 7,29);
F. e la tenebra non l'ha sopraffatta (1,5);	F. «Contro la sapienza la malvagità non può prevalere» (Sp 7,30);
G. Era nel mondo e il mondo non lo riconobbe (Pr 1,29);	G. «Hanno odiato la sapienza» (Sp 1,10);
H. Venne in casa propria (1,12);	H. «Fra tutti questi cercai un luogo di riposo in quale possedimento stabi lirmi» (Sir 24,7);
I. E la parola abitò tra noi, tenda, *eskênōsen* (1,14).	I. «Il mio creatore mi fece posare la *kataskênōsen*, in Giacobbe (Sir 24,8).

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[299] R. FABRIS, *Giovanni*, Borla, Roma 1992, 173-174.

M.-É. Boismard observes the same movement in all these hymns and its reflection in the Johannine Prologue: "Wisdom describes her intercourse with God and her pre-existence with reference to the creation; next the part she played in the work of creation, then she tells how she was sent upon earth to dwell among the Chosen people; finally she describes all the benefits that she brought with her and which will be profitable to those who know how to search for her. In the Prologue of his Gospel, St. John has reproduced this movement of the hymns to wisdom, transposing it and adapting it to the Word of God".[300] According to him, there is one more important factor that has contributed to the formation of the literary style of the Prologue, apart from the one mentioned above. In his opinion, the Evangelist has adapted the literary *decorum* used by the poets of ancient times and prophets of Judaism. Some of the literary techniques adapted by the Evangelist in the Prologue are: Semitic inclusiveness, Parallelism and Construction by development.[301]

Although the Prologue has such a close literary similarity to the wisdom hymns, it is not so easy to determine its literary genre. I. de la Potterie divides the Prologue into three parts (vv. 1-5; vv. 6-14; vv. 15-18) and writes as follows: "I vv. 1-5 che costituiscono la prima tappa appartengono al genere *apocalittico* o sapienziale. […] La seconda tappa (vv. 6-14) è di un genere completamente differente essa si presenta come un racconto *storico*. […] [vv. 15-18] una *confessione di fede*".[302] A similar idea is proposed by Y. Simoens in the following words: "Il prologo mescola l'elogio poetico, liturgico e retorico adottando un tono innico. Il genere letterario non è dunque puro. In generale non lo è quasi mai, se non a prezzo di certe astrazioni esegetiche".[303]

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[300] M-É. BOISMARD, *St. John's Gospel,* 76. The same idea is supported by X. LÉON-DUFOUR (*Lettura del Vangelo secondo Giovanni*, 94-101).

[301] *Ibid*., 76-77.

[302] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Studi di Cristologia*, 46-47.

[303] Y. SIMOENS, *Secondo Giovanni. Una traduzione e un'interpretazione*, Dehoniane, Bologna 2002 (Original: *Selon Jean. I. Une traduction - 2. Une Interprétation*, Éditions Lessius, Bruxelles 1997), 144.

V. SOURCE ANALYSIS

In this section, we are going to study the historical origin of the Prologue in order to understand whether the Prologue was composed by the Evangelist himself, not depending on any already-existing text, or it is a pre-Christian rhythmic poem into which the Evangelist has interpolated prose passages. If the latter is true, was v.13 a later addition or part of the original hymn? Many theories have been proposed by various authors. There is no common agreement among the scholars regarding the origin of the Prologue. R.E. Brown says: "some think that there are two stages of editing the hymn to adapt it to the Gospel; some think that there was one, and this was done by the final redactor".[304] We want to present here different opinions of the scholars in order to have a clear understanding of its historical textual origin.

In the year 1923, R. Bultmann proposed a theory that considers the Prologue as the work of a redactor who added a few verses to an already-existing cultic community hymn.[305] According to him, the Evangelist or the redactor has added his own prosaic comments (vv. 6-8, 12-13, 15, 17-18). He justifies his theory with the following arguments: 1) the difference of linguistic style between these poetic verses and the prosaic verses is very evident. 2) There are notable idea-breaks between the original hymn and the later insertions. For these two reasons, he concludes: "the Evangelist has made use of a cultic community hymn the basis for the Prologue, and has developed it with his own comments".[306] Since he is in favour of the plural reading of v. 13, he says that vv. 12-13 is a later insertion, developing the theme of the spiritual birth of the children of God.

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[304] R. E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 21.

[305] Cfr. R. BULTMANN, "Der religionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Prologs zum Johannesevangelium" in H. SCHMIDT (ed.), *EYXAPISTHRION*. Studien zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1923, 3-26.

[306] R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John. A Commentary*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1971, 17.

R. Schnackenburg proposes a theory that the Prologue makes use of a Logos-hymn. The arguments he presents to support his theory are as follows:

> (i) Literary criticism can point to poetical and rhythmical sentences, verses and perhaps strophes (though not exactly definable be metre, stress etc.), and distinguish them from prose elements or additions, as in vv. 6-8, and also in 12 (in its entirety or perhaps only c), 13, 15, 17 (?). The "rhythm" of the hymn is, indeed, debatable. Some find a regular succession of groups of two or three lines, others "free rhythms". But the fact itself can hardly be doubted. (ii) The structure and the movement of thought, hence the content exegetically examined, also reveal breaks and sudden switches. These are again particularly clear in the two interpolations about John the Baptist (vv. 6-8, 15); but the difficulty and indefiniteness of v. 9, the pleonasms of vv. 12-13, and the unexpected nature of the last two verses (17-18), the impression they give of being attached loosely or merely by external association, reinforce the idea that a well-constructed and finished poem has been worked over and added to. (iii) Analysis of the style is also important. Using the methods of E. Schweizer and E. Ruckstuhl, one can note in several verses or portions of verses the absence of typical criteria of Johannine style, and their frequent presence elsewhere. These observations agree very well with the analysis of rhythm and content. (iv) Analysis of the style is supported by observations on the terminology and concepts used in the re-discovered Logos-hymn.[307]

R.E. Brown says that the original hymn contained only vv. 1-2, 3-5, 10-12b, 14, 16. Regarding the origin of v. 13, R.E. Brown writes: "Is vs. 13 part of the original hymn, or part of the editorial comment? Bernard, Gächter, Green, Haenchen, Jeremias, Käsemann, Robinson, Schnackenburg, and Wikenhauser are among those who think of it as editorial expansion. Certainly the style is different from the clearly poetic stanzas of the hymn. The apologetic motif is strong in 13, and this is not true of the poetic verses".[308]

According to him, two sets of additions were made to this hymn.1) Explanatory expansions of the lines of the hymn (vv. 12c-13). This addition explains how men become children of God; 2) Ma-

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[307] R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. I, 225.

[308] R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 11.

terial pertaining to John the Baptist (vv. 6-9, 15).[309] He says that he is not "certain whether these two sets of additions were the work of one man and done at the same time".[310]

The following table[311] explains how the scholars' opinions differ as to the point of distinguishing the original part of the hymn from the later addition:

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[309] *Ibid.*, 22.

[310] *Ibid.*, 23.

[311] This table has been taken from: M. ENDO, *Creation and Christology*, 184. The author adds a note to this table (cfr. *Ibid*, p. 184, note 14): "This table is based on Brown's survey (*John,* 22), and it is supplemented by E. Miller's summary (*Salvation-History in the Prologue of John: The Significance of John 1:3/4* [NovTSup 60; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989], 6)".

The Source Analysis of the Johannine Prologue

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Bultmann (1923)						▨	▨	▨				▨	▨		▨		▨	▨
Bernard (1928)						▨	▨	▨				▨	▨		▨	▨	▨	▨
Gächter (1936)						▨	▨	▨	▨			▨	▨		▨			▨
Green (1955)			▨	▨		▨	▨	▨	▨			▨	▨		▨	▨	▨	
Käsemann (1957)			▨	▨		▨	▨	▨				▨	▨		▨		▨	▨
Schnackenburg (1957)					▨	▨	▨	▨	▨			▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Haenchen (1963)						▨	▨	▨					▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Brown (1966)						▨	▨	▨	▨			▨	▨		▨		▨	▨
Sanders (1971)						▨	▨	▨				▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Schmit-hals (1979)						▨	▨	▨	▨		▨		▨		▨	▨		▨
Rochais (1985)						▨	▨	▨				▨	▨		▨		▨	▨

(The shadow indicates the sections regarded as the additions to the original hymn)

[161]

From the table given above, we can understand that there is no common agreement among the scholars regarding the origin of the text. It is surprising to see that a consensus exists only with regard to

vv. 1, 2 and 4 that are considered as part of the original hymn. All the scholars mentioned above in the table unanimously consider v. 13 to be an addition to the original hymn. Some also consider v. 12 an addition to the original hymn.

Having seen the different opinions of the scholars, we are now going to argue that the Prologue has a close relationship with the whole Gospel of John and thus no part of the Prologue could be alien to Johannine thought. Seeing the intrinsic unity between the Prologue and the Gospel, many authors interpret the Prologue as an original and integral part of the Gospel. Analyzing the textual genre and literary style of the Prologue and its thematic connections with the Gospel, H. Ridderbos says: "as the introduction to and background of the portrayal of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (cf. 20:31), the Prologue speaks successively of: 'the Word in the beginning' (1:1-5); the coming of the Word as the light of the world (1:6-13), and the glory of the Word in the flesh (1:14-18)".[312]

The Prologue serves as a hermeneutical key for readers to get into the core message of the Gospel and better understand Johannine Christology. We note a list of themes common to the Prologue and the rest of the Gospel. This deliberate correspondence between the Prologue and the Gospel can be found in the following table:[313]

	Prologue	*Gospel*
The pre-existence of the Logos or Son	1.1f.	17.5
In him was life	1.4	5.26
Life is light	1.4	8.12
Light rejected by darkness	1.5	3.19
Yet not quenched by it	1.5	12.35
Light coming into the world	1.9	3.19, 12.46

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[312] H. RIDDERBOS, *The Gospel According to John*, 23.

[313] J.A.T. ROBINSON, *The Relation of the Prologue*, 68.

Christ not received by his own	1.11	4.44
Being born of God and not of flesh	1.13	3.6; 8.41f.
Seeing his glory	1.14	12.41
The only-begotten Son	1.14,18	3.16
Truth in Jesus Christ	1.17	14.6
No one has seen God, except the one who comes from God's side	1.18	6.46

This close connection between the Prologue and the Gospel has been proposed by other exegetes such as M. Endo,[314] S. Grasso[315] and others.[316] The scholars who see a pre-existing Logos hymn in the Prologue base their arguments on the contextual breaks or sudden shifts that are seen in the sections of the witness of John the Baptist.[317] But M. Endo argues that: "there are some examples of the contextual

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[314] M. Endo presents a very detailed study in order to prove the close relationship between the Prologue and the Gospel. Cfr. M. ENDO, *Creation and Christology*, 230-248.

[315] S. GRASSO, *Il Vangelo di Giovanni*, 34-35 : "Si possono individuare i maggiori temi che ricorrono nel prologo e che si incontreranno nel seguito della narrazione: - esistenza del *logos* (v. 1; cf. *Gv* 8, 58; 17, 5.24), - identità del *logos* con Dio (v. 1; cf. *Gv* 8, 58; 10, 30; 20, 28), - vita nel *logos* (v. 4; cf. *Gv* 5, 26; 6, 33; 10, 10; 11, 25-26; 14, 6), - la luce nel *logos* (vv. 4,9; cf. *Gv* 3, 19; 8, 12; 12, 46), - conflitto tra luce e tenebre (v. 5; cf. *Gv* 3, 19; 8, 12; 12, 35; 12, 46), - credere nel *logos* (vv. 7.12; cf. *Gv* 2, 11; 3, 16.18.36; 5, 24; 6, 69; 11, 25; 14, 1; 16, 27; 17, 21; 20, 25), - rifiuto del *logos* (v. 10-11; cf. *Gv* 4, 44; 7,1; 8, 59; 10, 31; 12, 37-40; 15, 18), - rigenerazione divina (v. 13; cf. *Gv* 3, 17), - gloria del *logos* (v. 14; cf. *Gv* 2, 11; 12, 41; 17, 1.4-5.22.24), - rivelazione della verità (vv. 14.17; cf. *Gv* 4, 24; 8, 32; 14, 6; 17, 17; 18, 38), - *logos* compimento di Mosè e della legge (v. 17; cf. *Gv* 1, 45; 3, 14; 5, 46; 6, 32; 7, 19; 9, 29), - solo il *logos* ha visto Dio (v. 18; cf. *Gv* 6, 46), - *logos* rivelazione del Padre (v. 18; *Gv* 3, 34; 8.9.38; 12, 49-50; 14, 6-11; 17,8)".

[316] Referring to these scholars, R. Fabris says: "L'unità del testo attuale si può cogliere sulla base dei criteri tematico-teologici che trovano la loro conferma nelle caratteristiche lessicali e stilistiche omogeneamente distribuite (E. Schweizer; E. Ruckstuhl). Perciò alcuni autori sostengono un'origine «giovannea» del prologo, sia pure distinta in ordine di tempo da quella del vangelo (H. van den Bussche; I. de la Potterie; S.A. Panimolle)" [G. RAVASI – R. FABRIS (ed.), *Giovanni*, 170].

[317] Cfr. R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John*, 16-18; R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. I, 225-226.

breaks or sudden shifts in the other texts of the Fourth Gospel. How-
ever, these breaks do not necessarily show an awkward impression,
but rather they can be observed as a literary pattern. It is noteworthy
that the sentence break' is observed in Semitic languages as a literary
device".[318] He gives the following examples to support his argument:
i) The narrative of the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:3-42) where there are
two breaks: vv. 15-18 and vv. 25-27; ii) The narrative of Jesus' arrest
(Jn 18:12-40). Here we find two breaks: vv. 15-18 and vv. 25-27.
Thus Endo concludes that it is possible to assume that a similar liter-
ary device might have been employed in the Prologue.

C.K. Barrett says: "The Prologue is not a jig-saw puzzle but
one piece of solid theological writing. The evangelist wrote it
all…".[319]

The source analysis shows us that the later insertions in the
Prologue (especially v. 13) need not be accepted as an object of *dog-
matic truth*. Is v. 13 part of the editorial comment? The source analy-
sis shows that it is possible that it could have been added later on as a
gloss or editorial comment but this theory does not provide us with
valid proofs. In our source analysis, we have demonstrated the close
thematic and theological connection between the Prologue and the
whole Gospel. Verse 13 of the Prologue too has got a connection with
the Prologue and Johannine thought is clearly reflected in this verse.
We consider v. 13 as an integral part of the Prologue and thus v. 13
has got a Johannine origin.

VI. LINGUISTIC-SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

In this section, we are going to analyze the text from the
grammatical, syntactical and lexical points of view. Since v. 13 is only
a dependent clause (Relative clause) of v. 12, we will analyze v. 13 in
connection with v. 12. First we will divide vv. 12-13 into small units.
Then we will parse each and every word of vv. 12-13, or in other
words we will analyze this sentence (vv.12-13) in terms of grammati-

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[318] M. ENDO, *Creation and Christology*, 185-187.

[319] C.K. BARRETT, *The Prologue of St. John's Gospel*, Athlone Press,
London 1971, 27.

cal constituents and identify the parts of speech, syntactic function and so on.

Different grammatical elements that compose vv. 12-13:

v. 12 a:	ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν
b:	ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι
c:	τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ,
v. 13a:	ὅς οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων ... ἀνδρός
b:	ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη

A. Grammatical mechanics of the sentence

First of all, we want to parse the individual words of vv. 12-13 and present their grammatical details in the following table:

v. 12a	ὅσοι	Relative pronoun: nominative, mas. pl. (from ὅσος)
	δέ	Coordinating conjunction
	ἔλαβον	Verb: indicative, aorist, active, 3rd person pl. (from λαμβάνω)
	αὐτόν	Personal pronoun: accusative, mas, sing. (from αὐτός)
b	ἔδωκεν	Verb: indicative, aorist, active, 3rd person sing. (from δίδωμι)
	αὐτοῖς	Personal pronoun: dative, mas. plural (from αὐτός)
	ἐξουσίαν	Noun: accusative, fem., sing. (from ἐξουσία)
	τέκνα	Noun: accusative, neuter, pl. (from τέκνον)
	θεοῦ	Noun: genitive, masculine, sing. (from θεός)
	γενέσθαι	Verb: infinitive, aorist, middle deponent (from γίνομαι)
c	τοῖς	Definite article : dative, mas. pl. (from ὁ)
	πιστεύουσιν	Verb : present participle, active, dative, mas. pl. (from πιστεύω)
	εἰς	Preposition
	τό	Definite article, accusative, neuter, sing. (from ὁ)
	ὄνομα	Noun: neuter, accusative, sing. (from ὄνομα)
	αὐτοῦ	Personal pronoun: genitive, mas. sing. (from αὐτός)

v. 13a	ὅς	Relative pronoun: nominative, mas. sing.
	οὐκ	Adverb (from οὐ)
	ἐξ	Preposition: genitive (from ἐκ)
	αἱμάτων	Noun: neuter, genitive, pl. (from αἷμα)
	οὐδέ	Coordinating conjunction
	ἐκ	Preposition: genitive (from ἐκ)
	θελήματος	Noun: neuter, genitive, sing. (from θέλημα)
	σαρκός	Noun: genitive, fem. sing. (from σάρξ)
	οὐδέ	Coordinating conjunction
	ἐκ	Preposition genitive
	θελήματος	Noun: neuter, genitive, sing. (from θέλημα)
	ἀνδρός	Noun: genitive, mas. sing. (from ἀνήρ)
b	ἀλλα	Adversative particle
	ἐκ	Preposition
	θεοῦ	Noun: genitive, mas. sing. (from θεός)
	ἐγεννήθη	Verb: passive, indicative, aorist, 3rd person sing. (from γεννάω)

B. Sentence diagram

Having parsed every single word with its grammatical details, we are now going to present the grammatical syntax of this sentence so as to better understand the connection between itsvarious grammatical elements. The sentence diagram is very important in the exegetical process. R. Leedy explains how and why sentence diagram plays a significant role in understanding and interpreting a biblical text:

> Sentence diagramming is another such exegetical tool that forces us to deal with every word in the sentence, […] mapping out the sentence schematically in order to develop confidence that our understanding of the sentence's basic skeleton is correct. […] There is a subjective dimension to that confidence, in which the Spirit of God operates within us to assure us that we are speaking the truth. God has also provided an objective basis for confidence, however, in the very nature of language and history. The grammatical-historical approach to interpretation provides means of testing the validity of our interpretation. Is our interpretation consistent with the meanings that the words and grammatical structures can be demonstrated regularly to have? […] Sentence diagramming is a very powerful tool within the grammatical prong of that

hermeneutical approach to Scripture in that it enables us to demonstrate to ourselves that we are taking the individual words of the sentence consistently with the language's regular grammatical principles. Apart from a relatively complete understanding of a sentence's grammatical mechanics, we have no objective basis for confidence that our understanding of the sentence's meaning is correct.[320]

This diagram will help us easily recognize the subject and predicate of the sentence, distinguish the main clause and the subordinate clauses (dependent clauses), determine the adjectives that modify the nouns, find out the function of the participle as an adjective or a noun or an adverb, learn the function of the infinitive and the use of prepositions and their objects.

C. Grammatical Skeleton of the Sentence[321]

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[320] R. LEEDY, "New Testament Greek Sentence Diagramming", *Biblical Viewpoint* 39 (2005/1)17-18. For more details about Diagrammatical Analysis, cfr. R. P. BELCHER, *Diagramming the Greek New Testament*, Richbarry Press, Columbia (SC) 1985; L. KANTENWEIN, *Diagrammatical Analysis*, BMH Books, Winona Lake (IN) 1979.

[321] The diagram, reproduced in the following page, has been taken from the Compact Disc Rom: *The Bible Works 7*. Software for Biblical Exegesis and Research, Norfolk (VA) 2006. The original diagram reads the verb in the plural form. As we have opted for the singular reading of the text for our exegetical study, we have changed "οἳ … ἐγεννήθησαν" into "ὅς … ἐγεννήθη".

ὅσοι | ἔλαβον | αὐτόν

δέ | (X) | ἔδωκεν | αὐτοῖς | =

ἐξουσίαν | γενέσθαι | τέκνα | θεοῦ

τοῖς πιστεύουσιν | εἰς | τὸ ὄνομα | αὐτοῦ

ὅς | ἐγεννήθη

ἐξ | αἱμάτων

οὐδέ | ἐκ | θελήματος | σαρκός

οὐδέ | ἐκ | θελήματος | ἀνδρός

οὐκ | ἀλλ' | ἐκ | θεοῦ

[168]

1. Grammatical Observations

Looking Closely at the sentence diagram given above, we note that there is only one principal clause (v. 12b) with two subordinate/relative clauses (v. 12a and v. 12c), whereas v. 13 is a complement of v. 12c that explains the direct object (ἐξουσίαν) of the main verb ἔδωκεν. Although both v. 12a and 12c speak about the same persons, v. 12a is in the nominative case whereas v. 12b is in the dative. The principal clause v. 12b has got the 'Logos' as its implicit subject. Verse 13, starting with the relative pronoun ὅς, is a subordinate clause (dependent / relative clause) referring to the personal pronoun (αὐτοῦ) of v. 12c.

Starting with the relative pronoun (ὅσοι) in the nominative case (v. 12a), the main clause (v. 12b) is formed with a *'casus pendens'* construction. R.E. Brown says: "It is an example of the *casus pendens* construction where a word or a phrase is taken out of its normal place in the sentence and put first. […] However the phrase thus moved is usually the expansion of a nominative or an accusative, rarely of a dative as here. The construction is Semitic but is also found in colloquial Greek of non-Semitic origin".[322] *Casus pendens* refers to the noun phrase (v. 12a) standing outside of the principal clause construction (v. 12b) and replaced by the resumptive pronoun (αὐτοῖς) in the main clause (v. 12b). The use of *casus pendens* construction is very common in Johannine writings. It occurs in John 27 times, whereas it occurs only 21 times in all three Synoptics.

The grammatical relationship between v. 11, v. 12 and v. 13 is explained by R.A. Culpepper in the following words:

> Verse 13 corresponds (antithetically) to v. 11. It has puzzled commentators to observe that whereas v. 13 is in apposition to v. 12c, v. 12c is dative and v. 13 is nominative. The grammatical relationship between v. 12 and v. 13 cannot be denied. But it should be further observed that v. 11b is nominative. There is a thematic and grammatical correspondence between v. 11 and v. 13. Thematically both deal with 'his own'; grammatically, both are in the nominative case. Furthermore, vv. 12 and 13

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[322] R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 10.

are set in contrast to v. 11 by the adversative δέ at the beginning of v. 12. The contrast is twofold: (1) the action of 'those who received him' is opposite that of 'his own', and (2) the nature of 'those who received him' is contrasted (in v. 13) with that of 'his own'.[323]

The repetitive use of the preposition ἐκ in v. 13 attracts our attention. This preposition has been repeated four times with a clear purpose. This repetition (3 times negatively and once positively) shows that the Evangelist is putting great emphasis on the 'origin' (birth) of Jesus in v. 13. The preposition ἐκ and the adversative particle ἀλλά add more weight to the concept of origin.

Apart from all these grammatical considerations, a detailed study of the use of the tenses is also equally important in understanding this text. There are five verbs in vv. 12-13. Let us now closely examine the important role that these five verbs play in this sentence.

2. The use of Tenses

The five verbs that occur in the sentence are: ἔλαβον (v. 12a), ἔδωκεν (v. 12b), γενέσθαι (v. 12b), πιστεύουσιν (v. 12c), ἐγεννήθη (13b). Among them, ἔδωκεν is the main verb of the principal clause of the sentence (v. 12b). Let us now closely examine these verbs one by one from grammatical point of view.

ἔλαβον (v. 12a)

This verb is used in the aorist tense of the indicative mood. "The aorist aspect conveys the viewpoint of an action as terminated. In the indicative mood this aspect combined with the other elements in the context usually means that the action in question is past".[324] It refers to the act of receiving or accepting the Logos in the past.

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[323] R.A. CULPEPPER, "The Pivot of John's Prologue", 14-15.

[324] J. SWETNAM, *An Introduction to the Study of New Testament Greek*, vol. I, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Roma 1998, 110.

ἔδωκεν (v. 12b)

This is the main verb of the whole sentence (vv.12-13). The subject of this verb (the Logos) does not appear in the sentence. This verb in the aorist tense is used in connection with the aorist verb ἔλαβον. The parallelism between these two verbs (ἔλαβον and ἔδωκεν) shows that the acceptance of the Logos and the giving of the power to become the children of God are contemporaneous.

γενέσθαι (v. 12b)

It is an infinitive in the aorist tense. In Greek grammar, the aorist infinitive refers to an action in itself. Here in this sentence, it explains ἐξουσίαν, the object of the principal verb ἔδωκεν. M. Vellanickal observes that "γενέσθαι in its verbal expression, has a meaning that points towards the future, by the very fact that it means «to become»".[325]

πιστεύουσιν (v. 12c)

The use of πιστεύω is very frequent in the fourth Gospel. It occurs 98 times in the Gospel of John, whereas it is used only 11 times in Mt, 14 times in Mk and 9 times in Lk. In v. 12c, this verb is used as a present participle. As we know, the present participle signifies a continuous action, without temporal specification.[326] Faith in Jesus is not something static but dynamic. As M. Vellanickal comments:

> The act of believing is conceived as something that is going on. As we saw above, both phrases refer to those to whom the power is given to become the children of God. This repetition of the same idea with a different word and in a different tense, naturally points to a progress of signification in this element of faith. If v. 12a speaks of men as having

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[325] M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 138, note 205.

[326] Cfr. M. ZERWICK, *Biblical Greek* (Scripti Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 114), English edition adapted from the Fourth Latin edition by Joseph Smith, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome 1963, n. 371.

received the Logos at a definite time in the past, v. 12c describes them as continuing or persisting in that reception and belief.[327]

ἐγεννήθη (13b)

In our exegetical study, this verb is the most important one. So, we want to clarify the use of the aorist tense of this verb in a detailed manner. The following grammatical definition can help us understand better what this aorist tense really means:

> In grammatical terms it constitutes a limitation; thus, «as adjective *modifies* a noun» ('table' is all inclusive; 'round table' excludes all other shapes, 'round, polished table' limits still further its application, and so on). It is in this sense that the aorist bears the name ἀ- (without) ὅρος (boundary, limit), i.e. «undetermined», in so far as it implies nothing as to continuity or repetition (= imperfect) or endurance into the present (= perfect) […]; in short, if the aor. does not express duration, neither does it preclude it *as a fact* but views the action, of however long duration, as telescoped to a point. From this basic character of the aor. emerges what is variously known as the constative, complexive, or global use of the aor. in which a «punctliar» statement is made which, just because it is a-orist, has the capacity to be all-embracing, summarizing without detailing numerous instances. Perhaps to continue the geometrical image it may be said that the point here becomes the centre point of a circle which the verb itself never describes but which is revealed by the context, either expressly or by logical inference.[328]

It remarks a 'punctliar action' in the past, that is, the historical event of the birth of Jesus. Here the use of the aorist tense is a very important grammatical element to be considered. John always uses the perfect tense when he refers to Christians, but here he uses the aorist tense. It is a clear sign that he is talking about the birth of Jesus. He uses the aorist tense because the Incarnation of Christ is an historical event of the past.

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[327] M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 138.

[328] M. ZERWICK – M. GROSVENOR, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Roma 1996⁵, xii.

VII. Literary Structure of the Johannine Prologue

Analyzing the literary structure of the Prologue is very important to better understand the exegetical meaning of Jn 1:12-13. Regarding the importance of studying the structure, I. de la Potterie says: "In ogni studio studio sincronico l'analisi della struttura letteraria di un testo è di importanza capitale, perché permette di scoprire le correzioni multiple tra i diversi elementi, e di vedere meglio la funzione di ognuno di essi nell'insieme".[329] We will study the structure of the Prologue so as to find out the role of v. 13 in the Prologue and its connection with every structural unit of the Prologue. First we will present some of the important structures proposed by the scholars and then we will examine them and look for the role played by v. 13 in the Prologue and its connection with the other elements of the Prologue.

Various types of structures have been proposed by the scholars. Many of them apply the following literary criteria in determining the structure of the Prologue: Inclusion, Chiasm, Parallelism, and connections between key words, etc. In our study, we will make a survey of the most important types of structure, evaluate each structure and make note of the role played by v. 13 in the structure of the Prologue. We are not going to study all types of strcucture in an exhaustive manner, nor are we going to propose a new structure. Rather we will evaluate the two major types of structure (chiastic/concentric and spiral/staircase) and establish the role played by v. 13 in the whole structure. Thus we can understand better the meaning of v. 13 within the structure of the Prologue, as the Evangelist himself intends to communicate to his readers.

We are now going to present some important types of structure proposed by majority of the exegetes.

A. Concentric/Chiastic Sturcuture

'Chiasm' or 'Inverted Parallelism' is one of the main literary characteristics of John's Gospel (for example: Jn 6:36-40; 18:28-

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[329] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Studi di Cristologia*, 32.

19:16). This literary device is used by the Evangelist in order to emphasize, parallel or contrast theological concepts and ideas. "According to its Greek origin, the term designates a literary figure, or principle, which consists of 'a placing crosswise' of words in a sentence. The term is used in rhetoric to designate an inversion of the order of words or phrases which are repeated or subsequently referred to in the sentence".[330] The typical example of chiastic structure is as follows: A B C D … D' C' B' A'. Many scholars say that the Johannine Prologue has got a concentric/chiastic structure.[331]

1. N.W. Lund

N.W. Lund was the first among the modern scholars to observe the parallel correspondeces in the Prologue and thus proposed the following structure:[332]

A	vv. 1-2	The Logos and God in eternity
B	vv. 3-5; 9-10b	The Logos and the men of the OT
C	vv. 10c-12	Rejection and Acceptance of historical Logos
D	**v. 13**	True and false grounds of Sonship
C'	v. 14	The Incarnation of Logos in the history
B'	v. 16-17a	The Logos and the believers in the NT
A'	v. 17b-18	The Logos and God in eternity

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[330] N.W. LUND, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1942, 31.

[331] Here is a list of some authors who defend the concentric structure of the Prologue: N.W: LUND, "The Influence of Chiasmus upon the Structure of the Gospels", in *ATR* 13 (1931) 42-46; M.-É. Bosmard, *St. John's Prologue*, 79-81; P. LAMARCHE, "Le Prologue de Jean", 497-537; A. FEUILLLET, *Le Prologue*, 149-162; P. Borgen, "Observations in the Targumic Character of the Prologue of John", in *NTS* 16 (1969-70), 288-295; M. VELLANICKAL, The Divine Sonship, 132-136; C. HÉLOU, *Symbole et langage dans les écrits johanniqus. Lumière-ténèbres,* Mame, Paris 1980, 66; CH. H. GIBLIN, "Two Complementary Literary Structures", 87-103; R.A. CULPEPPER, "The pivot of John's Prologue", 1-31; J. Staley, "The Structure of John's Prologue. Its Implication for the Gospel's Narrative Structure", in *CBQ* 48 (1986) 241-264; J. van der Watt, "The Composition of the Prologue of John's Gospel. The Historical Jesus introducing Divine Grace", in *WTJ* 57 (1995) 330.

[332] Cfr. N.W. LUND, "The Influence of Chiasmus", 42-46.

In this structure, the connection between the parallel units of the Prologue is evident. We are interested in looking for the place of v. 13 in the Prologue. Seeing v. 13 at the centre of the structure, we note that the theme of divine Sonship is the core message of the Prologue. Although N.W. Lund was a pioneer in proposing such an interesting structure, this structure has some defects too. R.A. Culpepper observes two weaknesses in this structure:

> First, his analysis requires that vv. 6-8 and 15 be excluded. If they were retained the basic chiasm of the Prologue would not be destroyed. One might argue that Lund has identified the chiastic structure of the *Vorlage* or an earlier redaction, but he himself pointed out that vv. 6-8 and v. 15 are not 'haphazard' interpolations. Secondly, Lund pushed his scheme too far when he attempted to show that vv. 1-6 and 9-12 form a chiasm. The correspondence between vv. 1-2 and vv. 10b-12 is simply not apparent.[333]

2. M.-É. Boismard

A	vv. 1-2	The Word with God
B	v. 3	His role of creation
C	vv. 4-5	Gift to men
D	vv. 6-8	Witness of John Baptist
E	vv. 9-11	The coming of the Word into the World
F	*vv. 12-13*	*By the Incarnate Word we become children of God*
E'	v. 14	The Incarnation
D	v. 15	Witness of John Baptist
C'	v. 16	Gift to men
B'	v. 17	Role of recreation
A'	v. 18	The Son in the Father[334]

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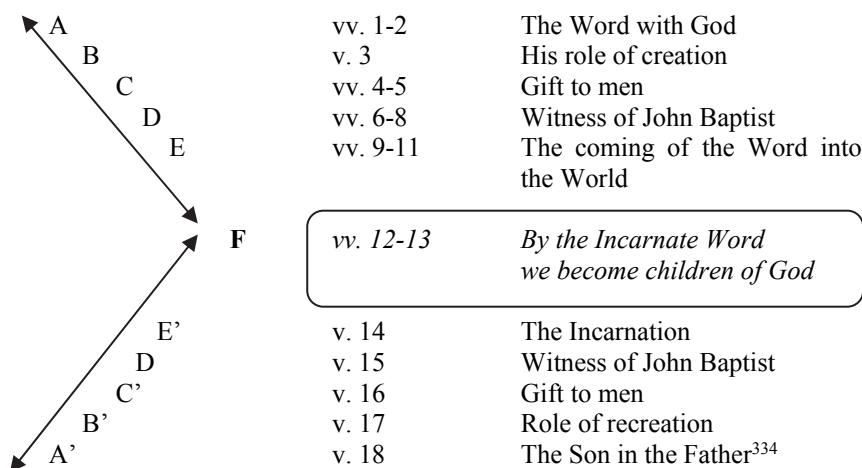
[333] R.A. CULPEPPER, "The pivot of John's Prologue", 2-3.

[334] Here we have presented the chiastic structure as has been proposed by M.-É. Boismard, but with some modifications in its design so as to highlight the place of vv. 12-13 in the structure of the Prologue. It is to be noted that we have modified the design, not the chiastic structure. Cfr. M-É. BOISMARD, *Le Prologue de St Jean,* Cerf, Paris 1953, 106-108; English translation : *St. John's Prologue,* 79-80. Cfr. R.A. CULPEPPER, "The pivot of John's Prologue", 4.

According to B.T. Viviano, "modern analysis of the structure of the Prologue may be said to begin with M.-É. Boismard's chiastic structuring of 1953".[335] It is based on the parallelism between the following sections: vv. 1-2 The concluding section v.18 (A') picks up the theme of the opening vv. 1-2 (A); v. 3 and v. 17 (B-B') have in common the theme of creation by the Word and recreation by Jesus Christ; vv. 4-5 and v. 16 (C-C') speak of the Word as source of life and light and fullness of grace; vv. 6-8 and v. 15 (D-D') present the witness of John Baptist; vv. 9-11 and v. 14 (E-E') speak of the coming of the Word into the world before and at the Incarnation; vv. 12-13 is the centre of the Prologue. R.E. Brown remains in doubt on the applicability of a chiasm pattern to the Prologue and says: "the parallels Boismard finds between vss. 3 and v. 17 and between vss. 4-5 and 16 are highly imaginative".[336] And also I. de la Potterie does not accept the theory that the Prologue has got a concentric structure.[337]

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[335] B.T. VIVIANO, "The Structure of the Prologue of John (1:1-18): A Note", in *RB* 105 (1998), 177.

[336] R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 23.

[337] The following are the objections against the theory that supports the concentric structure of the Prologue: "1) […] Questa struttura è completamente statica: il secondo ramo della parabola ripete il primo. Non vi si percepisce niente del dinamismo che anima tutto il prologo: tra l'inizio e la fine non si rivela nessun progresso; 2) È strano che la filiazione dei cristiani si trovi al centro della struttura, poiché il tema fondamentale del prologo è incontestabilmente il Cristo rivelatore; 3) Il parallelismo tra i due rami della parabola, se si esaminano i dettagli, è più apparente che reale: per esempio per le due testimonianze di Giovanni Battista (vv. 6-8 e 15), dove non si tiene conto del fatto che la prima è al passato (ἐγένετο... ἦλθεν) e la seconda al presente (μαρτυρεῖ); questo implica che v. 15 […] una attualizzazione della testimonianza storica di Giovanni Battista; 4) L'argomento più importante per tutta la struttura concentrica è la corrispondenza tra i primi due versetti e il v. 18; questo suppone che si lega qui con la Volgata *in sinu Patris*, che è una traduzione inesatta di εἰς τόν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός, giustapposta al soggetto, esprime la fede cristiana nel Figlio di Dio, tornato ormai nel seno del Padre. Ma il verbo principale all'aoristo (ἐξηγήσατο), l'ultima parola del prologo, descrive l'opera *passata* di Gesù, *al livello terrestre*; e perciò non è possibile ritrovare nel prologo una struttura concentrica" (I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Studi di Cristologia*, 34-35).

The theme of Incarnate Word making us the children of God is at the centre of the Prologue (vv. 12-13). M.-É. Boismard says: "As to verses 12 and 13, they form the centre of the Prologue, the hinge between two parts of a diptych; the Word Incarnate gives us the power to become the children of God".[338] Thus, vv. 12-13 play the main role in the structural design of the Prologue and mark the fundamental theme of becoming the children of God by the Incarnate Word.[339]

3. R.A. Culpepper

1-2	18 The Wod with God
3	17 What came through the Word
4-5	16 What was reveived from theWord
6-8	15 John announces the Word
9-10	14 The Word enters the world
11	13 The Word and his own people
12a	12c The Word is accepted
	12b The word's gift to those whoaccepted him
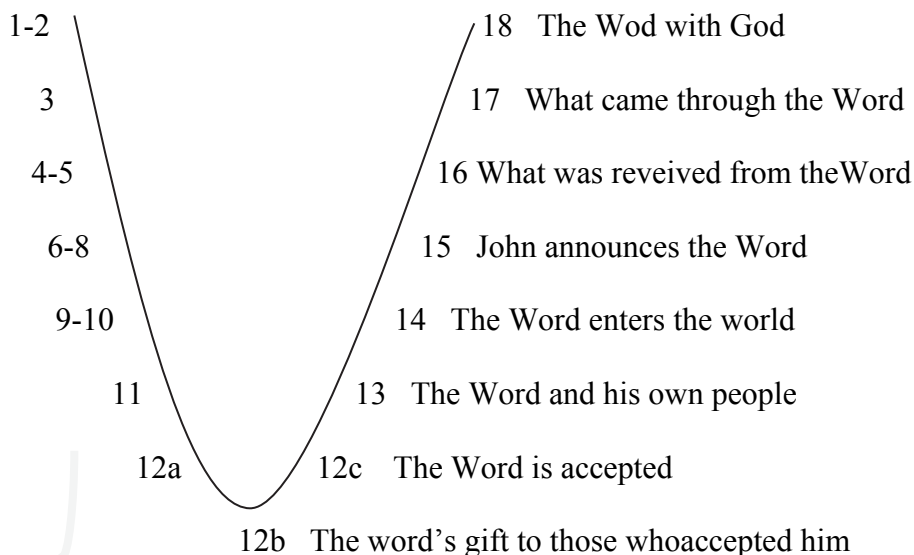
R.A. Culpepper proposes the chiastic structure with verse 12b as its centre.[340] Regarding his proposal, he himself says: "That the

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[338] M-É. BOISMARD, *St. John's Prologue*, 80.

[339] S. de Ausejo says that the whole Prologue refers to the Word-become-flesh. This idea supports us in taking a stand in favour of the singular reading of Jn 1:13. Cfr. S. DE AUSEJO, "¿Es un himno a Cristo el prólogo de San Juan?", *EstB* 15 (1956) 223-277, 381-427.

[340] The diagram has been taken from: R.A. CULPEPPER, *The Gospel and Letters of John*. Interpreting the Bible Texts, Abingdon Press, Nashville 1998, 116.

Prologue is chiastic is not a new thesis; that its centre is v. 12b is".[341]
The key phrase on which he bases his arguments to defend his thesis
is τέκνα θεοῦ. In his article, he summarizes various chiastic structures
of the Prologue and observes that "there is no agreement as to the cen-
tre of the chiasm except that it lies in the vicinity of vv. 10-13. […]
My thesis is that v. 11 is balanced by v. 13, that v. 12a is balanced by
v. 12c, and that v. 12b is the pivot on which the Prologue turns. It is
the point to which John gave the greatest emphasis".[342] He justifies the
connections between the parallels on the basis of three categories:
Language, Concepts and Content.[343] According to him, the concept of
the 'Children of God' is the fundamental theme of the whole Pro-
logue.

B. STRUCTURE IN THE FORM OF 'W'

1. P. Lamarche

The chiastic/concentric structure proposed by Lund and
Boismard is not accepted by some scholars for the reason that this
structure is too simplistic. For example, P. Lamarche accepts the chi-
astic structure of the Prologue but in a sophisticated and complex
form.[344] He notes two chiasms in the Prologue; first chiasm in the vv.
1-9 and the second chiasm in vv. 14-18, with vv. 10-13 as the centre
of these two parts. The first part (A) addressed to the nations and the
second part (A') to the Jews, make a chiasm with B (vv. 10-13). Thus,
this structure is presented in the form of a 'W'.

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[341] R.A. CULPEPPER, "The pivot of John's Prologue", 1-31.

[342] *Ibid*., 14.

[343] The diagram of the criteria used and evidence for the chiastic struc-
ture of the Prologue, see: *Ibid*., 16.

[344] Cfr. P. LAMARCHE, "Le Prologue de Jean", in *RSR* 52 (1964) 497-
535.
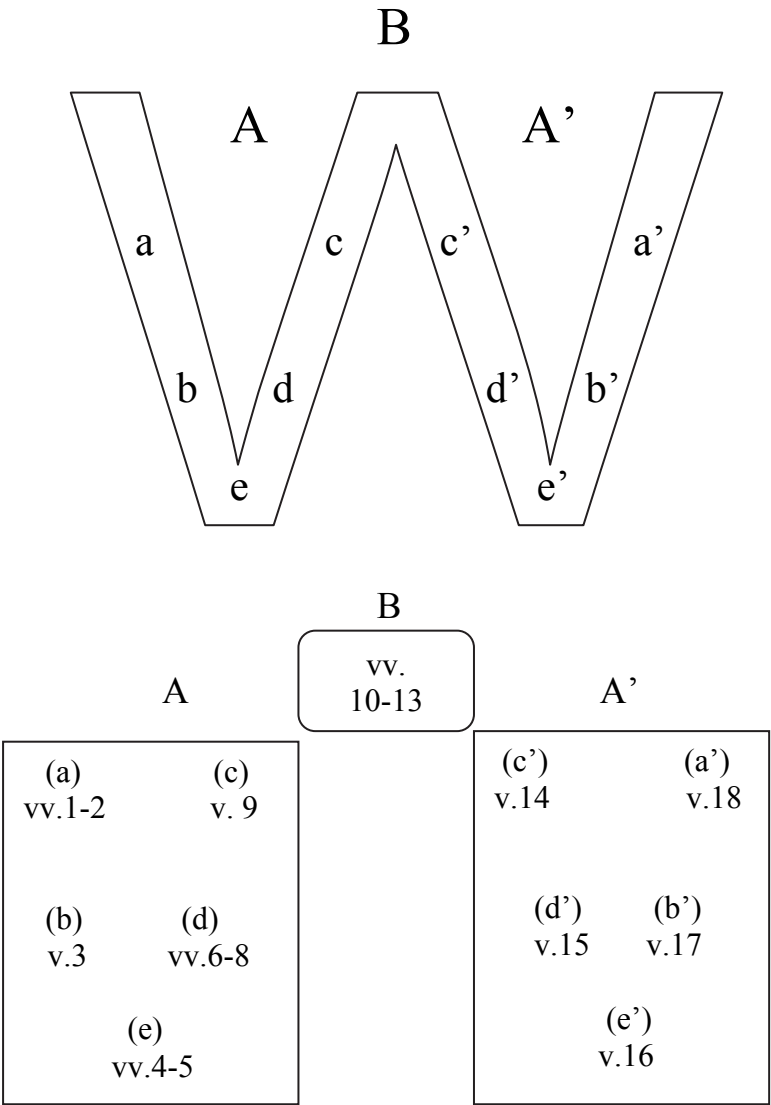
This structure assimilates much of those proposed by Lund and Boismard, except for the centre of the chiasm. R.A. Culpepper comments that "the verbal and conceptual parallels which would indicate a

chiastic structure in vv. 1-9 and 14-18 are not apparent; and Lamarche gives no detailed arguments in support of his proposal".[345]

C. SPIRAL OR STAIRCASE STRUCTURE

Many scholars do not accept the chiastic/concentric structure of the Prologue because they are of the opinion that the Johannine development of theological thought in the Prologue is *not linear* but *spiral*. For example, R. Kysar explains this spiral movement in the following words: "Far from a straightforward linear argument, the Evangelist's thought seems to move in circles (more optimistically, spirals), doubling back upon itself."[346]

R. Law observes that this spiral development of thought is also found in the first letter of John: "The word that, to my mind, might best describe St. John's mode of thinking and writing in his Epistle is 'spiral'. The course of thought does not move from point to point in a straight line. It is like a winding staircase always revolving around the same centre, always recurring to the same topics, but at a higher level. Or, to borrow a term from music, one might describe the method as contrapuntal".[347]

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[345] R.A. CULPEPPER, "The pivot of John's Prologue", 4.

[346] R. KYSAR, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel*. An examination of contemporary scholarship, Ausburg Publishing House, Minneapolis (MN) 1975, 176.

[347] R. LAW, *The Tests of Life.* A Study of the First Letter of St. John, T&T Clark, Edinburg 1909, 5.

One of the pioneers in proposing the spiral structure of the Johannine Prologue was M.-F. Lacan.[348] The tripartite spiral structure proposed by him can be represented as follows:[349]

1)	A (1-2)	B (3)	C (4-5)
2)	A' (6-8)	B' (9-11)	C' (12-14)
3)	A'' (15)	B'' (16-17)	C'' (18)

In this spiral structure, there are three different phases, each one of them having three movements. This model was further modified and developed in a sophisticated manner by other scholars such as H. Ridderbos,[350] S.A. Panimolle,[351] I. de La Potterie,[352] and G. Mlakuzhyil.[353]

1. Ignace de la Potterie

Adapting M. Lacan's spiral/parallel structure, I. de la Potterie proposes the following structure with three parallel correspondences:[354]

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[348] "Le Prologue de saint Jean. Ses thèmes, sa structure, son mouvement", in *LV* 33 (1957)   91-110.

[349] *Ibid.*, 97-100.

[350] "The Structure and Scope", 180-201.

[351] *Il dono della Legge*, 96-97;

[352] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Structure du Prologue de Saint Jean", in *NTS* 30 (1984), 358 ; IDEM, *Studi di Cristologia*, 36.

[353] *The Christocentric Literary Structure of the Fourth Gospel*, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Rome 1987, 131-132.

[354] The structure presented above has been taken from: M. ENDO, *Creation and Christology*, 194. Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Structure du Prologue", 358 ; IDEM, *Studi di Cristologia*, 36.

| I | II | III |

THE BEGINNING

| *A (vv. 1-2)* | *A (vv. 6-8)* | *A (v. 15)* |

In the beginning
was the Word.
The Word was
with God.

There was a man
sent from God

He was before me.

THE WORD SHINES PEOPLE

| *B (vv. 3-5a)* | *B (v. 9)* |

Life and Light
of people

True light enlightens
all people.

THE RESPONSE

| *C (v. 5b)* | *C (vv. 10-12)* | *C (v. 16)* |
| οὐ κατέλαβεν | οὐ παρέλαβον, ἔλαβον | ἔλαβομεν |

THE OBJECTION OF FAITH
THE FATHER'S ONLY SON

| *D (vv. 13-14)* | *D (vv. 17-18)* |

The Word became flesh.
The only Son came
from the Father.
Grace and Truth.

Jesus Christ. The
only Son was in the
bosom of the Father.
Grace, Truth, revelation

I. de la Potterie compares this style of Johannine composition of the Prologue to a spiral and an advancing wave in the sea:

> Due immagini soprattutto illustrano questo modo di comporre di Giovanni: la prima, quella di una spirale; da un livello all'altro si resta sempre nello stesso asse, ma innalzandosi del paesaggio, che di per sé rimane inalterato. L'altra immagine, quella delle onde della marea che sale, esprime la stessa realtà: ogni onda ricopre la precedente e tuttavia più lontano sulla riva.[355]

He observes that the eighteen verses develop only one unique theme but in three continuous phases like a three successive waves advancing in the sea. These three advancing movements (I, II, III) recurring to the same topics progress in a gradual and revolving manner like a spiral. The parallel thoughts that occur in the first phase are again taken up in the second phase. Similarly, the parallelism of thoughts that occurs in the second phase is taken up in the third phase. Each section is connected by parallel correspondences.[356]

2. S.A. Panimolle

The structure proposed by Panimolle is 'somewhat similar' to that of I. de la Potterie. The main difference is that Panimolle observes, not triple, but double parallel correspondences.[357]

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[355] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "L'evangelo di san Giovanni", in G. RINALDI – P. BENEDETTI (ed.), *Introduzione al Nuovo Testamento*, Morcelliana, Brescia 1971, 894.

[356] M. Endo observes a few defects in the parallel correspondences of this structure: "Since he [I. de la Potterie] attempts to find an ideal symmetric parallel correspondence, his comparison sometimes becomes partial or inconsistent: e.g. vv. 1-2 and v. 15 are comparable on the correspondence of the theme of the pre-existence, and vv. 6-8 and v. 15 are comparable on the basis of reference to the witness o John the Baptist, while the relationship between vv. 1-2 and vv. 6-8 on the terminological correspondence (πρὸς τὸν θεόν; παρὰ θεοῦ) seems partial; the semantic correspondence between λαμβάνω (1:5) and καταλαμβάνω (1:16) is ambiguous; and the division after v. 14 is rather artificial" (M. ENDO, *Creation and Christology*, 194).

[357] For more detailed explanation of this structure, Cfr. S.A. PANIMOLLE, *Il dono della legge*, 91-95.

"I parte (vv. 1-5): Il Verbo e la sua opera rivelatrice:
      A) (vv. 1s): il Logos nella sua vita divina prima della creazione;
      B) (v.3): La mediazione del Verbo nella creazione;
      C) (vv.4s): L'azione rivelatrice del Logos fonte di vita e luce.

II parte (vv. 6-14) La incarnazione del Verbo Rivelatore:
      AI) (vv.6-8: La testimonianza di Giovanni Battista alla Luce;
      C') (vv.9ss): La rivelazione cosmica e storica della Luce;
      D) (vv. 12s): Il dono riservato a chi accoglie la Rivelazione del Logos;
      A') (v.14): La incarnazione del Verbo Rivelatore.

III parte (vv.15-18): Il dono della Rivelazione escatologica totale:
      AI') (v.15): La testimonianza di Giovanni Battista al Logos
                          Incarnato;
      D') (v.16): La nuova "grazia" (*charis*) del Verbo Rivelatore;
      B') (v.17): La mediazione di Gesù nella Rivelazione escato
                          logica;
      A'') (v.18): Gesù l'unico Rivelatore perfetto, perché
                   Unigenito di Dio".[358]

The graphical diagram of the spiral structure is presented as fol-lows:[359]

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[358] S.A. PANIMOLLE, *Il dono della Legge*, 96.

[359] *Ibid.*, 97.
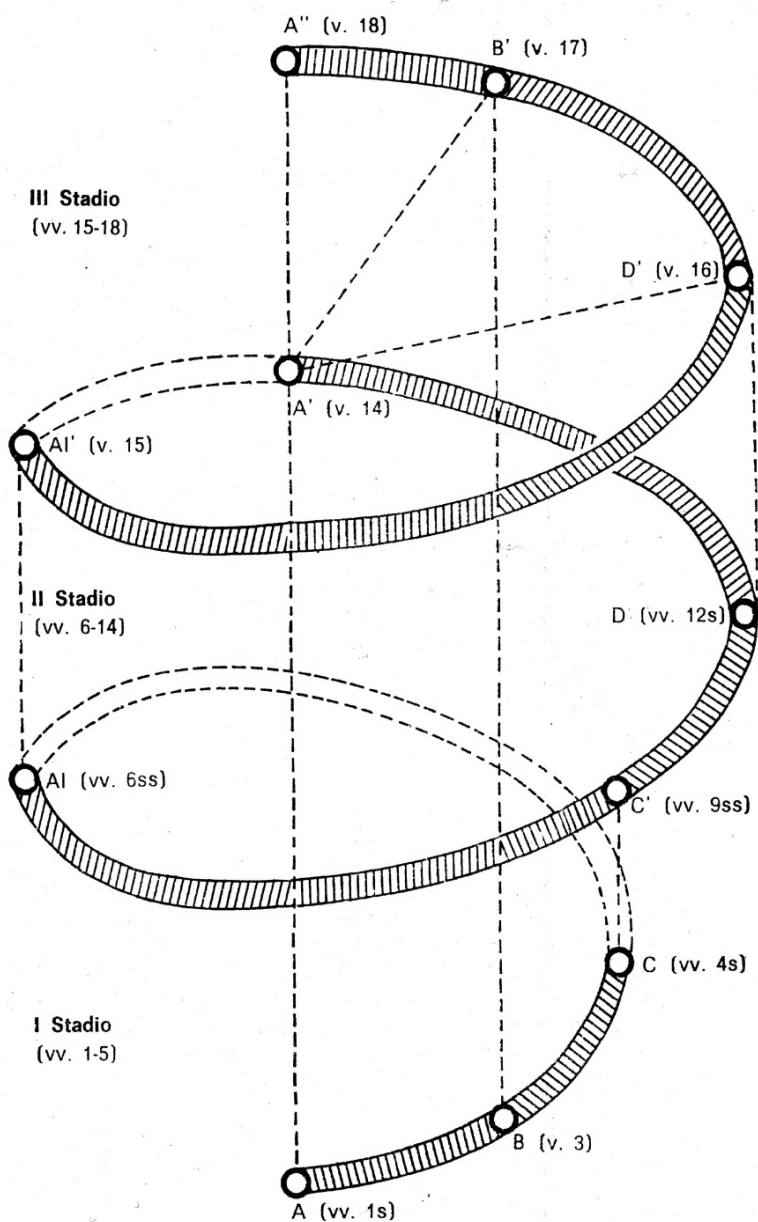
S.A. Panimolle says that the spiral structure proposed by him seems like a *synthesis* of all the valid elements that other structures contain: elements such as chiasm, parabolic parallelism, wave-like

movement, double return to the beginning, the tension between the final verses and elaboration of the initial themes.[360]

3. G. Mlakuzhyil

G. Mlakuzhyil proposes a spiral structure of Prologue as given below:

a*   **(1,1-5): The Divine, Creative, Revelatory Word**
a   (1-2):   The divine Word with God
   b   (3ab): The mediation of the divine Word in creation
        c   (3c-5):   The life-giving, revelatory Word opposed
   b*   ***(1,6-8):The Baptist's Mission of Testimony to the Revelatory Word***
        c*   **(1,9-14): The Revelatory, Regenerative, Incarnate Word**
        c'   (9-11): The revelatory Word rejected
             d   (12-13): The mediation of the revelatory Word in regeneration
                e   (14) : The incarnate, revelatory Word contemplated
   b**   ***(1,15): The Baptist's Testimony to the Divine, Incarnate Word***
        c**   **(1,16-18): The Incarnate, Revelatory, Divine Word**
             e'   (16): The incarnate, revelatory Word participated
                f   (17):   The mediation of Jesus Christ in revelation
                   g   (18): The only divine revealer of God.[361]

In this structure, the theological thoughts revolve around in a progressive direction. This progression of thought and revolving parallel movements is made evident by the key words. The subunit c (vv. 3c-5: the life-giving, revelatory Word opposed) is taken up by c' (vv. 9-11: the revelatory Word rejected).

There is a parallelism of thought between these two units and also there is a dynamic progression between c and c'. The key words that connect these two waves of progressive thought are: φῶς (vv. 4,5,9); ἄνθρωπος (vv. 4,9), οὐ κατέλαβεν (v. 5); οὐ παρέλαβον (v. 11). In the same way, the subunit e (v. 14: the incarnate, revelatory Word contemplated) is taken up by e' (v. 16: the incarnate revelatory Word participated). Here too there is parallelism and also dynamic progression between e and e'. The two statements about John the Baptist

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[360] S.A. PANIMOLLE, *Il dono della Legge*, 95.

[361] G. MLAKUZHYIL, *The Christocentric Literary Structure of the Fourth Gospel*, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome 1987, 132.

(b and b') introduce the two key sections (c and c'). Both the parallel movements and the progression of thoughts make the spiral structure of the Prologue very evident.

D. ASSESSMENT

Having seen different structures proposed by various scholars, we can divide them into two main categories: 1) Chiastic/Concentric Structure [Boismard *et al.*]; 2) Wave or descending/Incarnational structure [I. de la Potterie *et al.*]. The first category of scholars base their arguments on the parallel connection between different sections of the Prologue, whereas the second category base their arguments on the wave theory. Can we decide which structure is more convincing? According to B.T. Viviano, both are mutually complementary to each other.[362] He reconciles both of them by means of reconsidering the prehistory of the text of the Prologue and its relation to the rest of the fourth Gospel. He says: "These two competing proposals may be compared to the two theories of light in physics, particles, and waves. Each proposal explains some of the data better than the other. So here in the Johannine Prologue, the chiastic structure of Boismard and the wave structure of de la Potterie, each explains some of the dynamics within the text better than the alternative".[363] We too agree with B.T. Viviano that both the structures are complementary to each other.

As the result of our structural analysis, we want to make the following remarks:

1) Verse 13 has got an important role to play within the structure of the Prologue (either concentric or spiral).

2) In the chiastic structure vv. 12-13 form the centre of the Prologue. The exegetes who support the chiastic structure consider vv. 12-13 as the pivot of the Prologue. Thus, the section vv. 12-13 is considered as "the hinge between two parts of a diptych".

3) The dynamics of Prologue's concentric structure point to the Incarnation of Jesus. The descent-ascent movement of the Logos

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[362] Cfr. B.T. VIVIANO, "The Structure", 176-184.

[363] *Ibid.*, 179.

proposed in the chiastic structure is confirmed by other texts such as Jn 1:51; 3:13; 6:62 and 20:17.

4) In the spiral/wave structure too, the section formed by vv. 12-14 is the culmination of the second wave. Thus, the theme of Incarnation is the axis on which the whole Prologue gradually develops its theological concepts in a spiral movement like a wave.

5) The structural analysis makes it evident that the section formed by vv. 12-13 makes sense only if the verb ἐγεννήθη is read in the singular. Its lexical and theological link with other elements of the Prologue confirms this fact. Thus, the fundamental theme of this section of the Prologue (vv. 12-13) is the Incarnation of Jesus and not the spiritual birth of believers.

VIII. Exegetical Meaning

Having finished the source, grammatical, and structural analysis, we are now going to consider the exegetical meaning of the text. Taking into account all that we observed in these various analyses, we will interpret v. 13 in connection with its immediate context (vv. 11-14). This is because v. 13 cannot be understood if we remove it from its context or disconnect it from the other units of the pericope (vv. 11-14). When we established the delimitation of the text, we demonstrated that these four verses (vv. 11-14) form a single unit, as they are closely linked with each other from a grammatical and lexical point of view. So, we will begin our exegetical analysis with v. 11 and end with v. 14. But verse 13 being the main object of our study, we will dedicate more time and more pages to this verse.

In doing our exegetical analysis, we will try to get into the semantic field of Johannine vocabulary of this pericope. We will try to bring out the general meaning of all the important lexemes and their meaning. We will analyze this pericope (vv. 11-14) verse by verse in its immediate and proximate contexts.

A. VERSE 11:

εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον.

This verse opens the pericope that we showed earlier to be the immediate context of Jn 1:13. It consists of two clauses united by the conjunction καί. John speaks about the coming of Jesus to his own people and his non-acceptance on the part of these people.

The expression εἰς τὰ ἴδια is neuter, whereas οἱ ἴδιοι is masculine, though they both refer to the same people.[364] Commenting on this difference of gender between these two expressions, R.E. Brown says: "Those who think that this hymn was originally in Aramaic point out that *dîlēh* («his own» – without differentiation of gender) would have been found in both 11a and 11b. They are hard put to explain why the Greek translator chose two different genders to express it. The reference is clearly to the people of Israel; according to Exod xix 5, Yahweh said to Israel: «You shall be *my own possession* among all the peoples»".[365] Though the reference to the people of Israel is evident, some exegetes like R. Bultmann see a cosmological sense in this verse. According to R. Bultmann, "Τὰ ἴδια … refers to the world of men, which belongs to the Logos as its creator, and the ἴδιοι equally are men. Thus the same idea, which was expressed in v. 10 by ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, is here contained in the notion of ἴδιον".[366]

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[364] For a more detailed lexical meaning of these terms, cfr. V. PASQUETTO, *Incarnazione e Comunione con Dio,* Teresianum, Roma 1982, 166-168.

[365] R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 10.

[366] R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John*, 56. It is interesting to see how R. Bultmann justifies his interpretation, by connecting it to a number of texts that are related to this expression, especially with reference to Wisdom literature: "τὰ ἴδια cannot here mean 'home, homeland' as in 16:32; 19:27 Acts 21:6 […], but only «property, possession». […] The ἴδιοι are 'his own', who belong to him as their creator, as in Od. Sal. 7.12. This also provides us with a basis for understanding the dualistic Gnostic sense of the concept, according to which ἴδιον means that which shares in a common nature; cp. on the one hand 8:44; 15:19; on the other hand 10:3f.; 13:1 and on this C. Herm. 1.31; Iren. I, 21,5; Hipp. El. V 6, 7; 8.12.17; 19, 16; 21, 8 p. 78, 18; 91, 11; 19, 13; 120, 4; 124, 7; Act. Thom. 124 p. 233, 14; Od. Sal. 26, 1 (דילה), Mand. Lit. 114, 4f. – It is im-

Most of the commentators such as H. van den Bussche,[367] R.E. Brown,[368] and E. Ghezzi,[369] interpret this verse in connection with the people of Israel. Whatever be the reference, what is most important to our study is that this verse talks about the Incarnation of Jesus. It will be elaborately described in vv. 12-13 and solemnly announced in v. 14.

The reference to the Incarnation can be understood by the lexical and structural connection between the following two verbs: ἦλθεν of v. 11a and ἐρχόμενον of v. 9b. It is to be noted that the same aorist verb used to mention the historical event of the coming of John the Baptist in v. 7 is used here in v. 11a in order to speak about the historical coming of Jesus. The same idea is finally expressed in v. 14.

When the Evangelist speaks about Jesus being rejected by his own people, he uses the verb παραλαμβάνειν.[370] This verb is a synonym of

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possible in the Prologue, which treats of the ἄνθρωποι and the κόσμος, to take τὰ ἴδια (or οἱ ἴδιοι) to mean Israel or the Jewish people, which is, according to Ex. 19:5; Dt. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135;4 God's 'own people,' or a people as God's 'possession' (סְגֻלָּה or עַם סְגֻלָּה = LXX λαὸς περιούσιος not ἴδιος). For even if Merx is mistaken in supposing John to be the most anti-Jewish book in the world, he is right when he says: 'The sentence, he came into his own … may mean what it will; but one thing it cannot mean, namely: he came to the Jews …' (p. 5). There is however a parallel in the Wisdom myth, where peoples and nations as well as earth and sea are seen as the possession of Wisdom (Eccles. 24.6), just as in the Wisdom myth there is a parallel to the οὐ παρέλαβον (Prov. 1:24-31; Bar. 3:12f; Eth. Enoch 42:1f.; cfr. Eucharist. II 6-11). Wik. and Schlier have interpreted τὰ ἴδια and οἱ ἴδιοι should probably be traced back to the translator; Aram. (or Syr.) would in both cases have had דיליה; cf. Od Sal. 7.12; 26.1" (R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John*, 56, note 1).

[367] Cfr. H. VAN DEN BUSSCHE, *Giovanni*, Cittadella, Assisi 1974, 102-103.

[368] Cfr. R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 10.

[369] E. Ghezzi says: "Il v. 11 è certamente da intendere riferito quasi esclusivamente al popolo di Israele '*eis tà ídia élthen*' per la sua relazione con Jahvè divenuto '*suo bene particolare*' sua '*eredità*' [cf. Es. 19,5; Sal. 135,4; Dt. 7,6; Is 19,25]" (E. GHEZZI, *Come abbiamo ascoltato*, 134).

[370] It is to be noted that John uses the verb καταλαμβάνω in v. 5 to speak about the same idea: "καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν." Here we note a thematic parallelism between v. 5 and v. 11.

'to receive somebody as one's own'. This meaning becomes clear when we refer to the use of this verb in Mt 4:5,8; Mk 5:40; Lk 9:28 and Acts 15:39. It is interesting to note that the Evangelist uses this verb in Jn 14:3 when he speaks about Jesus coming back to his disciples to take them as his own (παραλήμψομαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς ἐμαυτόν). Here Jesus talks about a close relationship of communion with his disciples. The same verb is used when the Evangelist talks about the Jews receiving Jesus to crucify him (cfr. Jn 19:16). Taking into consideration the use of this verb in these two passages, V. Pasquetto proposes a new translation of v. 11:

> Se si tengono nel debito conto queste precisazioni, sembra che il «οὐ παρέλαβον» di 1, 11b non debba essere letto come una semplice «non-accoglienza» di fede. Più che di «non-accoglienza», si tratterebbe, stando soprattutto all'impiego di «παραλαμβάνειν» in 14, 3 e in 19, 16, di «rifiuto» ad avere legami spirituali con Cristo. L'intero v. 11 sarebbe dunque da parafrasare: «(Gesù) venne tra il suo popolo (come Messia e Verbo Incarnato, per stabilire con lui un'intima comunione di vita); però rifiutò (categoricamente) questo genere di «appartenenza».[371]

B. VERSE 12

ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

We have divided this verse into three small units for our convenience. We will carry out the exegetical analysis of this verse according to this division.

a) ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν [v. 12a]

Having talked about the rejection of Jesus in v. 11b, now the Evangelist speaks about the contrasting fact that Jesus is accepted by some. This dialectical procedure is typically Johannine.[372]

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[371] V. PASQUETTO, *Incarnazione e Comunione con Dio*, 168.

[372] During the public ministry of Jesus, his hearers did not believe in him in spite of the great signs. After mentioning this rejection (Jn 12:37-41), the Evangelist writes: "Nonetheless, even among the rulers there were many who

Verse 12a is thematically connected with v. 12c and they mutually explain each other, although the former is in the nominative and the latter in the dative. "This relative clause which qualifies the indirect object of the main clause (αὐτοῖς) has been placed first in the sentence, this being a not uncommon rhetorical device which is by no means specifically Semitic".[373]

The verb λαμβάνω has the following etymological meaning: to grasp, to seize, to take hold of, to take, to attain, to receive. This verb is used 260 times in the New Testament. John uses it 46 times. The active meaning of λαμβάνω is to take or to grasp; the receptive meaning is to accept or to receive. A. Kretzer says: "The variety of NT attestations of λαμβάνω are the indications of the vb.'s breadth of meaning. They are, concentrated with a significant theological emphasis: The meaning *accept, receive* «is predominant, esp. in theologically significant verses». From this it is apparent «how strongly the NT views the relation of man to God as that of recipient and Giver…»".[374]

To receive Him means to 'receive his testimony'. The same verb is used when Jesus speaks to Nicodemus: "ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι ὅτι ὃ οἴδαμεν λαλοῦμεν καὶ ὃ ἑωράκαμεν μαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν οὐ λαμβάνετε" (Jn 3:11). To receive Him means to receive the words of Christ (cfr. Jn 12:48-49). 'Receiving Christ' or 'Accepting Christ' is thus an important theme in the Gospel of John.

   b) ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι [v. 12b]

To those who welcomed the Word in faith, He gave power (authority) to become God's children. This implies a concept of adoption. The verb is considered by the exegetes an equivalent to the Hebrew verb נתן in Semitic language, rendering the meaning : 'to give' or 'to give permission' (cfr. Rev 2:7; 3:21). Regarding the Johannine use of the verb δίδωμι, S. Grasso says:

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believed in him" (Jn 12:42). The same movement of thought can also be found in Jn 3:32ff. See also Jn 3:18ff; 3:35ff; 5:29; 6:36ff; 6:64ff; 8:23ff; 9:39; 10:13ff; 10:26f; 12:44ff; 15:18ff: 17:6; 17:14ff.

[373] R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John*, 57, note 1.

[374] A. KRETZER, "λαμβάνω", in *EDNT*, vol. II, 337-338.

Il verbo *didōmi* non vuol dire semplicemente «dare» , ma nel linguaggio giovanneo indica l'offerta della salvezza. Il verbo «dare» ha come soggetto Mosè (*Gv* 1, 17; 6, 32; 7, 19.22), Giacobbe (*Gv* 4, 5.12), spesso Gesù che dà il pane (*Gv* 6, 27.33.34.51.52; 21, 13), l'acqua viva (*Gv* 4, 14.15), la vita eterna (*Gv* 10, 28; 17, 2), il comandamento nuovo (*Gv* 13, 34), la pace (*Gv* 14, 27), la Parola (*Gv* 17,13). Tuttavia soggetto più sovente del verbo è Dio che dà il Figlio unico (*Gv* 5,27), il pane del cielo (*Gv* 10, 29), ciò che Gesù domanda (*Gv* 11, 22), ciò che i discepoli richiedono (*Gv* 15, 16; 16, 23), il potere (*Gv* 19, 11). L'uso più frequente del verbo è quando esso ha come soggetto Dio e come destinatario Gesù (*Gv* 3, 27.35; 5, 22.26.27; 6, 37.39.65; 12, 49; 18, 9; 13, 3; 5, 36; 17, 4; 17, 2.6.7.8.9.11.12.22.24).[375]

With regard to this point, C.K. Barrett comments: "Men are not by nature the children of God, as for example by virtue of an indwelling σπερματικὸς λόγος. Only by receiving Christ do they gain the right to *become* children of God. ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι is on the whole accurately used by John (1:12; 5:27; 17:2; 19:10f.), and means «authority», «right». δύναμις does not occur in John".[376] He makes a clear distinction between right (authority) and power. According to him, ἐξουσία is very close to 'right' or 'authority', rather than 'power'.

This authority (or power) is given to the believers insofar as they accept Christ. With this authority, every member of the Church participates in the divine sonship of Jesus Christ. The Johannine use of the word ἐξουσία and its meaning is explained by W. Foester as follows:

In the varied use of ἐξουσία for the authority imparted to the community the outstanding characteristic is that the Church owes its existence and nature to Christ. It needs "anablement" even to enter the Kingdom of God: ἔ δωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσί αν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέ σθαι (Jn. 1:12). The same thought is figuratively expressed in Rev. 22:14: Μακάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς, and negatively in Hb. 13:10: ἔχομεν θυσιαστήριον ἐξ οὗ φαγεῖν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες.[377]

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[375] S. GRASSO, *Il Vangelo di Giovanni*, 52.

[376] C.K. BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 136.

[377] W. FOESTER, "ἐξουσία", in *TDNT*, vol. II, 569.

John makes a clear distinction in using the terms 'τέκνα θεοῦ' (children of God) and 'υἱοι θεοῦ' (sons of God). John always calls believers 'τέ κνα θεοῦ', whereas Paul calls them 'υἱοι θεοῦ' (cf. Gal 3:26). J.H. Bernard says that when Paul uses the title 'sons of God' for believers, he "employs the notion of *adoption*, as recognized by Roman law, to bring out the relation of God to the faithful".[378] John reserves the word 'υἱος' (Son) for Jesus alone.

According to John, Divine Sonship is God's gift (cfr. 1 Jn 3:1). Regarding the original concept of son ship, J.H. Bernard writes: "The conception of the faithful as «children of God» has its roots deep in the Jewish thought. Israel conceived of herself as in covenant with Yahweh (see on 3:29), and the prophets speak of her as Yahweh's wife (Hos 1:2). «Thy sons whom thou hast borne to me» are words ascribed to Yahweh when addressing the notion (Ezek 16:20). Thus the Jews were accustomed to think of themselves as peculiarly the children of God".[379]

The verb γίνομαι appears 667 times in the New Testament. It is used in all the books of the New Testament, except Jude. It means in the literal sense *become, come into existence, originate.* It may also mean: *happen, become, attain to, arrive at* (something). It is sometimes used as a substitute for εἰμί (cfr. Mt 10:16; 13:22; Mk 4:19 etc.).

In the Johannine writings, this verb occurs a total of 54 times. In the Prologue, it has a theological meaning.[380] It has a dynamic value (with the meaning 'to become') and implies that divine sonship is a call for a continuous journey of faith involving a dynamic evolution. It means that we do not become children of God in an instant; rather, there is a long journey of faith. M. Vellanickal explains this point in the following words:

> While Jn makes use of the aorist indicative to signify the bodily becoming of Christ (1:14) and also the bodily change that takes place in the paralytic (5:4,9), he never makes use of it to signify the moral or spiritual change that takes place in man. When speaking of a moral and

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[378] Cfr. J.H. BERNARD, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 16.

[379] *Ibid*.

[380] Cfr. W. HACKENBERG, "γίνομαι", in *EDNT*, vol. II, 247.

spiritual change in men, Jn makes use of γίνομαι in the aorist infinitive
or conjunctive, which is a form often similar to future indicative. This
seems to show that Jn considers the spiritual change in men, not as
something static that takes place once for all at a definite moment in his-
tory, but as something that gradually takes place, and remains dynamic
moving towards a final perfection.[381]

Apart from Jn 1:12, the Johannine theme of becoming children of
God can be found in the following texts too: 1Jn 3:1-2,10; 5:2.
R. Bultmann sees an eschatological sense in the expression τέκνα θεοῦ
γενέσθαι:

> The notion that men are related to God as his children develops into an
> "eschatological" concept, both in Judaism and in the Mystery religions:
> man becomes God's child (or son) only when he has been transferred
> into a new existence, whether it be at the end of the present aeon, when
> God renews the world, or whether it occurs in the present, when a man
> is made the son of God by initiation into the Mysteries, and thus is "be-
> gotten" anew or "born" anew. It is clear that in John τέκνα θεοῦ
> γενέσθαι is intended in such an "eschatological" sense. Moreover the
> fact that this notion is derived from the Mystery religions, and not from
> Jewish eschatology is shown clearly by ἄνωθεν γεννηθῆναι 3:3ff. It is
> equally clear that the transference into this new mode of existence is
> given only to the man who believes in the revelation with which he is
> confronted in Jesus; further that the new existence is characterized by
> the illumination which comes from understanding oneself in relation to
> God: the τέκνα θεοῦ are the υἱοὶ τοῦ φωτός (12:36).[382]

Referring to the lordship of the Logos as the creator, vv. 12-13 are in-
terpreted in an eschatological sense. The word τέκνα θεοῦ does not oc-
cur in the Old Testament but the concept was well established.[383] This
concept of sonship is used in three different contexts of relationship to
God: divine beings, kings, and Israel.[384] "The reference to divine be-
ings (Gen 6:2,4; Deut. 32:8; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38.7; Pss. 29:1; 89:6; 82:6)
are not directly relevant. It is sufficient to note that the phrase denotes

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[381] M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 140.

[382] R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John*, 58-59.

[383] Cfr. R.A. CULPEPPER, "The Pivot of John's Gospel", 18-19.

[384] Cfr. *Ibid.*

divine beings […]. Secondly, three references speak of the King of Is-
rael as God's son (II Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7; 89:26f.; cf. also Ps. 110:3).
[…] Finally, occasional passages also speak of Israel, or the Israelites,
as God's son(s). Exod. 4:22 and Deut. 14:1 are the most familiar of
these passages".[385]

     In the Old Testament, this filial relationship of Israel with God
can be understood from the following expressions:

Exod 4.22:   υἱός πρωτότοκος μου [LXX]
               בְּנִי בְכֹרִי [MT].

Deut 14.1:   υἱοὶ κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ [LXX]
               בָּנִים לַיהוָה [MT]

Isa 43.6:   υἱοί μου [LXX]
               בָנַי [MT].

The relationship that the people of Israel had with God has to be un-
derstood in an eschatological sense (cf. Hos 1:9; Isa 43:6-7). As
M. Endo observes: "The promise to be τέκνα θεοῦ in John 1:12 can al-
so be understood in line with the eschatological expectation for the
restoration of God's people. The phrase 'he gave power to become
children' (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν) indicates that it was revealed as
'eschatological gift' to the people".[386]

    It is important to note the right to become τέκνα θεοῦ is given
through the faith in the name of ὁ λόγος. It is much more important to
understand that believers become children of God through faith in the
one who himself was the born of God (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη [v. 13]). So,
the gift of becoming τέκνα θεοῦ is a participation in the divine sonship
of Jesus. Thus, a clear understanding of the meaning of v. 12 is essen-
tial for the exegetical interpretation of v. 13.

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[385] *Ibid.*, 18.

[386] M. ENDO, *Creation and Christology*, 222.

c) τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ [v. 12c]

Verse 12c and v. 12a are mutually related. To receive Christ is to believe in his name. The verb πιστεύω occurs 98 in the Gospel of John and 9 times in 1 Jn. But the noun πίστις is never used in the Gospel. And it occurs only once in 1 Jn 5.4. This verb is extremely important for understanding the theology of John.[387]

The construction (πιστεύειν with εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ) is typically and exclusively Johannine. We see this expression in Jn 2:23; 3:18; 1 Jn 3:23; 5:13. In the Gospel of John, the verb πιστεύειν is very frequently used with the preposition εἰς followed by an accusative.[388] In all these occurrences, the Evangelist presents the act of faith as a result of our belief in the person of Christ and in his name.

The noun ὄνομα is used many times in the Gospel of John; it either refers to God[389] or to Jesus[390]. The dynamic aspect of faith becomes more evident, referring to the following Johannine texts (Jn 6:35; 7:37-38). The expression ἔρχομαι πρὸς ἐμέ puts this dynamic aspect of our faith in evidence.[391]

In the Old Testament, the 'Name' of Yahweh is frequently used to refer to the person of God when He manifests Himself to various persons (cfR. 2 Sam 7:13; Isa 18:7). J.H. Bernard is of the opinion that this usage of ὄνομα in the NT is an Aramaism.[392] W.J. Dumbrell interprets it in the light of Exod 33-34 and argues that there is a link be-

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[387] For further details about the various use of this verb in the Gospel of John and its theological meanings, cfr. G. BARTH, "πιστεύω", in *EDNT*, vol. III, 91-97.

[388] This verb (with εἰς followed by an accusative) occurs 36 times in the fourth Gospel: Jn 2:11,23; 3:16,18(bis),36; 4:39; 6:35,40; 7:31,38,39,48; 8:30; 9:35,36; 10:42; 11:25,26,45,48; 12:11,36,37,42,44(bis),46; 14:1(bis),12; 16:9; 17:20; 20:31.

[389] Cfr. Jn 5:43; 10:25; 12:13,28; 17:6,11,12,26.

[390] Cfr. Jn 14:13,14,26; 15:16,21; 16:23,24,26; 20:31.

[391] Cfr. S. GRASSO, *Il Vangelo di Giovanni*, 53.

[392] Cfr. J.H. BERNARD, *The Gospel According to John*, 17.

tween the Sinai event and the theological content of v. 12.[393] He says
that the glory revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai is reflected in the
glory revealed in Jn 1:14. He justifies his interpretation by making
reference to Exod 3:14; 33:18. The 'name' mentioned in v. 12c, is a
reflection of the 'name' revealed to Moses:

<div dir="rtl">(Exod 3:14) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה</div>

Hence, the key word 'glory' found in Exod 33:18 and Jn 1:14 is an in-
dication of this allusion. On Sinai Yahweh gives the 'gift of Law' and
in the Prologue we see that God gives believers the 'gift of sonship'.
John himself makes reference to Moses in the Prologue: "ὅτι ὁ νόμος
διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
ἐγένετο" (Jn 1:17).

    R.E. Brown distinguishes the expression 'to believe in his name'
from 'to believe in Jesus' and notes a subtle nuance: "The former ex-
pression brings out clearly that to believe in Jesus one must believe
that he bears the divine name, given to him by God (xvii 11-12)".[394]

    To believe in His name points to an acceptance of Jesus as the Son
of God. Verse 12c speaks about this faith which should be the life
principle of everyone who accepts Jesus. This idea goes well with the
following verse 13 read in the singular, because it explains the αὐτοῦ
of v. 12c, who is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Those who accept Je-
sus are called to live a life of faith based on the name of Jesus.

C. Verse 13

        ὅς οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός
        οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη.

    In our exegetical analysis, this is the verse on which we want
to focus our careful attention, because it is in this verse that we find
the most difficult negation οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων and the singular verb

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[393] Cfr. W.J. DUMBRELL, "Law and Grace. The Nature of the Contrast in
John 1:17", in *EvQ* 58 (1986) 25-37.

[394] R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 11.

ἐγεννήθη that speaks of the Incarnation of Christ. As we have already noted, v. 13 is not an independent sentence; rather it is a subordinate clause connected with v. 13 by the relative pronoun ὅς. In connection with its antecedent in v. 12c, it refers to the Logos. In other words, it points to the virgin birth of Jesus. To facilitate our exegetical analysis, we want to divide this verse into two units as follows: a) ὅς οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων … θελήματος ἀνδρός; b) ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη. We will examine these two units one by one and bring out their exegetical meanings.

a) ὅς οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός
      οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός [v. 13a]

Verse 13a begins with the relative pronoun ὅς. Since the verb at the end of the phrase (ἐγεννήθη) is in the singular, the initial relative pronoun is also in the singular form. In connection with its antecedent αὐτοῦ of v. 12c, it refers to the Logos. The relative pronoun is separated from the antecedent as in Col. 1:13,15,18. In order to underline the truth that Jesus was born from above, this divine act is contrasted with man's origins of the natural law, by means of three strong negations.

1. The Exegetical Meaning of οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων

The phrase οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων is the first of the three negations. It has been interpreted with several meanings. The word for blood is in the plural form here. The word 'bloods' is very unusual from linguistic point of view. There is no common agreement among the scholars with regard to the exact meaning of this phrase, because the unexpected and strange expression αἱμάτων in the plural form has led to varieties of interpretations. A number of interpretations have been proposed for this unusual form of word. We will present and analyze them in the following sections.

The ancient non-Christian Greek literature never uses the plural form in reference to anybody's origin.[395] The plural is always used

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[395] The only exception is: EURIPIDES, *Ion*, 63.

to speak of bloodshed in a collective sense in reference to a group of persons.

In the Old Testament, the plural דָּמִים is used to indicate either the violent bloodshed of a group of persons or the menstrual blood of women. In both the cases, the Septuagint (LXX) renders this word in the singular form.

Lv 12:5:   MT: עַל־דְּמֵי טָהֳרָה
                LXX: ἐν αἵματι ἀκαθάρτῳ αὐτῆς

Lv 12:7:   MT: וְטָהֲרָה מִמְּקֹר דָּמֶיהָ
                LXX: ἀθαριεῖ αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς

Ez 16:9   MT: וָאֶשְׁטֹף דָּמַיִךְ מֵעָלָיִךְ
                LXX: ἀπέπλυνα τὸ αἷμά σου ἀπὸ σοῦ

Having seen the meaning of the word "blood" in the context of the ritual purification of the OT, we also want to refer to the Apocryphal writings of the OT, especially 1 Enoch 15:4. This text has to be read in connection with Gen 6:1-5. We quote here the Apocryphal text:

> Perchè avete lasciato il cielo eccelso e santo in eterno e vi siete corciati con le figlie degli uomini ed avete commesso impurità, vi siete prese mogli, avete agito come i figli della terra ed avete generato gigantic? E voi, per davvero (esseri) spirituali, santi e viventi la vita eterna, avete commesso impurità sulle donne, (le) avete fatto come fanno loro, (che sono) angue e carne, che sono mortali e distruttibili. E perciò io detti loro le donne: affinchè seminino su di esse e da esse, così come si fa sulla terra, nascano figli (1 Enoch 15:3-5).[396]

In this apocryphic text, the blood of women is mentioned in the context of child birth. Here we can also note that the blood of women is connected with 'impurity'.

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[396] P. SACCHI (ed.), *Apocrifi dell'Antico Testamento* (Classici delle Religioni: La religione Ebraica), Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, Torino 1981, 488.

In Jn 1:13, the word 'bloods' is not used in the context of a violent death, but of a birth (ἐγεννήθη). What is the exact meaning of this expression οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων in the context of the Incarnation of Christ? The meaning of this first negation in Jn 1:13 is not as simple as one might think. It is considered to be the most difficult part of v. 13.

Even the Church Fathers seem to have found it difficult to interpret this expression. That is why they are said to have omitted this expression in their writings. While explaining how the singular original form of the verb of Jn 1:13 was lost, I. de la Potterie presents a hypothesis as follows:

> We believe – and this remains partially a hypothesis – that the reason for the change is above all to be looked for in the fact that the earliest Church Fathers, who were still reading the text in the singular, did not know how to explain the first of three negatives in verse 13: "non ex sanguinibus". When the text was read in the singular, so says Irenaeus, the first negation was often omitted and only the second and third were retained: "He (Christ) was *not* born *of the will of man nor of the concupiscence of the flesh*, but of God". Read in this manner, the text is obviously related to the virginal conception. But the first negation of John's text ("not of blood[s]") was omitted because it was not understood. Morover, the major difficulty of the Fathers came from the fact that they had to fight on two fronts at the same time. On the one hand they had to combat the heresy of the Docetists who affirmed that the body of Christ was not real but only appeared to be so, and on the other hand, especially in Alexandria, against the doctrine of the Gnostics (who imagined *themselves* as "being born of God"). No one, it seems, could offer an explanation for *all* parts of the text.[397]

2. Different Interpretations of αἱμάτων

As the first negation οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων is so complicated in its meaning because of its strange plural form and its polyvalent meanings, biblical scholars have interpreted this phrase in many different ways. Making a survey of the various meanings, we can group them

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[397] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 138-139.

into four categories:[398] 1) Genealogical reference to family lineage or to the generations of ancestors; 2) The plural form αἱμάτων is an allusion to the mixing of Father's blood and mother's blood at the conception; 3) It refers to mother's blood alone; 4) It indicates the temporal generation of the Incarnate Word. Let us now examine these four interpretations in greater detail.

i) Reference to family lineage and generations of ancestors?

According to some scholars,[399] the plural expression αἱμάτων does not indicate the bloods of the parents nor the bloods of the mother; it is rather used to indicate Jesus' ancestry. It means the ancestors' blood relationship passed on from one generation to another.

A. Vicent Cernuda is convinced that 'the bloods' indicates the race or family lineage. He justifies his interpretation in the following words: "La relativa scoperta non è difficile, se si pensa che l'aspettativa giudaica attendeva un uomo *davidico* come Messia, come salvatore, e che la sua accoglienza è il tema precedente v. 12. Dunque *non da sangui* vorrà dire che il sangue, cioè la razza, il lignaggio non ha nessuna importanza; quello che veramente conta è che il vero Messia è *nato da Dio*".[400]

According to him, the Evangelist's statement that Jesus was not born of *flesh and blood* was inspired by Sir 14:17-19.[401]

> All living beings become old like a garment, for the decree from of old is, 'You must die!' Like abundant leaves on a spreading tree that sheds some and puts forth others, so are the *generations of flesh and blood*:

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[398] These four different interpretations have been explained by I. de la Potterie in his article: "Il parto verginale del Verbo incarnato: «Non ex sanguinibus…, sed ex Deo natus est» (Gv 1,13)", in *Mar* 45 (1983) 128-130.

[399] Cfr. F. SALVONI, "Nascita verginale di Gesù", in *RicBibRel* 15 (1980) 165-174; A. VICENT CERNUDA, "«Non da Sangui» - In mezzo all'incarnazione di Gv 1, 13-14", 581-603; J. WINANDY, "Note complémentaire sur la conception virginale dans le Nuoveau Testament", in *NRT* 104 (1982) 429-431.

[400] A. VICENT CERNUDA, "«Non da Sangui» - In mezzo all'incarnazione di Gv 1, 13-14", 586.

[401] Cfr. *Ibid.*, 587-588.

one dies and another is born. Every work decays and ceases to exist, and the one who made it will pass away with it (Sir 14:17-19).

This biblical text says that all generations of flesh and blood will pass away and their works will cease to exist one day. Contrasting this reality with the birth of the Messiah mentioned in Jn 1:13, A. Vicent Cernuda says:

> Pare davvero che l'evangelista abbia preso da queste considerazioni lo spunto sull'impotenza umana. Qui si manifestano chiaramente *le generazioni della carne e del sangue* e qui si afferma che *ne periscono tutte le azioni*. Vuol dirsi che dalle generazioni della carne e del sangue, cioè, dalle γενεά umane non poteva aspettarsi, non poteva uscire geneticamente un Messia tale quale fu il Cristo reale, dal momento che tutte le lore opere diventavano immancabilmente effimere, periture […]; perciò appunto Gesù, il generato da Dio, *non* veniva *dai sangui, né da volere di carne*, perché *ogni carne si va consumando*, anziché vivendo per sempre, come Dio. Il plurale *sangui*, quindi, non è più paradossale; rispecchia addirittura e accuratamente il plurale *generazioni*, γενεά, che, secondo Gv 1,13, si confondono, in stretto parallelo, cioè nella loro espressività universale, con i lignaggi e le razze di tutta la terra, di tutta la storia. […] il parallelismo è chiaro e il plurale, supposta la metonimia, necessario: γενεά = sangui.[402]

He adds to this interpretation another meaning of this expression οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων: it also means *not from the bloods of David*, and thus *not from the blood of Mary*. At the same time, it means *not of bloods*, implying the virginal conception and the virgin birth of Jesus.

This interpretation (bloods = human race, genealogy) is not accepted by I. de la Potterie for the simple reason that no text from the OT, NT, or non-biblical literature uses the plural form to refer to the generations. They always use the singular form when they speak about the family relationship, genealogical bond, or old generations. He gives the following three examples to justify his argument:[403]

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[402] *Ibid.*, 588.

[403] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 130.

In the Greek Bible:
> "The Gibeonites were '*of the blood*' of the Amorites"
> ἐκ τοῦ λείμματος τοῦ Αμορραίου
> (2 Sam 21:2 in many Manuscripts);

In the NT:
> "He (God) made *of one blood* the whole human race"
> ἐποίησέν ἐξ ἑνὸς αἵματος πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων
> (Act 17:26, in D and the *Textus Receptus*);

In a non-biblical text (from a child adoption agreement):
> "That he may be your legitimate firstborn son,
> as if he were born of your own blood"
> ἐξ ἰδίου αἵματος γεννηθέντα σοι
> (Papyrus Leipzig, 28:15-16).

In all these above-mentioned the singular is used. Apart from the above-cited texts, there are many other Greek texts[404] that use the singular form to refer to the family relationship with reference to former generations. But in Jn 1:13 we have the plural form.

But it is interesting to note that J. Winandy cites two texts with the plural αἱμάτων in order to justify the theory that the word αἱμάτων has a genealogical connotation and refers to 'the bloods' of the foster parents of Jesus: "… de sangs étrangers (à celui de ses parents adoptifs)".[405] The texts cited by him are as follows:

1) ἄλλων τραφεὶς ἐξ αἱμάτων (EURIPIDES, *Ion*, v. 693);
2) ἐκ τῶν Ἡρακλείων ἐκγεγῶντες αἱμάτων
   (LYKROPHON, *Alexandra*, v. 1249). [406]

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[404] HOMER, *Iliad,* 19, 111: ἐξ αἵματός εἰσι; *Odyssey,* 4, 611: αἵματος εἰς ἀγαθοῖο; JOSPEH FLAVIUS, *Jewish Antiquities*, 4, 310: τις τῶν ἐξ αἵματός; See also the following texts: HOMER, *Iliad*, 6, 211; 20, 241; *Odyssey*, 8, 583; PLATO, *Sophist*, 268D; PLUTARCH, *Life of Pompey*, 36,8. These references have been taken from: I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", p. 140, nn. 35-36.

[405] J. WINANDY, "Note complémentaire sur la conception virginale", 429.

[406] *Ibid*.

These two texts have been said to have no base for such an interpretation. I. de la Potterie explains why these two examples cannot be used to defend J. Winandy's interpretation as follows:

Dobbiamo cercare di chiarire se questo plurale designa i «genitori adottivi», come pensa J. Winandy, o soltanto la madre. L'analisi del contesto mostra che non ci può essere nessun dubbio: Ione era nato da un'unione segreta tra Creusa e Apollo; dopo la sua nascita, fu portato a Delfi ed educato dalla profetessa, la quale fu per lui una madre (v. 321). Ma egli non sapeva ancora chi fossero veramente i suoi genitori (v. 313). Prima della scena drammatica in cui il figlio riconosce la madre, il coro rivolge ad Apollo questo lamento: « Da dove viene questo fanciullo educato nel tuo tempio? Chi tra *le donne è la sua madre?...* Tutto è inganno e sorte in questo ragazzo, formato da sangui stranieri » (vv. 683-693). Questi « sangui stranieri » sono in realtà quelli di Creusa, la vera madre d'Ione, ch'egli però non conosce ancora. Questo è confermato dall'uso del verbo τραφείς (da τρέφω, *nutrire*, formare; letteralmente: rendere spesso, compatto); quindi no si tratta qui né di discendenza né del concepimento né del parto, ma […] secondo la quale l'embrione, *nel seno* della madre *si nutre* del suo sangue. Ma perché c'è il plurale « sangue »? Si spiega forse dall'incertezza che c'è ancora: *chi tra le donne* greche è la madre del ragazzo? « Da *sangui* » nel v. 693 è un plurale *distributivo*, un'eco del plurale « chi tra *le donne* » del v. 684. Il testo allude quindi al sangue di *una* di queste donne, la madre d'Ione, durante la *gestazione* del suo bimbo, e non ha niente a che fare con l'ascendenza in genere, ossia con la trasmissione del sangue da una generazione all'altra".[407]

Like the first example, the second one is not accepted by I. de la Potterie. We want to quote here his counter-argument in the very words of the author:

Un altro esempio del plural è un testo del poeta alessandrino Licofrone (2° sec. a.C.?): egli parla di due eroi, Tarconte e Tirreno, i figli di Telefo, il quale era il figlio di Eracle (Ercole); erano quindi « discendenti dai sangue di Eracle », ἐκ τῶν Ἡρακλείων ἐκγεγῶντες αἱμάτων [*Alexandra* (ed. Scheer, 1881), 102, v. 1249]. Qui senza dubbio si tratta di più persone, non però in rapporto alla madre (cfr Euripide), ma ai figli: al plurale dei *soggetti*, « Tarconte e Tirreno, lupi ardenti » (v. 1248), fa seguito, al versetto seguente, il plurale

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[407] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 140-141.

distributivo per la generazione di ciascuno di loro: *tutti i due* erano « dai *sangui di Eracle* ». Ma se è così, il senso dell'espressione è lo stesso che nell'espressione corrente ἐξ αἴματος: ambedue erano *del sangue* di Eracle, cioè i suoi discendenti. Un altro punto deve essere notato: in tutti i casi citati in cui ἐξ αἴματος designa l'ascendenza, si pensa sempre al sangue *paterno*, e l'espressione viene *specificata* (p. es. col *nome*). Sono rari i testi (p. es. Euripide, *Baccanti*, 989) in cui ἐξ αἴματος indichi l'ascendenza in riferimento alla *madre*. Pertanto è molto improbabile la nuova esegesi che è stata proposta per οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων di Gv 1, 13 essa dice che verrebbe negata qui per il Verbo incarnato ogni ascendenza *paterna*. Ora questa sarà esplicitamente esclusa nella *terza* negazione: « non da volere di *uomo* ». La *prima* negazione quindi non significa lo stesso, deve avere un altro senso: […] deve trattarsi qui del sangue della *madre*.[408]

Taking into consideration all the arguments presented in favour of and against the interpretation that associates αἱμάτων to the family lineage or the generations of ancestors, we conclude that this theory is not reliable.

ii) The 'blood' of father and mother?

The plural form of the 'blood' is interpreted by some scholars against the background of the Greek mentality of ancient times. In the year 1924, H.J. Cadbury tried to demonstrate a theory based on the idea that conception takes place as a result of the physiological mixture of the 'bloods' of the parents.[409] But he himself was not convinced about this theory because ancient textual proofs were lacking. That is why he writes: "This, however, is widely rejected by modern commentators".[410] This theory was also studied by other scholars, such as J. Behm,[411] H. van den Bussche,[412] J. Winandy,[413] J.H. Ber-

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[408] *Ibid.*, 141-142.

[409] Cfr. H.J. CADBURY, "The ancient physiological notions underlying John I,13 and Hebrews XII,11", in *Expositor* 9 (1924), vol. 2, 430-439.

[410] *Ibid.*, 435.

[411] Cfr. J. BEHM, "αἷμα", in *TDNT*, vol. I, 172.

[412] Cfr. V. DEN BUSSCHE, *Giovanni*, 107: "Anticamente si credeva che la generazione fosse il risultato di una mesolanza di sangue (è per questo che nel greco « sangue » è al plurale, conformemente all'uso semitico)".

nard[414] and J. Galot.[415] Their interpretation is not a completely novel idea, but was based on the writings of St. Augustine[416] and St. Bonaventure.[417] G.R. Beasley-Murray is also of the opinion that "the plural αἵματα (commonly = 'drops of blood') alludes to the blood of the parents who beget and give birth".[418]

J. Winandy says: "Quoi qu'il en soit de ces hypothèses, nous noterons encore que le pluriel « des sangs » fait allusion à une idée assez répandue parmi les anciens, idée selon laquelle la conception s'accompagnerait d'un certain mélange de sang provenant en partie du père, en partie de la mere. Dans le cas envisagé, ce mélange n'a pas eu lieu."[419] J.H. Bernard is of the same opinion and writes: "it was a current doctrine in Greek physiology that the human embryo is made from the *seed* of the father and the *blood* of the mother".[420] This theory cannot be accepted because we do not possess any single ancient text that would support this idea of conception.[421]

M.-É. Boismard says that "blood is a dignified way of describing the seed of conceptions".[422] It is difficult to accept this interpretation, because John does not use any euphemism in 1Jn 3.9: ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει. He uses the word σπέρμα without any problem. M.-É. Boismard continues his comment on the meaning of this word as follows:

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[413] Cfr. J. WINANDY, "La conception virginale dans le Nouveau Testament", in *NRT* 100 (1978) 706-719.

[414] Cfr. J.H. BERNARD, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 18.

[415] Cfr. J. GALOT, "Egli non fu generato dai sangui (Gv 1,13)", in *Asp* 27 (1980) 153-160.

[416] Cfr. AUGUSTINE, *In Ioannem* 2, 14 (*Opere di Sant'Agostino*, vol. XXIV/1, 38-41); *Sermo* 121, 4 (*Opere di Sant'Agostino*, vol. XXXI/1, 50).

[417] Cfr. BONAVENTURE, *In Ioannem* 1, 28 (*Opera Omnia*, VI, 252).

[418] G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 13.

[419] J. WINANDY, "La conception virginale", 714.

[420] J.H. BERNARD, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 18.

[421] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 128; P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 47.

[422] M.-É. BOISMARD, *St. John's Prologue*, 44.

> The Greek text here is in the plural, not the singular; perhaps to indicate the two-fold seed of man and woman, whose production was attributed to the blood. But it must be noted that such an idea is Greek and not Semitic; in the Old Testament 'blood' in the plural *always* refers to blood shed by murder, by violence. And that is a further difficulty against accepting the current text, for John was a Semite, not a Greek and the whole Prologue is composed […] of echoes of the Old Testament.[423]

According to J. Galot, on the one hand the 'blood' indicates the maternal origin and on the other hand it indicates paternal ancestry.[424] He puts his argument in the following words:

> Il senso più normale del plurale giovanneo è dunque quello del « sangue del padre e della madre, che si riuniscono nel bambino come portatore di vita ». […] Il sangue era considerato come l'elemento fondamentale della vita, sangue che si era formato con la fusione del sangue del padre e della madre. Ciò che l'evangelista vuole escludere è la congiunzione del sangue del padre e della madre nella formazione del bambino. Si comprende perché non ha impiegato il singolare di « sangue »: in questo caso poteva sembrare che volesse escludere il contributo di Maria alla concezione. Pur affermando la natura verginale della concezione, non voleva diminuire il valore della maternità di Maria. « Essere generato da Dio » significava l'esclusione non di ogni cooperazione umana ma soltanto di quella di un padre umano. Il plurale s'imponeva dunque per significare questa esclusione senza compromettere il concorso della madre.[425]

This interpretation of J. Galot seems interesting and logical but it has its own logical flaws and lack of sufficient textual evidence. We want to present here the counter-arguments of I. de la Potterie against the position of J. Galot:

> Da una parte, egli [J. Galot] dice, il sangue può indicare l'origine *materna*; ma questo, egli lo afferma senza nessun argomento; d'altra parte « essere del sangue di » indica l'ascendenza *paterna*, il che è vero; e l'autore conclude subito: il plurale « i sangui » designa questa *duplice*

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[423] *Ibid.*

[424] Cfr. J. GALOT, "Egli non fu generato dai sangui (Gv 1, 13)", 157-158.

[425] *Ibid.*, 158.

origine. Ma è risaputo che, quando una delle promesse di un sillogismo non vale, anche la conclusione è priva di valore. Del resto è molto dubbio che si possa determinare il valore semantico di un'espressione poco comune, solo con un ragionamento. Aggiungiamo ancora un'altra difficoltà: se fosse vera questa spiegazione di Gv 1,13, si escluderebbe *due volte* la funzione del padre in questo versetto; nella prima negazione, si parlerebbe *del padre e della madre*, ma nella terza, solo *del padre*. Sarebbe una presentazione delle cose molto paradossale.[426]

Agreeing with these arguments of I. de la Potterie, we conclude that it is improbable that the first negation of Jn 1:13 alludes to the blood of the mother and the blood of the father.

iii) The 'blood' of the mother alone?

Before we consider into the arguments in favour of this interpretation, we want to see the background on which this theory is based. According to the Greek-Roman tradition, the human embryo is formed in the maternal womb through the joining of the seed of the father and the menstrual blood of the mother. This blood forms the bodily substance of the embryo.[427] I. de la Potterie offers the following two texts as examples from the early Greek literature.[428]

Wis 7:1-2:

> "I was modelled in flesh inside a mother's womb, where, for ten months, *in blood I acquired substance* (παγεὶς ἐν αἵματι) - the result of virile seed and pleasure, sleep's companion".

Theophilate, *In Johannem*, ad 1, 13:

> "He (the Evangelist) says: 'they were born not of bloods': it is obvious that he deals with the menstrual bloods; the embryo is nurtured by these bloods and grows".[429]

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[426] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 142-143.

[427] This thought is clearly expressed in PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *De opificio mundi* 45, 132.

[428] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 144.

[429] PG 123, 1154A.

H.J. Cadbury is convinced of this theory and writes against the view that the blood represents the human descent: "It is this birth out of blood rather than the metonymy by which blood represents the human organism as a whole or the mysticism by which it means human descent that appears to be the thought denied in Jn 1:13".[430]

Nor does P. Hofrichter accept that the word 'bloods' has a physiological reference: "Leider handelt es sich hier um ein Rückzugsgebeit der exegetischen Phantasie, dann für keine der beiden Auslegungen gibt es auch nur die jüdischen Bereich […] Der Plural bezeichnet in keinem Fall das Blut als Existenzprinzip".[431] He says that the 'bloods' is an allusion to the menstrual blood of the mother from the ritual point of view. He bases his arguments on the OT use of the plural דָּמִים.[432] In his opinion, the language style of the OT clearly indicates the reference to the blood of the mother.[433] The interpretation of P. Hofrichter goes well up to this point but we cannot accept his interpretation when he completely excludes the participation of a woman in the human origin of Jesus. He writes: "La lezione cristologica avrebbe detto che non era stato generato dal sangue della vergine Maria, ma da Dio solo, e questa era nella lotta dogmatica fin dal secondo secolo esattamente la posizione docetica e gnostica".[434] He says that it is not the Gnostics but the Church itself that is responsible for fixing the plural form ἐγεννήθησαν as the canonical text.[435]

Both authors (H.J. Cadbury and P. Hofrichter) say that the expression οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων intends to offer a contrast between the human

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[430] H.J. CADBURY, "The ancient physiological notions", 434.

[431] P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 47.

[432] Cfr. Lev 12.:7; 20.18; Ezek 16:6,9,22.

[433] Cfr. P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 46-55.

[434] P. HOFRICHTER, "Il Significato dei « sangui » in Gv 1, 13", 572.

[435] "La comprensione cristologica di Gv 1,13 come erotica dovette essere esclusa. Non gli gnostici, che usavano l'una e l'altra interpretazione, ma la Chiesa stessa è responsabile della fissazione del testo nel plurale ecclesiologico come canonico. L'affermazione espressa dell'origine di Gesù dai sangui della vergine fin da san Cirillo, talvolta in chiara relazione al testo di Gv 1,13, dimostra la necessità dogmatica di questa decisione della Chiesa" (P. HOFRICHTER, "Il Significato dei « sangui » in Gv 1, 13", 572).

and the divine generation. According to them, the birth of Jesus has to be completely attributed to a divine origin and the maternal role of the mother has to be completely excluded.[436] We do not agree with this complete exclusion of a maternal role in the birth of Jesus for the reason that it denies the motherhood of Mary. And it goes against the Evangelist's repeated use of the epithet ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ in the fourth Gospel.[437] The denial of the human mother would lead to a kind of Docetism. The Docetists were convinced that Jesus was not born of Mary's blood. This belief was against the Christian faith in the Incarnation of Jesus.

I. de la Potterie also asserts that the 'bloods' in the first negation of Jn 1:13 is a clear allusion to the blood of the mother. He goes so far as to say that the 'bloods' mentioned in this verse not only refers to the virginal conception but also to the virgin birth.[438] He argues against H.J. Cadbury's interpretation from philological point of view. In his opinion, the preposition ἐξ has to be taken into serious consideration in understanding the first negation of Jn 1:13. We present this argument in his own words:

> Secondo l'interpretazione proposta, il termine αἵματα designerebbe qui il sangue *interiore* al seno materno, quel sangue *in cui* gli antichi pensavano che si formasse e si nutrisse il corpo del bimbo. Perciò H.J. Cadbury dice che ἐξ αἱμάτων qui equivale a ἐν αἵματι di Sap 7, 2. Ma questa affermazione è del tutto arbitraria, perché tra il testo sapienziale e il versetto giovanneo ci sono differenze importanti: Giovanni adopera la preposizione ἐξ (« fuori di ») e non ἐν (« in »); non vuol dunque parlare del periodo di formazione del bimbo *nel seno* della madre; la sua intenzione è di dire *da dove* viene, da dove è *uscito* al momento della sua nascita (ἐξ … ἐγεννήθη). Inoltre, non c'è ἐξ αἵματος, ma il plurale.

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[436] The following citations show the positions taken by these two authors: "The οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, if it denies especially the human mother, as has been argued …" (H.J. CADBURY, "The ancient physiological notions", 436); "Die genetische Rolle der Frau wird offensichtlich zugunsten des göttlichen Ursprungs verneint" (P. HOFRICHTER, *Nich aus Blut*, 105); "Tatsächlich scheint also Joh 1, 13 die menschliche Elternschaft insgesamt zu verneinen" (*Ibid.*, 107).

[437] Cfr. Jn 2:1,3,5,12; 19:25,26,27.

[438] "In questa interpretazione si deve dire che Giovanni parla sia del *concepimento verginale* quanto della *nascita verginale* del Verbo fatto carne" (I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 147).

Insistiamo su questo punto, perché nei testi su cui si fondono questo
autori, il termine « sangue » si trova sempre al singolare. Trascurare
queste differenze è un errore metodologico. Perciò i testi ellenistici sulla
formazione del bimbo *nel* sangue materno non sono veri paralleli, e non
possono servire a interpretare il nostro testo. Non era quindi fondato il
timore di alcuni Padri, e cioè che le parole οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων
escluderebbero il ruolo materno di Maria nella formazione del corpo del
suo figlio. La negazione ha un senso diverso.[439]

I. de la Potterie examines the use of the expression 'the bloods' in the
OT. The word דָּמִים often means the violent bloodshed of a group of
people. But Jn 1:13 has nothing to do with a context of violent blood-
shed. But there are two interesting biblical texts that use the word דָּמִים
to indicate the blood lost by women during menstruation and child-
birth. These texts are: Lev 12:4,7 and Ezek 16:6,9. Apart from these
two texts, Lev 20:18 uses the word דָּמִים to speak about the loss of
blood of a woman during her menstrual cycle. In Jewish society, it
was believed that this blood made women unclean. That is why the
book of Leviticus speaks of the purification law: "The priest must of-
fer this before Yahweh, perform the rite of expiation for her, and she
will be purified from her discharge of blood (דָּמִים). Such is the law
concerning a woman who gives birth to either a boy or a girl" (Lev
12:7). In this background, Jn 1:13 has to be interpreted. Then, the
meaning becomes clear. The expression 'bloods' is used to refer to the
blood of the mother alone. That is why I. de la Potterie proposes that
v. 13 should be translated as follows: "Born not *of bleedings* (or
bloods), nor of the will of man, nor of the urge of the flesh".[440]

P. Hofrichter who defends this interpretation is of the opinion
that the verb ἐγεννήθη does not mean the Incarnation of the Word of
God in the womb of a woman, but rather it is a metaphor that indicates
the coming of the Logos-Revealer.[441] We agree with P. Hofrichter that

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[439] *Ibid.*, 145-146.

[440] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 139,
note 10.

[441] "Die Geburt aus Gott demonstriert das göttliche Wesen des Logos
und hebt ab gegen die Geburt dem Fleische nach aus der Jungfrau. […] Dabei ist
aber immer an einen ewigen Hervorgang des Sohnes – vor aller Zeit – gedacht,
von dem in der Weisheitsliteratur, nicht aber im Johannes-Evangelium die

the first negation refers to the blood of the mother but we do not ac-
cept his view that this does not imply the Incarnation of Christ. The
aorist form of the verb used in v. 13 is clear indication that the Evan-
gelist speaks of the physical aspect of the Incarnation of Jesus.

iv) The temporal generation of the Incarnate Word

Having completely negated the first two interpretations, we
partially accepted the third interpretation. We are now going to pre-
sent the fourth interpretation that says that the expression 'not of the
bloods' in connection with the verb ἐγεννήθη points to the temporal
generation of the Incarnate Word.

The plural form (αἱμάτων) is used to explain the loss of blood
which is linked with a woman's period; that is with menstruation and
childbirth. It is to be interpreted in connection with the OT texts that
speak of the ritual of woman's purification (cf. Lev 12:4,7 and Ezek
16:6,9 where the term דָּמִים denotes 'the bloods' of a woman who
needs ritual purification according to the Jewish laws). Applying this
meaning to Jn 1:13, I. de la Potterie writes: "In the context of the laws
of purification it signifies that Jesus, in being born, did not cause an
effusion of blood in his mother; in other words, at the birth of Jesus
there would not have been any ritual impurity in his mother because in
her there would not have taken place any shedding of blood".[442] Thus,
the first negation of v. 13 speaks of the virginal conception and the
virgin birth of Jesus.

3. The Exegetical Meaning of the Three Negations

Having already seen the meaning of the first negation (οὐκ ἐξ
αἱμάτων), let us now see what the other two negations (οὐδὲ ἐκ

Rede ist" (P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blutt*, 124). "Ein johanneisches ἐκ θεοῦ
ἐγεννήθη bedeutet nicht die menschliche Geburt Jesu, auch nicht eine Geburt des
Logos in mythischen Vorzeiten, sondern den Abstieg des von Ewigkeit her bei
Gott existenten und anfangslosen Logos aus seiner Gottheit in die Welt" (*Ibid*.,
131).

[442] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 149.

θελήματος σαρκός, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός) mean and the relation-
ship between these three negations with reference to the final positive
statement (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη).

In the second and third negations, the word θέλημα is used.
Θέλημα occurs 62 times in the New Testament. It can "represent both
(objectively) what is willed and (subjectively) the act of willing. In
John 1:13; 1 Cor 7:37 refers specifically to male sexual *desire*".[443]
Observing the omission of this word, R.E. Brown comments as fol-
lows: "The word 'desire' is omitted in some Ethiopic mss. and in
some of the Fathers, perhaps in order to bring the text more into con-
formity with the 'flesh and blood' idiom".[444]

The second negation (οὐδὲ ἐκ θελή ματος σαρκός) is missing in
the following Mss and uncials: E*, 42, 96*, 114, 983 and 1573. It is
also missing in the *Epistula Apostolorum* and the *liber Comicus*. Some
Church Fathers such as Irenaeus,[445] Methodius of Olympus,[446] and Je-
rome[447] omit the second negation.

The third negation (οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός) is missing in
B*, 17* and the Diatessaron. Some Church Fathers omit the third ne-
gation, namely Justin Martyr,[448] Clement of Alexandria,[449] Epiphani-
us[450] and Cyril of Alexandria[451].

These two negations contrast birth from God with human be-
getting and emphasize that Jesus was not born of flesh and sexual de-
sire.The phrase οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός negates the 'will of the

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[443] M. LIMBECK, "θέλημα", in *EDNT*, vol. II, 138.

[444] R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 12.

[445] IRENAEUS, *Adversus haereses* 3, 16, 2 (SCh 34, 280).

[446] METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS, *De resurrectione*, 1, 26, 1 (GCS 27, 253).

[447] JEROME, *Epistle* 65, 8, 2 (CSEL 54, 625).

[448] JUSTIN MARTYR, *Dialogue* 135, 6 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten
Apologeten*, 258; PG 6, 789B).

[449] CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Stromata* 2, 13 (SCh 38, 81).

[450] EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion* 2, 1; 51, 12 (GCS 31, 265).

[451] CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *De adoratione in spiritu et vaeritate* 15 (PG
68, 1005C).

flesh' that is the sexual desire. In the Gospel of John, the word is used to speak of the physical nature of human beings in contrast with the divine and the spiritual (cf. Jn 17:2). A. Sand says that "in the Johannine Prologue *flesh* (1:13) refers to physical lineage (cf. the interpretative αἷμα and θέλημα ἀνδρός) – contrasted with birth from God. Σάρξ is thus thought of as having a will – as does a human being: The birth willed by the physical human being corresponds to the conception desired by the person".[452] This contrast between the human sphere of man's origin and the divine birth from God is much more clearly explained by R. Bultman as follows:

> The human sphere is designated by concepts which, taken together, give a uniform description of that which is human as opposed to divine. In Semitic thought σάρξ and αἷμα are traditional descriptions of that which is human and earthly (I Cor. 15:50); Gal. 1:16; Mt. 16:17, etc.). Yet the phrase here cannot be traced to such a formula, but is original. […] In any case, σάρξ is not used here in the sense of a principle which is at enmity with God. Cf. also on v. 14. Without drawing an undue distinction, as B. Weiss wished, between the foregoing and the following, it is not surprising that the human initiative can also be described by the phrase ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός, for it was an unquestioned assumption of the ancient world that the man played the leading part. – The fact that in the antithesis the θέλημα of God is not named is to be explained partly by the fact that "to be born of God" is a typical expression of the Evangelist, and partly by the fact that in the context θέλημα refers to a natural movement of the will which could not be attributed to God.[453]

The will of 'a male' (ἀνδρός) points to the initiative of the male in sexual intercourse and this expression extends to the human initiative in procreation.

All these three negations may seem to deal with one and the same theme, that is, the exclusion of the sexual element of procreation. By noting this fact, we cannot simply conclude that these three negations are all equivalent. In no way can they be considered simple repetitions. They do not simply mean the same. These three negations are followed by an affirmation (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη).

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[452] A. SAND, "σάρξ", in *EDNT*, vol. III, 232.

[453] R. BULTMANN, *The Gospel of John*, 60, note 2.

I. de la Potterie observes an ascending progression which moves through these four units of v. 13 and explains it in the following words: "First appears the exclusion of the 'fleshly' desire of the 'animal nature' in the conception; finally, the exclusion of a human being, the man, in this same conception (this desire would normally be that of the father); finally, which is positive this time, it moves up to the transcendent level, in underlining the generative role of God; it is God himself who is presented as the Father of the Word incarnate".[454] This ascending progression is grounded on a step-by-step elimination process. This process of elimination is repeated for three times in an ascending order to gradually get into the core message of the divine origin of Jesus.

b) ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη [v. 13b]

This is the most important part of v.13. It is this final positive statement that gives meaning to all the three negations of v. 13a.[455] The phrase begins with a strong adversative conjunction ἀλλά. When it is followed by οὐ, it denotes a strong contrast to the preceding phrase(s). It can be translated as: but, on the contrary, rather, etc.[456] Here in Jn 1:13, it is used to introduce the positive statement in clear

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[454] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 146. R.C.H. Lenski compares this progressive thought to the structure of a pyramid and three concentric circles: "The three phrases used by John in stating how the birth of the Logos as man was not brought about are not coordinate, merely placed side by side; nor should we subordinate the second two phrases and regard them as merely defining more closely the first phrase. These phrases are like a pyramid, one placed on top of the other. They are like three circles, the second being narrower than the first. Thus the first phrase includes the other two, and the second includes the third. Beyond the final, most precise specification John cannot go and need not go in his negations. The Logos was born entirely without a human father. In his conception no male parent was active" (*The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, 68).

[455] "Il vero senso di questi aspetti negativi si può cogliere soltanto in connessione con l'affermazione positiva finale, cioè in relazione col mistero di Cristo" (I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Sangui", 1212).

[456] W. RADL, "ἀλλά", in *EDNT*, vol. I, 61.

contrast with the preceding three negations. It emphasizes the fact that the birth of Jesus is in contrast with ordinary human origin.

The preposition ἐκ denotes a person's physical origin.[457] As the Evangelist uses it three times in his denials with negative meanings, he uses the same proposition again for the fourth time with the positive phrase that states how this birth has a divine origin (ἐκ θεοῦ). Unlike any ordinary human birth, God alone is the source of this birth. The divine origin of Christ is one of the fundamental themes of the fourth Gospel. Jesus himself declared that he came down *from heaven* (cfr. Jn 6.38). He himself spoke to the people about his filial relationship to God and of his origin from God (cfr. Jn 7:33-44). In Jn 1:13, Christ's temporal generation (Incarnation) is described as a divine generation, or in other words a generation from God.

This divine origin mentioned in Jn 1:13 by the expression ἐκ θεοῦ can be interpreted in connection with Lk 1:35 and Mt 1:18. P. Hofrichter observes that some Church Fathers have substituted the word θεοῦ with δυνάμεως (Lk 1:35) or πνεύματος ἁγίου (Mt 1:18). Here are the examples given by him:[458]

Justin:

> οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπείου σπέρματος ... ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ[459]
> οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπείου σπέρματος ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ της του θεοῦ δυ νάμεως[460]

Tertullian:

> Non de spiritu nec de deo sed ex uiri voluntate[461]

Origen:

> μὴ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς ἠ ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου[462]

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[457] Cfr. G. LÜDEMANN, "ἐκ", in *EDNT*, vol. I, 403.

[458] P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 121.

[459] JUSTIN, *Apology* 1, 32, 11 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 48; PG 6, 380).

[460] JUSTIN, *Dialogue* 54, 2 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 154; PG 6, 593D).

[461] TERTULLIAN, *De carne Christi* 15, 3 (SCh 216, 274, 23f).

Methodius of Olympus:

> τὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σῶμα οὐκ ἦν ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός, … ἀλλὰ
> ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ δυνάμεως ὑψὶστου …[463]

This parallelism between Jn 1:13 and the other related texts will be studied in detail in the next part when we will deal with the theological interpretation.

In v. 13, the Evangelist uses the verb γεννάω. It means 'to beget' when used with reference to the father; it also means 'to give birth' when used with reference to the mother. This verb occurs 18 times in the Gospel of John. Though the other Gospels, namely Matthew and Luke, use this verb with reference to genealogy and sonship, it receives a deeper theological 218meaning in the fourth Gospel. "The concept of begetting receives further development and a new depth in the Johannine literature, where the birth originates with God (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7) and with the Spirit (John 3:5,6,8), or 'from above' (3:3,7)".[464]

With regard to the translation of the verb ἐγεννήθη, R.C.H. Lenski says that "was born" is to be preferred rather than "was begotten". We want to present his argument as follows:

> The tense of ἐγεννήθη is the historical aorist, and the passive accords with ἐκ θεοῦ, not, indeed, as the usual agent with the passive, which would be ὑπό or ἀπό, but deeper than this, as the source of origin. We might translate, "was begotten," though in doing so we would have to ward off the thought that God was in some way a substitute for the human father in the begetting of the Logos. It is better to translate "was born," using the verb in the wider sense as including all that lies in the term "incarnation." Perhaps we may derive a little help from the figurative use of the verb. The idea of sex and of the function of sex disappears entirely when God is called the Father of his people, or when one human person becomes a spiritual father to another. Fatherhood and

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[462] ORIGEN, *In Matth.* 1,18 fr. 11 (GCS 41/1 = Or 12/1, 20, 25f).

[463] METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS, *De resurrection* 1, 26, 1 (GCS 27, 253, 12-15).

[464] A. KRETZER, "γεννάω", in *EDNT*, vol. I, 243.

> motherhood intermingle in this form of thought. So the Logos "was born" of man by a birth due to the miraculous intervention of God wholly apart from any paternal sex function.[465]

Thus, the exegetical analysis of v. 13 has made it clear that the three negations and the positive affirmation that follows them describe the Incarnation of Jesus and that this physical birth of the Logos is in complete contrast with ordinary human birth and has its origin from God.

D. VERSE 14

> Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς πὰ ρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

This is the climax of the entire Prologue. In this verse, the Evangelist solemnly declares the great event of the Incarnation of Jesus , the only-begotten Son. In this verse, we come across a number of important key words of Johannine theology, namely λόγος, σάρξ, δόξα, μονογενής, χάρις, and ἀλήθεια.

Verse 14 begins with the conjunction καί. We have already dealt with the function and role of this conjunction in the text-critical study. This connective καί at the start of v.13 accords perfectly well with the closing words of v. 13. It shows an intrinsic link between v. 13 and v. 14. The Evangelist develops the theme of the Incarnation – already introduced in   v. 13 – and makes a climactic statement in v. 14.

a) ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν [v. 14a]

In v. 14, John says that the Logos was made (became) *flesh*; he does not say that the Logos was made (became) a *man*. It is because 'flesh' stands for the whole man, according to R.E. Brown.[466] But

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[465] R.C.H. LENSKI, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, 70.

[466] Cfr. R. E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 13.

R. Schnackenburg gives a different interpretation as follows: "σάρξ is not just another way of saying 'man' (as πᾶσα σάρξ, 17:2). In Johannine terms, it expresses that which is earth-bound (3:6), transient and perishable (6:63), the typically human mode of being, as it were, in contrast to all that is divine and spiritual".[467] The word λόγος mentioned in v. 14 has a link with v. 1. It is interesting to note the 'paradox' that expresses the unique historical event that the same λόγος who dwelt with God has now entered the earthly sphere as a human being; he who was *divine* has become *flesh*; he who was *with God* has tarried *among us*.

G. Richter says: "The verb γίνομαι in connection with a predicative noun expresses that a person or a thing changes its property or enters into a new condition, becomes something that it was not before".[468] The verb clearly indicates this change.[469] The meaning of this verse is that the Logos became a *real human being*. This historical event of the Incarnation took place only once in whole of history and is a unique event. Nowhere in the whole of John's Gospel, is the mystery of Incarnation so clearly and so explicitly expressed as in this verse.

With the statement καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, John wants to reassure his readers about the real and physical presence of the incarnate Logos in the midst of humanity. The Evangelist "asserts that, like every person, the Logos too took on physical form; it chose the same

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[467] R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. I, 267.

[468] G. RICHTER, "Die Fleischwerdung des Logos im Johannes-Evangelium", in *NT* 13 (1971) 88.

[469] The exact meaning of the verb γίνομαι in the context of Johannine Prologue is explained by E. Ghezzi in the following words: "L'evento sorprendente del Logos '*fatto carne*', viene espresso dal verbo '*egéneto*': che non significa soltanto '*apparire*'(com'era nel v. 6 per Giovanni Battista), né significa soltanto che 'il Logos si è trasformato in *carne*', e neppure si tratta di un rivestimento di carne. Nel verbo '*egéneto*', viene espresso un cambiamento nel modo di essere nel Logos; prima era nella gloria presso il Padre (cf. 17,5.24), ora egli assume la bassezza della esistenza terreno-umana; prima era 'presso Dio' (1,1b), ora mette la sua tenda 'fra gli uomini', in figura umana" (E. GHEZZI, *Come abbiamo ascoltato*, 141).

earthly existence that every human being has, it set up its tent, and it dwelled among us".[470]

John uses the verb σκηνόω. It means to dwell, to pitch a tent, to live, to settle, to take up one's abode, etc. In the entire NT, this verb occurs only here, apart from the book of Revelation.[471] The language style of this verse evokes the revelation of God's glory in the Exodus (cfr. Exod 33:7-11). In v. 14, we observe an echo of the glory of Yahweh upon and in the Tabernacle (cfr. Exod 25:8; 40:34-48). John expresses an idea that the Logos 'tabernacled' among us as Yahweh did among the people of Israel in the wilderness (cfr. 2 Sam 7:6). The phrase ἐν ἡμῖν "does not mean that the Word dwelt in our human nature […]. Rather, he took up residence in our midst".[472]

The word σκηνοῦν has a special reference to the word δόξα. There is a connection between the Greek word σκηνοῦν and the Hebrew word שׁכן. It is explained by C.K. Barret as follows:

> It [σκηνοῦν] recalls, in sound and meaning, the Hebrew שׁכן, which means "to dwell"; the verb of the dwelling of God with Israel (e.g. Ex. 25:8; 29:46; Zech. 2:14), and a derived noun שׁכינה (shᵉchinah) was used (though not in the Old Testament) as a periphrasis for the name of God himself. Further, the bright cloud settled down (שׁכן) upon the Tabernacle (Ex. 24:16; 40:35), and since this cloud was the visible manifestation of the presence of God (cf. ὀφθήσομαι Ex. 25:7 LXX) the abiding presence of God suggested his glory (כבוד, δόξα). It must however be recalled that (a) שׁכינה (shᵉchinah) means not the glory of God but his presence, and (b) שׁכן is not regularly represented by (κατα)σκηνοῦν. Probably John means no more than that the Word took up a temporary residence among men. Cf. Sir. 24:8; 1 Enoch 42:2 for the temporary dwelling of Wisdom among men.[473]

Thus, we observe that the theme of 'tenting' is found in Exod 25:8 where Yahweh says: "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may

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[470] For more details about its usage and meaning: cfr. A. SAND, "σάρξ", in *EDNT*, vol. III, 232.

[471] Cfr. Jn 1:14; Rev 7:15; 12:12; 13:6; 21:3.

[472] C.K. BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St. John,* 138.

[473] *Ibid*.

dwell among them". The Ark of the Covenant was considered the dwelling place of Yahweh. In passages such as Num 35:34; Jos 22:19; 1 Kg 6:13; 1Chr 23.25; 2 Chr 6:1f; Ezra 6:12; 7:15; 11:9, the key word שכינה has the same meaning of Yahweh's dwelling or Yahweh's presence in the midst of his people. The verb σκηνοῦν recalls the tabernacle of Israel in which God dwelt. The pillar of cloud and fire covered the tabernacle and the glorious presence of God was visible (cfr. Exod 40.34-38).

The real presence of the incarnate Logos is to be understood against this background, because in the OT the כבוד (δόξα) of God is a sign of visible manifestation of God to men. "The Exodus associations are intentional, and are part of the theme of revelation and redemption of the Logos-Christ as fulfilling the hope of a *second* Exodus".[474] Also the analogy between with OT theophanies[475] and the Incarnation of the Logos illuminates the interpretation of v. 14a. In the book of Revelation too, John mentions this "dwelling / presence" of God in the midst of His people: ἰδοὺ ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ σκηνώσει μετ' αὐτῶν (Rev 21:3). The same verb (σκηνόω) used in Jn 1:14a is used in this passage here.

b) καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ [v. 14b]

It is a "new and profoundly original way of confessing the Saviour who has come 'palpably' (1 Jn 1:1) in history as a unique, personal human being, who has manifested himself in the reality of the 'flesh'".[476] The first person plural of the sentence points to the eyewitness of the apostolic Church. This apostolic witness is associated with the 'we' of the Prologue to 1 John:

> Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched (ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα) and touched with our own hands, the Word of life (1Jn 1.1).

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[474] G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 15.

[475] Cfr. Ex 25:7-8; 24:15-16; 33:2; 40:34; Deut 5:21; Ezek 11:23; 1 Kings 8:11; Sir 24:8.

[476] R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. I, 268.

1 Jn 1:1 has a close link with Jn 1:14b for two reasons: 1) both the texts speak of the 'contemplation' of the glory of the incarnate Logos; 2) the 'we' mentioned in both the passages is considered to be the same witnesses of the glory of the Logos. Some scholars suggest that "the hymn is referring to the moment when Peter, *John,* and James witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus, a scene not recorded in John but found in the Synoptics and II Pet I 16-18. On that occasion Luke ix 32 says that they saw his *glory.* And just as the Prologue speaks of the glory of an only Son, so at the Transfiguration the heavenly voice proclaimed Jesus as «my beloved Son»".[477] It is interesting to note that both the terms μονογενή ς and ἀγαπή τος mean the same.[478]

The Evangelist mentions here the same glory that the witnesses saw in the signs performed by Jesus (2:11; 11:4,40), in his being lifted up on the cross (19:35), and in the resurrection (20:24-29). The disciples of Jesus saw his glory and believed in him (2:11). It is interesting to note the connection between 'seeing' and 'believing' in the fourth Gospel (1:29; 2:11; 20:8,27ff). In Jn 1:14 too, we see this connection between 'seeing the glory of the incarnate Logos' (v. 14b) and the confession of faith in v. 14c (Jesus as God's only Son).

c) δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας

[v. 14c]

The word δόξα used in v. 13b is repeated in v. 14c too. This repetition emphasizes its reality. It underlines the fact that the true glory of the incarnate Logos was manifest and it was seen and contemplated. The two words μονογενής (1:18; 3:16,18; 1 Jn 4:9) and πατή ρ is characteristic of Johannine writings. The phrase δόξαν ὡς μονογε̂ νοῦς παρὰ πατρός is rendered as "the glory as of a father's only son". Scholars consider the μονογενής to be based on the Hebrew יָחִיד that means "unique, only begotten" and also "beloved". R. Schnackenburg gives the following references to prove that these two terms have the

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[477] R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 34.

[478] For more details and biblical references, cfr. R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. I, 271, note 183.

same meaning: "LXX translates יָחִיד both by μονογενής and ἀγαπήτος, cfr. Jg 11:34 where both are combined; μονογενής: Ps 21:21; 24:16; 34:17; ἀγαπήτος Gen 22:2 (Aquila: μονογενής); 22:12 (Symmachus: μονογενής); 22:16; Amos 8:10; Zech 12:10; Jer 6:26 (Aq., Symm., μονογενής); cf. Prov 4:3, ἀγαπώμενος. Cfr. further the Synoptic Mk 1:11 parr.; 9:7 parr.; 12.6 parr.".[479] The unique character of the relationship between the Father and the Son is expressed in v. 14c.

The phrase παρὰ πατρός underlines again the filial relationship of Jesus with God. The preposition παρά followed by a name in the genitive case indicates the origin. Having already declared him as 'the only begotten' (μονογενής), John writes παρὰ πατρός to emphasize that Jesus is of divine origin.

From a grammatical point of view, there is a problem of knowing with what we should connect the expression πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. Must the adjective πλήρης (masculine and nominative) go with λόγος, or with δόξαν, or with μονογενοῦς? The Revised Standard Version connects it with λόγος and renders the following translation: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth". The New Revised Standard Version attaches it to δόξαν and renders the following translation: "The glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth". But R. Schnackenburg says that this phrase has to be connected with the genitive μονογενοῦς.[480] Regarding this problem, we agree with the opinion of L. Morris who says that "in any case it is a problem of Greek grammar rather than of meaning, for on any showing it is the incarnate Word who is full of grace and truth".[481] Various scholars have reconsidered the theological meaning of this term and offered valuable contributions to the study of the term.[482]

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[479] *Ibid*.

[480] "It should be taken with the genitive μονογενοῦς, not with δόξαν, since the δόξα, as that of the only begotten Son, needs no further description" (R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. I, 272).

[481] L. MORRIS, *The Gospel According to John*, 94.

[482] One of the interesting studies about the word μονογενοῦς is: J.V. DAHMS, "The Johannine use of *monogenes* Reconsidered", in *NTS* 29 (1983) 222-232.

The expression χάρις καὶ ἀλήθεια stands for the OT phrase
חסד ואמת that describes the covenant mercy of Jahweh (cfr. Exod
34:6). The same mercy and fidelity of the God of Truth is manifest in
the incarnate Logos.[483] The word χάρις occurs in the John's Gospel
only in this context (vv. 14,16,17). The word keeps its OT sense of
'steadfastness and fidelity' and is used by the Evangelist "to mean the
'divine reality' in a more strongly ontological sense (cfr. v. 17), as he
understands ἀλήθεια in 4:23f.; 8:44; 14:6; 17:17; 18:37d."[484]

CONCLUSION

Having applied the historical-critical method to Jn 1:13 and
exegetically analyzed it from various points of view, now we want to
make a summary of what we have done and present the conclusions
we have drawn from the exegetical analysis of the text.

At the start of the exegetical analysis, we fixed the demarca-
tions of the text to be analyzed and then divided it into small units so
as to facilitate the analysis. The immediate and proximate contexts of
the text were determined. Also, we found that v. 13 has a lexical and
thematic link with vv. 11-12 that precede it and with v. 14 that follows
it.

The survey of the various opinions of the exegetes with regard
to the textual origin of v. 13 gave us the impression that v. 13 was a
later addition to a pre-existing Logos hymn. But we demonstrated that
its close link with the Prologue and with the entire Gospel of John
from the lexical and thematic points of view makes this theory unreli-
able.

Then we submitted the text to a linguistic-grammatical analy-
sis. The important key words of the text were lexically explained. The
repetitive use of the preposition ἐκ in v. 13 attracted our attention. The
preposition used with a noun in the genitive case denotes its origin.

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[483] For more details about the semantic and theological meaning of
"χάρις καὶ ἀλήθεια", cfr. S.A. PANIMOLLE, *Il dono della legge e la grazia della
verità*, 293-391.

[484] R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. I, 273.

We found that this preposition has been repeated four times with a clear purpose. This repetition (3 times negatively and once positively) indicates that the central theme of v. 13 is the 'origin' of Jesus. The adversative particle ἀλλα demonstrates how the divine birth of Jesus is in contrast with ordinary human birth. By examining the five verbs used in vv. 12-13, we showed that the aorist tense of the verb ἐγεννήθη denotes a 'punctilior action' in the past, that is, the historical event of the birth of Jesus.

In the structural study of the Prologue, we found that v. 13 has an important role to play within the structure of the Prologue (both concentric and spiral structures). We concluded that the section vv. 12-13 is to be considered as the 'pivot' of the Prologue, like the "hinge between two parts of a diptych".

Moreover, examining the spiral/wave structure we observed that the section formed by vv. 12-14 is the culmination of the second wave. Thus, the theme of Incarnation is the axis on which the whole Prologue keeps developing its theological concepts in a spiral movement like a wave. Whatever be the structure we favour, we observed that v. 13 (either by itself or along with its preceding or following verses) serves as the pivot/hinge/culmination of the Prologue. The structural analysis shows that vv. 12-13 makes sense only if it is read in the singular. Seeing its lexical and theological link with other elements of the Prologue's structure, we conclude that the fundamental theme of this section (vv. 12-13) is the Incarnation of Jesus and not the spiritual birth of Christians.

Having completed all these various literary considerations, the pericope vv. 11-14 was exegetically analyzed. The most important and interesting questions we dealt with were the meaning of the three negations (especially the different interpretations of the word αἱμάτων) and the meaning of the statement ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη.

As the result of our study, we concluded that the plural form of the word αἱμάτων has to be interpreted with reference to the OT background (e.g. Lv 12:4-7; 20:18) that associates the word 'bloods' to the purification rites of a woman who has given birth to a child. Thus the expression οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων points to the fact that Jesus, in being born, did not cause any effusion of blood. Thus v. 13 refers to the virginal conception and the virgin birth of Jesus. This great event of the Incarnation is solemnly declared in the following v. 14. John gives witness to the glory of the Incarnate Logos. As Yahweh dwelt in the midst of the people of Israel, the Logos made flesh pitched his tent in our midst.

PART THREE

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF JOHN 1:13

Having established the correct text of Jn 1:13 with the singular form of the verb and exegetically analysed it in its context, we are now going to see its theological implications. In the exegetical analysis that we did in the second part of the book, we made it clear that this verse is fundamentally Christological in its meaning, as it speaks of the virginal conception and the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. After studying the Christological significance of the text, we will also see the Mariological meaning of the virgin birth of Jesus.

I. CHRISTOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF JN 1:13

Before we begin our study about the Christological meaning of Jn 1:13, we want to present here the problems we face in its theological interpretation. In the following sections, we will deal with these difficulties one by one and will also try to find solutions to these problems.

A. PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION

1. Eternal or temporal birth?

An important question that is posed by theologians is whether Jn 1:13 with its singular verb refers to the eternal birth of the Son of God or the temporal birth (Incarnation) of Jesus. There seem to be difficulties in both cases. Regarding this problem, M. Vellanickal writes:

> According to some critics, it cannot be applied to the eternal generation because then it should have been mentioned in vv. 1-2 speaking of the eternal relation of the Word to God; and Jn never presents the eternal relation of the Father and the Son as a generation. Moreover, it would be absurd to exclude with such an emphasis the carnal elements in order to speak of the eternal generation. On the other hand, they find it difficult to apply it to the temporal generation, because in this case it anticipates v. 14 and thus destroys the newness of the declaration in v. 14, which

appears to be a new and solemn declaration both as to the form and as to its content.[485]

There are different opinions among theologians. Some say that Jn 1:13 refers to the eternal generation of the Son of God.[486] Others are of the opinion that it refers to the virgin birth of Christ from the womb of Mary, that is, the temporal generation of the Son of God. For example, I. de la Potterie gives more importance to the theme of Incarnation than to that of the eternal generation of the Word. He says: "This verse, then, deals with the *human* conception and birth of the One who, from all eternity, is the Son of God. Moreover, indirectly and implicitly, it also alludes to the eternal birth of the Son of God".[487] For P. Hofrichter, the verb ἐγεννήθη does not mean the eternal birth of the Word, nor the virgin birth of Christ, but is a metaphor that indicates the coming of the Logos-Revealer.[488] Some others like M. Vellanickal apply it to both the eternal and temporal generation of Christ.[489]

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[485] M. VELLANICKAL, *The Divine Sonship*, 126.

[486] Cfr. AUGUSTINE, *Confessioni* 7, 9, 14 (*Opere di Sant'Agostino*, vol. I, 196; PL 32, 740-741); G.H.C. MACGREGOR, *The Gospel of John*, 14-15; D. JACQUES, *Essais sur la Christologie de Saint Jean: le Christ, Parole, Lumière et Vie. La Glorie du Christ*, Éditions de l'Abbaye de Saint-André, Bruges 1951, 51, note 6.

[487] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the mystery of the Covenant*, 144.

[488] "Die Geburt aus Gott demonstriert das göttliche Wesen des Logos und hebt ab gegen die Geburt dem Fleische nach aus der Jungfrau. […] Dabei ist aber immer an einen ewigen Hervorgang des Sohnes – vor aller Zeit – gedacht, von dem in der Weisheitsliteratur, nicht aber im Johannes-Evangelium die Rede ist" (P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 124). "Ein johanneisches ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη bedeutet nicht die menschliche Geburt Jesu, auch nicht eine Geburt des Logos in mythischen Vorzeiten, sondern den Abstieg des von Ewigkeit her bei Gott existenten und anfangslosen Logos aus seiner Gottheit in die Welt" (*Ibid.*, 131).

[489] "In the phrase ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη of v. 13, the aorist ἐγεννήθη shows an event that took place at a moment in time. This cannot be referred to be the eternal generation. At the same time, the compilment ἐκ θεοῦ shows that it is a generation from God. Hence we see a combination of both the eternal and temporal generation of Christ in the very expression of v. 13" (M. VELLANICKAL, *The Divine Sonship*, 130).

We have mentioned four different theological interpretations of v. 13. Which of these is the correct one? To resolve this problem, let us now consider the expression ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη in its immediate context (vv. 11-14). The longest sentence of the Prologue (vv. 12-13) is situated between vv. 11 and 14 that speak of the Incarnation of Christ (v. 11: εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν; v. 14: ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο). Moreover, we note that there is a series of eight aorist verbs in this pericope: ἦλθεν, παρέλαβον, ἔλαβον, ἔδωκεν, ἐγεννήθη, ἐγένετο, ἐσκήνωσεν, and ἐθεασάμεθα. All these eight verbs refer to the past events that took place in the same period of time. It is logical to conclude that the verb ἐγεννήθη, like the other verbs in the aorist tense, shows an event that took place at a moment in time (i.e. the Incarnation of Christ).[490] At the same time, Jesus being the Son of God from all eternity, the complement shows the divine origin of Christ (i.e. the eternal generation).[491] So, we do not absolutely deny the eternal generation of Christ in v. 13, but we strongly affirm that the fundamental meaning of v. 13 is the temporal generation of Christ, because the aorist verb indicates that it is an historical event.

2. Objections of A. Vicent Cernuda

A. Vicent Cernuda objects to the temporal birth of Jesus in v. 13. He presents three objections against the temporal generation of Chirst in v. 13.[492] His objections can be briefly presented as follows:[493]

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[490] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 131.

[491] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the mystery of the Covenant*, 144.

[492] "La posibilidad de que el ἐγεννήθη del v. 13 pueda referisce a la génesis humana queda absolutamente descartada por tres motivos: a) porque no es verosimil que preceda a la proclamación encarnadora del v. 14 el cómo virginal; b) porque al NT le repugna naturalmente usar el verbo seminal γεννῶμαι para proponer una partenogénesis; c) porque referido al nacimiento de un hombre suena impertinentemente teogámico" (A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La doble generación de Jesucristo", 316).

[493] For more details about these objections, cfr. A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La doble generación de Jesucristo", 313-317; I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 132ff.

a) His first argument is based on the assumption that as the event of Incarnation is solemnly proclaimed in v. 14, it is improbable that the preceding v. 13 would anticipate the same idea. Then v. 14 would be nothing but a mere repetition of v. 13 expressed in other words. Quoting the words of A. von Harnack,[494] he concludes that "Difícilmente podría en verdad concebirse que el v. 13 adelantara la razón partenogenética al hecho de la encarnación; o, al revés, difícilmente el v. 14 podría declarar con tanto empaque un acontecimiento del que ya se había dicho el cómo virginal".[495]

b) The second argument is about the linguistic/semantic problem of the verb γεννάω and its use in the N.T.[496] According to A. Vicent Cernuda, this verb, being an antonomasia, means 'to father' or 'to beget'. Begetting is the function of man. Even if one supposes that it would also mean 'to give birth', the verb ἐγεννήθη refers to the father

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[494] "«Aber nun gilt, dass auch die Zeugung ins Fleisch an dieser Stelle nicht behandelt sein kann … weil der 14. Vers das nicht gestattet; den die hier einsetzende Aussage gibt sich als eine ganz unvorbereitete, schliesst also aus, dass schon im vorangegangenen Satze gesagt war, der, an dessen Name der Gläubige glaubt, sei in seiner menschlichen Erscheinung nicht aus Blut und menschlichem Willen, sondern aus Gott gezeugt» [HARNACK, *Textkritik*, 549]" (A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La doble generación de Jesucristo", 313, note 189).

[495] *Ibid*., 314.

[496] Here is the argument as has been presented by V. Cernuda: "[…] los autores del NT se resisten a emplear el verbo γεννῶμαι en relación con el nacimiento humano de Jesucristo por la sencilla razón de que éste se produce por concepción virginal y aquél es el verbo seminal por antonomasia. […] Es verdad, sin embargo, que esta inicial dificultad semántica fue vencida con el tiempo y que Ignacio de Antioquía la desconoce ya. Podía, por tanto, pensar que el tardío autor del Prólogo joaneo no tuviera ya por qué ceñir su lenguaje al uso de los precedentes escritores del NT; pero ocurre que a renglón seguido de γεννῶμαι, cuya intención taxativa en el v. 13 es tan poco clara, aparece γίνομαι significando cabalmente la encarnación. Ahora bien, este segundo verbo es el que había preferido y usado Pablo por sistema para enunciar simultáneamente, en un alarde de talento literario, la encarnación y la partenogénesis. Esta coincidencia estilística entre Pablo y Juan, unida al escollo lógico de que el v. 13 anticipe el cómo virginal al acontecimiento encarnador, sugiere con elocuencia la idea que debe ser ἐγένετο la voz que entrañe, como en los escritos paulinos, no sólo el movimiento vertical de la encarnación, sino también el horizontal del proceso biológico" (*Ibid*., 314-315).

(ἐκ θεοῦ). But in our case the role of the father is completely excluded, because Jesus was virginally conceived. So, the verb ἐγεννήθη cannot be applied to the temporal birth of Jesus.

c) The third objection against the virgin birth of Jesus in v. 13 is that it would necessarily imply a 'hierogamy' if we apply the phrase ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη to the temporal generation of Jesus. He argues: "No se puede concebir esta formula [ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη] sin más como abreviatura de ἐκ θελήματος θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη, porque si se hubiera querido expresar sólo la causalidad eficaz se habría repetido espontáneamente la voz θέλημα, que ya había aparecido por dos veces en el miembro antitético de la frase".[497]

3. Answer to the objections of A. Vicent Cernuda

In the following sections, we will try to answer the abovementioned objections raised by A. Vicent Cernuda against the virgin birth of Jesus in the expression ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη. In doing so, we will have recourse to the counter-arguments proposed by I. de la Potterie.[498]

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[497] *Ibid*., 315. In the footnote, he adds: "Ciertas posiciones teológicas de la antigüedad parecen justificar, sin embargo, esta omisión. Por una parte, ORÍGENES propuso el origen del hijo a través de la voluntad divina, y por otra, entre génesis preexistente y partenogénesis humana, no había para aquella teología verdadera discontinuidad: «El nacimiento *ex Maria* no estaba desligado del nacimiento eterno. Coexistía con la generación eterna, y continua, *ex Patre.* Jesús nació a través del instrumento humano "según la voluntad del Padre", "de la voluntad de Dios", como de simiente divina. Conforme a una exégesis implícita de Joh 1,13 sensible ya desde S. Ignacio Antioqueno» (ORBE, *La unción del Verbo; Est. Val.,* III [AnGreg 113; Roma, 1961], 25s. *V.* tambien *Procesión*, 478s[18]; *Cristología*, 49s.). Pero como quiera que se desee pensar teológicamente (en otros tiempos o ahora) en principio la distinción exegética debe ser neta: o la generación es del Logos preexistente, y entonces la voluntad divina obra extrínsicamente, es imprescindible que se *sobreentienda* para evitar la teogamia. Ireneo, como expusimos *supra*, no dudó en aplicar este segundo esquema, pero evitando además en su exégesis y rígidamente toda virtualidad generativa" (*Ibid.*, 315-316, note 199).

[498] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 133-137.

a) Καί consecutivum or explicativum

In response to the first objection, I. de la Potterie proposes two important considerations with regard to the use of the conjunction καί in v. 14. We want to present his arguments as follows.[499]

1) The καί used in v. 14 has a very precise role to play in the grammatical construction of the sentence. This is the only καί in the entire Prologue that is found at the start of a verse. This conjunction is used to develop further the theme of Incarnation already introduced in the long sentence (vv. 12-13). According to him, it has to be considered as a καί *consecutivum* or as a καί *explicativum* (*epexegeticum*). Its role is to emphasize or explain what has already been said in the previous verse.[500] So, from the explanatory role of καί (v. 14) indicates the fact that the expression of v. 13 ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη has to be interpreted with the meaning of the temporal birth of Jesus.

2) In his argument, A. Vicent Cernuda makes the following statement without any ground: "Si el v. 14 declaraba solemne y expedito el acontecimiento de la encarnación, una cláusula precedente *no podía, no debía anticipar* la misma idea".[501] He presumes that an idea mentioned in the preceding verse should not and cannot be repeated in the following verse. His presupposition is unwarranted and unjustifiable. Unlike him, I. de la Potterie does not simply consider it as a 'mere repetition', but he observes a 'parallelism' between these two verses. We want to present his argument in his words:

> Non dobbiamo dimenticare le regole del parallelismo biblico. Quando due membri sono paralleli, il secondo non è una semplice ripetizione del primo. Di solito riprende lo stesso tema, ma da un punto di vista diverso. In questo caso c'è chiaramente un progresso da una frase all'altra: al v. 13, l'incarnazione è considerata dal punto di vista di Cristo e del Padre: «*egli* (il Verbo venuto tra noi) fu generato da Dio »;

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[499] *Ibid.*, 136-137.

[500] To support his argument, I. de la Potterie gives the following two examples: 1) "*Sì*, il Verbo si è fatto carne …" (M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Evangile selon saint Jean,* 20). The second example is from the TOB (Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible) where the conjunction καί is considered as a καί consecutivum. For these examples, cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 137, note 28.

[501] A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La doble generación de Jesucristo", 313.

al v. 14, Giovanni ne parla rispetto agli uomini: i testimoni («noi»)
hanno potuto «contemplare la sua gloria», la gloria «del Figlio
unigenito venuto da presso il Padre, pieno della grazia della verità»; e al
v. 16, l'autore aggiunge: «dalla pienezza di lui, *noi tutti* abbiamo
ricevuto».[502]

Thus, from the parallelism between v. 13 and v. 14 we can conclude
that v. 13 speaks about the temporal generation of Jesus.

b) The meaning of γεννάω

Is the verb γεννάω an antonomasia that means 'to father'?
Does it really exclude the mother's role? If it does not exclude it,
could it refer to the role played by a human father? Let us see how
I. de la Potterie responds to these questions. He makes two restrictions
to the use of the verb γεννάω with meaning 'to beget'. He argues that
this verb in the passive form is in no way against the temporal genera-
tion of Jesus:

> Non è del tutto esatto che γεννάω significhi per antonomasia *generare*.
> Ci sono da fare due restrizioni a questa regola. Anzitutto, il verbo può
> essere usato per una madre che *partorisce* (per esempio in Lc 1, 13. 57);
> è vero che anche allora una allusione al ruolo paterno resta talvolta
> sensibile: perciò gli evangelisti non usano mai questo verbo alle forme
> *attive* per Maria, dato che diventò madre rimanendo vergine. D'altra
> parte – questa è la seconda restrizione – quando il verbo è usato al
> *passivo* (γεννῶμαι), tutta l'attenzione si concentra sul bimbo che è
> concepito e che *nasce* (cfr Mt 19, 12; 26, 24; Gv 3, 4; 9, 2.19; 16, 21; At
> 2, 8; 7, 20; 22, 3.28). Pertanto, quelle forme verbali possono essere
> usate per Gesù, senza che questo implichi che sia intervenuto un padre
> umano (cfr Mt 1, 20: τὸ … ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθέν; Lc 1, 35; Gv 18, 37).
> Niente quindi si oppone al fatto che anche il passivo ἐγεννήθη di Gv 1,
> 13 significhi la generazione o il parto temporale di Gesù, tanto più che
> le parole ἐκ θεοῦ indicano chiaramente che il « generare » non è dovuto
> a un uomo, ma a Dio.[503]

Considering the passive form of the verb in Jn 1:13 and observing
how it has been used in Mt 1:20, Lk 1:35 and Jn 18:37 to speak about

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[502] *Ibid.*, 137.

[503] *Ibid.*, 133.

the temporal birth of Jesus, we too are of the same opinion that there is no reason to deny the temporal generation of Jesus in the phrase ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη.

c) Hierogamous generation?

According to A. Vicent Cernuda, the expression ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη would imply a 'hierogamy' if we give it the meaning of 'the temporal birth of Jesus'. I. de la Potterie criticizes him for simply making this affirmation without any documentary evidence.[504] Moreover, he responds to A. Vicent Cernuda's objection with the following three arguments:

i) In order to support the theory proposed by A. Vicent Cernuda, one may quote the text of Pseudo-Callistene. In his writing on the life of Alexander, the expression ἐκ θεοῦ γεννήθησα παῖδα[505] clearly refers to a child birth as the result of a 'hierogamy' without any doubt. Regarding this, I. de la Potterie says: while it is true that the example given here clearly speaks of a hierogamy, we should not forget that the expression used by the Evangelist in Jn 1:13 is completely different from this. Here is the argument in his own words:

> Per parlare dell'origine divina dell'eroe, il re di Macedonia, Filippo, dice alla sua moglie Olimpiade, la future madre di Alessandro: «da un dio hai concepito un figlio» (ἐκ θεοῦ γεννήθησα παῖδα, I, 9, 2). Ma il verbo è *attivo* (in Gv, invece, è al passivo). Quando si legge tutto il contesto del brano indicato, si vede che si tratta di una vera ierogamia, cioè dell'accoppiamento di una donna con un dio (Ammone), descritto in termini abbastanza realistici. Però, l'espressione usata dallo Pseudo-Callistene per descrivere la nascita di Alessandro è veramente unica nel mondo greco; fa parte di una compilazione tardiva, fatta da un Alessandrino, probabilmente nel III secolo d.C., almeno un secolo dopo Giovanni, nel tempo del sincretismo ellenistico. Il vocabolario abituale per parlare delle ierogamie era del tutto diverso. Si può dire che la

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[504] "Questo viene semplicemente affermato, ma in nessun modo documentato" (*Ibid.*, 133).

[505] "*Historia Alexandri Magni (Pseudo-Callisthenes)* (ed. G. Kroll), Berlino 1958², 10; oppure in *Scriptorum de rebus Alexandri Magni fragmenta* (ed. C. Müller), Parigi Didot, 1846, 9" (I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 133, note 18).

formula di Giovanni (un secolo prima) è senza paralleli. Anche nella Bibbia si trova solo nei suoi scritti (cfr un altro uso in Gv 5, 18: ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ). Se l'evangelista ha coniato una *espressione nuova*, viene del fatto che doveva parlare di una *realtà nuova*, unica nel senso più assoluto: la generazione umana del Figlio di Dio, rivelata agli uomini.[506]

The Johannine formula ἐγεννήθη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ was not used at all in Hellenistic religious thought. It is a unique formula used by the Evangelist alone to speak of a unique event of the Incarnation of Jesus. So, it has nothing to do with the concept of hierogamical generation.

ii) Let us now examine how the expression ἐγεννήθη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ was explained by the 2nd and 3rd Century Church Fathers. In the following Patristic writings, we observe that the Church Fathers have replaced the word θεοῦ (Jn 1:13) with πνεύματος ἁγίου (Mt 1:20) or δύναμις (Lk 1:35).[507] P. Hofrichter gives examples[508] from Justin,[509] Tertullian,[510] Origen[511] and Methodius of Olympus.[512]

Apart from these texts, we have two more examples given by I. de la Potterie: one from Origen[513] and another one from Methodius

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[506] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 133-134.

[507] *Ibid.*,134.

[508] Cfr. P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 121.

[509] *Apology* 1, 32, 11 (E.J. GOODSPEED, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, 48; PG 6, 380): "οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπείου σπέρματος … ἀλλ' ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ; οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπείου σπέρματος ἀλλ' ἐκ της του θεοῦ".

[510] *De carne Christi* 15, 3 (SCh 216, 274, 23f; PL 2, 779C): "Non de spiritu nec de deo sed ex uiri voluntate".

[511] *In Matth.* 1,18 fr. 11 (GCS 41/1 = Or 12/1, 20, 25f): "μὴ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς ἢ ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου".

[512] *De resurrection* 1, 26, 1 (GCS 27, 253, 12-15): "τὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σῶμα οὐκ ἦν ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός, … ἀλλὰ ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ δυνάμεως ὑψίστου …".

[513] "La sua nascita (γέννησις) fu doppia, *secondo la nostra natura* (καθ' ἡμας) e *al di sopra di essa* (ὑπέρ ἡμας): egli è nato «da una donna» secondo la nostra natura; ma era sopra la nostra natura ch'egli nascesse, «non da un volere di carne, né da un volere d'uomo», ma dallo Spirito Santo; così egli proclamava

of Olympus.[514] They too use the term ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ or   ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίοῦ to explain of Jn 1:13. From this, we can understand that the Church Fathers saw a reference to the Incarnation of Jesus in this expression ἐγεννήθη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ and not at all a reference to a theogamic generation.

iii) A. Vicent de Cernuda says that as the Evangelist used the word θέλημα in the first part of the verse (v. 13a), he should have also inserted it in v. 13b, in order to hide the 'harshness of the theogamic formula'.[515] But I. de la Potterie does not accept this for the following two reasons:

> In primo luogo […] non è vero che le parole «fu generato da Dio» avevano una risonanza ierogamica, siccome non erano in uso nella lingua sacra del mondo greco. Inoltre, se supponiamo che Giovanni voleva insistere sul fatto che la generazione di Cristo era dovuta alla *volontà* di Dio e non a un *atto generatore* in senso fisico, non era praticamente possibile dire «fu generato da *volere di Dio*», perché nella prima parte del versetto il termine θέλημα (*volere*) indicava precisamente il desiderio carnale. Se avesse ripetuto la stessa parola nella parte positiva del versetto, allora sì, avrebbe creato un pericoloso equivoco! Non è dunque l'*omissione*, è piuttosto l'*inserimento* di θέλημα che avrebbe potuto far pensare a una generazione divina di tipo ierogamica.[516]

At this point, one may raise the following question: why then did the Church Fathers add the word θέλημα to the Johannine formula ἐκ θεοῦ

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anticipatamente la nostra futura rigenerazione di cui voleva gratificarsi dallo *Spirito*" (*In Matthaeum*, framm. 11: *GCS, Origines*, 12/1, 20)": I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 135.

[514] "Il corpo di Cristo non fu formato «da volere di carne» …, ma «dallo Spirito Santo (ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίοῦ) e dalla potenza dell'Altissimo» (ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ) e dalla vergine" (*De resurrectione*, I, 26, 1: *GCS*, 27, 253, 12-15)": *Ibid*.

[515] He writes the following expression: "… disimular la crudeza teogámica de la formula" (A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La doble generación de Jesucristo", 315, note 198).

[516] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 136.

ἐγεννήθη? We have many patristic texts in which the Church Fathers use the expression ἐκ θελήματος θεοῦ or *ex voluntate Dei*.[517]

That the Church Fathers added the word θέλημα (*voluntas* or *placitum*) to Jn 1:13b does not mean that they perceived a *hierogamic meaning* in it. I. de la Potterie is convinced that all these Church Fathers explain the expression ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη in connection with the Incarnation of Jesus and they do not see any hierogamical meaning in it.[518]

From all the arguments presented above, we can conclude that the objections raised by A. Vicent Cernuda are too weak to be accepted. Thus, we have made it clear that there is no reason to object that v. 13 refers to the temporal generation of Jesus. Here in this verse, "the Incarnation of the Word of God in the womb of a woman, Mary, is being spoken of. This verse, then deals with the *human* conception and birth of the One who, from all eternity, is the Son of God. Moreover, indirectly and implicitly, it also alludes to the eternal birth of the Son of God".[519]

B. THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF THE THREE NEGATIONS IN V. 13

The three negations mentioned in v. 13 have a precise role, that is, to describe the birth of Jesus which is totally different from any ordinary human birth. It is to be considered important that these negations can get their complete meaning only in reference to the positive

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[517] The examples for such patristic texts found in P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 122, are as follows. JUSTIN: οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπείου σπέρματος γεγεννή μένου ἀλλ'ἐκ θελήματος θεοῦ (*Dialogue* 63, 2: E.J. GOODSPEED, 169; PG 6, 620C); IRENAEUS: non enim ex voluntate carnis nec ex voluntate viri, sed *ex voluntate Dei*, Verbum caro factum est (*Adversus haereses* 3, 16, 2 : SCh 211, 294, 69-71); uti non ex voluntate viri, sed *ex voluntate Dei*, aduentum eius qui secundum hominem est intellegamus (*Adversus haereses* 3, 16, 2 (SCh 211, 420, 270f); non ex voluntate carnis neque ex voluntatis viri, sed *ex placito Patris* (*Adversus haereses* 5, 1, 3 : SCh 153, 28, 85-89); TERTULLLIAN: qua caro autem, non ex sanguine nec ex carnis et viri voluntate: quia *ex Dei voluntate* Verbum caro factum est (*De Carne Christi* 19, 2 : SCh 216, 288, 15f).

[518] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 133-134.

[519] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the mystery of the Covenant*, 144.

statement that follows. We begin with the second and the third nega-
tion, which are easier to explain than the first one.

If Christ was not conceived 'by the urge of the flesh, nor by the
will of man', it implies a reference to the virginal conception. Do
these two negations mean the same? Do they repeat the same ideas?
Are they simply equivalent? Regarding this point, I. de la Potterie says
that these negations do not have the same meaning; rather there is an
ascending progression that moves through the four elements of the
verse. We want to quote his words here in order to better understand
this ascending line of thought in v. 13:

> If no man played a role in the manner in which the Son of God took on
> our human flesh, if man's function is totally absent here, it can only be a
> question then of a virginal conception. The second negation "nor by the
> urge of the flesh" seems to go in the same direction. However, some-
> times it is thought that the two negations must be distinguished by giv-
> ing to the second ("nor by the will of the *flesh*") an impact that is more
> general than the third ("nor of the will of *man*"). The second negation
> would seem to exclude from the process of the Incarnation absolutely
> every *carnal desire*, equally for the woman as for the man; only the
> third negation would exclude in a particular way the role of a *man* in the
> temporal begetting of the Word. In this interpretation, the words "nei-
> ther of the urge of the *flesh*," would also pertain to Mary, who would
> experience no carnal desire, since she was oriented toward a virginal
> life. […] But isn't it an exaggeration to find allusion so precise in the
> four words of John 1:13? Such a reading might be possible, but one
> would not say that it is a compelling one. Moreover, it is impossible that
> the two negations are simply equivalent: such a repetitive style is not
> the manner of John. The following solution could be presented, starting
> from the fact of an ascending progression which evidently moves
> through the four members of the verse: first appears the exclusion of
> the element that is most physical – "blood(s)" (at the birth); then the
> more general, that of the "fleshly" desire of the "animal nature" in the
> conception; finally, the exclusion of a human being, the man, in this
> same conception (this desire would normally be that of the father); fi-
> nally, which is positive this time, it moves up to the transcendent level,
> in underlining the generative role of God; it is God himself who is pre-
> sented as the Father of the Word incarnate.[520]

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[520] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the mystery of the Covenant*, 146.

This observation is important and interesting too. It shows us how the Evangelist is very linear in expressing his ideas about the birth of Christ. He mentions these three negations in a progressive manner in order to insist upon the extraordinary birth of Christ. His aim is to convince his readers that Jesus' birth was not an ordinary one but a virgin birth. Commenting on these three negations, F.-M. Braun says: "John is simply saying that instead of depending on human initiative, the birth of the Word-made-flesh resulted from an action that was really divine".[521] The virginal quality of Jesus' birth is considered so important by the Evangelist that he explains it with such strong negations. I. de la Potterie says that the patristic writings have an echo of this emphasis on the virginal quality of the birth of Jesus.[522]

The first negation (οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων) is the most difficult one to understand.   The plural form of the word 'blood' (αἱμάτων) creates the problem of understanding its meaning. We do not want to repeat here the different interpretations of various scholars, because we have already elaborately discussed on this point in the second part. One of the important interpretations of the 20th Century was the one proposed by P. Hofrichter.

According to him, the word αἱμάτων has to be explained in connection with the Old Testament texts, where the plural form of the blood דָּמִים is used in reference to the loss of blood linked with a woman's menstrual period. He says: "Der hebräische plural דמם, dem die griechische Pluralform αἵματα in Joh 1,13 entspricht, kommt im Zusammenhang von Sexualität und Geburt zweimal bei Levitikus (Lev 12,7; 20,18) und dreimal bei Ezechiel (Ez 16,6.9.22) vor. Das bedeutungsfeld umfaßt auf dieser Grundlage genitales Blut der Frau in jeder denkbaren Erscheinungsform: Wochenfluß (Lev 12,7), menstru-

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[521] F.-M. BRAUN, *Mother of God's People*, 39-46.

[522] *Ibid*, 147, note 24-25: "St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.*, III, 21, 5, 7: «Non ex voluntate viri erat qui nascebatur; … non operante in eum Joseph, sed sola Maria cooperante dispositione; … uti non ex voluntate viri, sed ex voluntate Dei, adventum eius qui secundum hominem est, intelligamus». St. Jerome, *Epist*, 65, 8, 2: «Virgo de virgine, qui non ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo natus est» (PL 22, 267; CSEL 54, 625, 8-9)".

ationsblut (Lev 20, 18), geburtsblut (Ez 16,6.22), auch das Blut zu Beginn der reife (Ez 16, 9)".[523]

In his opinion, the word 'blood(s)' in Jn 1:13 too refers to the blood of Mary in her giving birth to Jesus. Interpreting Jn 1:13 against the background of the classic text (Lev 12:4-7) for the laws of purification for a woman after giving birth to a child, we can conclude that "in the context for the laws of purification it signifies that Jesus, in being born, did not cause an *effusion of blood* in his mother; in other words, at the birth of Jesus there would not have been any ritual impurity in his mother because in her there would not have taken place any shedding of blood".[524]

C. THE PARALLELISM BETWEEN JN 1:12-13 AND JN 20:31

Jn 1:12-13	Jn 20:31
ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, <u>τοῖς πιστεύουσιν</u> εἰς τὸ *ὄνομα αὐτοῦ,* ὃς οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' <u>ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη.</u>	ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα <u>πι-στεύσητε</u> ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,* καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ *ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.*

We note a strong link between these two texts. The Evangelist ends his Gospel with the words that contain the scope of his writing the Gospel. Let us analyse the following key words of these two texts:

Jn 1:12-13   Jn 20:31

τοῖς πιστεύουσιν   =   πιστεύσητε
εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ   =   ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ
ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη   =   ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ

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[523] P. HOFRICHTER, *Nicht aus Blut*, 92.

[524] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the mystery of the Covenant*, 149.

In both texts, the divine Sonship of Jesus is mentioned. The theme of faith is also present in both the texts. Moreover, becoming the Children of God (1:12) or having life in His name (20:31) is the fruit of this faith. Here we can note an important element in this parallelism: that is, the *human birth* of Jesus (His Incarnation) is the model of the new birth of Christians (becoming God's Children or having new life). The same parallelism can also be found in its connection with 1 Jn 5:13: Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. Here also, John speaks about the divine Sonship of Jesus, believing in His name and having eternal life.

When John speaks of Jesus as the Son of God, he always mentions the importance of believing in the divine Sonship of Jesus. Believing in Him is a condition for taking part in His life. J. Galot cites a number of Johannine texts such as Jn 3:14-15; 5:11-13; 6:35,47, 61; 11:25; 12:36; 14:12; 20:30 to explain this point. With regard to this point in connection with the Prologue, he writes:

> Dans le prologue, ce rôle de la foi est bien mis en lumière, puisque ceux à qui est donné le pouvoir de devenir enfants de Dieu sont ceux qui croient; c'est par la foi qu'ils reçoivent communication de la generation divine de celui que ne fut pas engendré d'un commerce humain mais de Dieu. Nous retrouvons le schème de pensée: par la foi, devenir ce que le Christ est lui-même le premier. L'expression "croire en son nom" pourrait apporter une autre confirmation du singulier. On peut en effet remarquer, avec le P. Mollat, que ce "nom" demande à être précisé: Parole ou Verbe, vie, lumière ne sont pas des noms. Or dans l'évangile et dans la première épître, le nom en lequel on croit et reçoit la vie est celui du Fils de Dieu (3,18; 20,31; 1 Jn 3,23; 5,13). On s'attend donc normalement à voir mentionné ici également le Fils de Dieu. "Ceux qui croient au nom de celui qui ne fut pas engendré des sangs … mais de Dieu".[525]

Thus, we note that the theology of Jn 1:12-13 becomes clear when we read it in connection with the other Johannine texts mentioned above. The fundamental theme of vv. 12-13 is the human birth of the Son of God and the importance of having faith in His name to become Children of God and have eternal life. God's revelation reaches its highest

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[525] J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 109-110.

point at the moment of Jesus' Incarnation. We will later study in detail the Johannine theology of Incarnation.

D. MEANING OF JN 1.12-13 IN CONNECTION WITH 1 JN 5:18

There is a strong parallelism between Jn 1:12-13 and 1 Jn 5:18. Analysing these two parallel texts and taking into consideration their vocabularies, we get a better understanding of the meaning of the expression ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. One of the most important points to be taken into consideration is that in the entire New Testament Jn 1:13 and 1 Jn 5:18 are the only texts that use the formula ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ with the aorist verb γεννάω. The following graphic illustration of I. de la Potterie presents well the connection between these two passages:[526]

		A) Jn 1:12-13	B) 1 Jn 5:18
I. The believers	{	τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι	πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ
II. Jesus Christ	{	ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη	ὁ γεννηθείς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

Here we note that John uses two equivalent formulas to speak about believers (A and B): "children of God" and "the one who is born of God". Both the formulas describe the divine sonship of believers. This divine sonship is a sign of believers' mature faith. But when Jn speaks about the sonship of Jesus, he uses a different formula in a different way. We observe that when speaking of the believers' birth John uses the perfect tense; but speaking about the birth of Christ, he uses the aorist indicative. It can be observed in the following passages too: Jn 3:3-8; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1. The exclusive use of the aorist indicative to speak of the birth of Christ is a sign that John is very particular about the historical event of the Incarnation. This point is very evident from Jn 1:12-13 and 1 Jn 5:18. The Evangelist wants to distinguish

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[526] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Maria-Virgen en el IV Evangelio*, 56.

between the two births: the spiritual birth of believers as sons of God and the Incarnation of Christ as the only and unique Son of God.

Commenting on this point, M. Vellanickal says: "Jn seems to describe the role of Christ in the divine generation of Christians, as the One who is generated by God "ὁ γεννηθείς ἐκ τοῦ θεου" (cf. I Jn 5:18), in the aorist, referring to His temporal generation in the Incarnation. Thus John specifies the roles of the Father and the Son in the generation of Christians: The Father as the One who generates (ὁ γεννήσας) and the Son as the One who is generated (ὁ γεννηθείς)".[527] John emphasizes this role of Jesus as the one who was generated by God, with the expression μονογενής in the prologue (cfr. Jn 1:14,18). This word underlines the quality of being the "only and unique" Son of God.

In the writings of John, we can see another difference in the way he speaks about the children of God. According to John, the divine filiation of believers (becoming children of God) is a dynamic process. Referring to the Johannine texts (Jn 1:12; 3:3-8 and 1 Jn 2:29; 3:2,9), I. de la Potterie presents the dynamism of the filiation in the following diagram:[528]

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
(1) & (2) & (3) \\
\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\acute{\eta}\theta\eta\nu\alpha\iota & \longrightarrow & \gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\acute{\eta}\mu\epsilon\nu\text{o}\nu\ \epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota \\
(\text{Jn } 3:3,5) & & (\text{Jn } 3:6,8;\ 1\ \text{Jn } 2:29;\ 3:9) \\
\end{array}
$$

$$
\longrightarrow\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\nu\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\text{o}\hat{\upsilon}\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota\ \longrightarrow\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\nu\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\text{o}\hat{\upsilon}\ \epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota
$$
$$
(\text{Jn } 1:12)\qquad\qquad (1\ \text{Jn } 3:2)
$$

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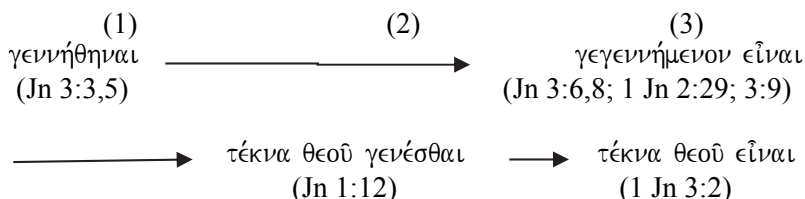
[527] M. VELLANICKAL, *The Divine Sonship*, 123.

[528] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *María-Virgen en el IV Evangelio*, 57. He explains the dynamic process of becoming children of God in the following words: "Juan concibe la filiación cristiana de una manera dinámica: después de haber recibido al Verbo, puede el hombre, por una fe costante en el Engenerado de Dios, *llegar* también él a ser *hijo* de Dios (Jn 1, 12-13); lo mismo, después de haber sido regenerado (*gennêthêi* en subjuntivo aoristo Jn 3, 3.5) por el agua y el Espíritu, por el bautismo y la fe, podrà, bajo la acción del Espíritu Santo, llegar a ser poco a poco un hombre 'nacido del Espíritu' (*gegennêmenos* 3, 8). Este empleo de *gennân* en perfecto, para describir el desarrollo completo de la vida filial, es frecuente en San Juan" (*Ibid*).

Believers become children of God though an intimate relationship with Christ. Their becoming children of God is based on their faith in the mystery of Incarnation and accepting Jesus as the only Son of God. This intimate spiritual relationship is well expressed in 1 Jn 5:18: "The one who is born of God does not sin because He who was born of God protects him". Thus, having faith in the Incarnation of Jesus becomes the foundation of one's spiritual birth.

E. THE SINGULAR DIVINE SONSHIP OF JESUS

The Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Jesus is an important theme in the Gospel of John. In the Johannine writings we note that the word πατήρ is used 115 times in the Gospel, 16 times in the letters and 5 times in the book of Revelation. The abundant use of this word is a sign that this theme is very important in the Johannine writings. "The fact that the expression 'Our Father' does not occur in Jn and 'Your Father' only once and that after the resurrection of Christ, marks the singular relation between the Father and the Son, as developed by Jn".[529] The theme of the divine Sonship of Jesus, developed throughout the Gospel, is again well expressed in the concluding verse: Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (Jn 20:31).

As M. Vellanickal observes, the divinity of Christ, expressed in the term ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ is made evident by His preexistence (Jn 1:1-2; 6:7,38,62; 8:58; 17:5,24), His equality with the Father in knowledge (Jn 2:24; 5:18; 6:65; 12:33; 16:29) and power (Jn 5.17,20,36), His community with the Father (Jn 16:15; 17:10), and the mutual communication of the divine nature and attributes (Jn 10:30; 14:10-12; 17:22-23).[530] That Jesus is the only Son of God is repeatedly mentioned by the Evangelist in many passages.[531]

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[529] M. VELLANICKAL, *The Divine Sonship*, 127.

[530] *Ibid*.

[531] Cfr. Jn 1:18,34,49; 3:16,18,35,36; 5:19,23,25,26; 6:40,69; 8:36; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4,27; 14:13; 17:1; 19:7; 20:31.

F. Jesus' divine Sonship and Christian discipleship

According to the fourth Evangelist, Christian discipleship should be modeled on the filial relationship of Jesus with His Father. Our life should be an imitation and a resemblance of Christ's life. We become children of God in the measure that we believe in Him as the Son of God. Christ is the model on which we have to live our Christian life. According to Johannine theology, Jesus' relationship with the Father is the basis of our relationship with God.[532]

The mission of the disciples is based on Jesus' mission: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you"; Jn 17:18: "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world". The mission that we received from Christ is the result of the mission that Jesus received the Father.

Jesus promises to give new life to his believers through the Eucharist, as He himself drew life from His Father: "As the living Father sent me and I draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will also draw life from me" (Jn 6:57).

It is through our faith in Christ the only Son of God that we come to know God the Father. This faith of the disciples in Christ is based on Christ's knowledge about the Father. Jesus prays: "Father, Upright One, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me" (Jn 17:25). The intimate relationship between the Father and the Son is resembled in the relationship between Christ and us. This mutual rapport is expressed in the following words of Jesus: "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep" (Jn 10:14-15).

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[532] This parallel scheme which is typically Johannine can be noted in the following passages. Jn 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, will have life"; Jn 12:36: "As long as you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may be children of the light"; Jn 14:12: "whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father".

Jesus' love for us is the reflection of the Father's love for the Son. This is how Jesus declares his love for us: "I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love" (Jn 15:9).

Jesus prays for unity in analogy with the perfect unity that exists between Him and his Father: "With me in them and you in me, may they be so perfected in unity that the world will recognize that it was you who sent me and that you have loved them as you have loved me" (Jn 17:23).

We have seen a number of examples of this principle of analogy in John's Gospel. All these examples tell us that Christ is the model on which our Christian life has to be modeled. The same correspondence between Christ and believers is perfect, if we read Jn 1:13 in the singular. His divine Sonship is the model for our becoming God's children. His filiation is the basis and model of our call to become children of God.

His divine filiation is passed on to us inasmuch as we receive him or accept him through our faith in Jesus the only Son of God. We have already discussed this in the first part that if we read Jn 1:13 in plural, this analogy between Christ's birth and the spiritual birth of believers will disappear and we will not have Jesus as our 'model' in becoming children of God. Seeing this analogy very evident in Jn. 1:13, many biblical scholars are convinced that this verse should be read in the singular.[533] This parallelism is an important point in the theology of John's Gospel.

G. OTHER JOHANNINE TEXTS DEALING WITH THE VIRGINAL CONCEPTION OF JESUS

1. Some Important Observations

We saw that Jn 1:1-12 is better understood in comparison with the Johannine texts such as Jn 20:31 and 1 Jn 5:18. We made it clear that vv. 12-13 of the Prologue is fundamentally Christological and

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[533] Cfr. M. VELLANICKAL, *Divine Sonship*, 118; J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 107-108; I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 142-143.

speaks about the virginal conception and the virgin birth of Jesus. Now we want to show that it is not only these two verses of the Prologue that speak about the virginal conception of Jesus but also there is much more to be explored in the Gospel of John about this theme. Now we want to present here three important observations.[534]

a) The first observation is that Mary is never called by her name. She is called the "mother of Jesus" on six occasions (cfr. Jn 2:1,3,5,12; 6:42; 19:25). It is not that John had any aversion towards the name of Mary. It is evident from the fact that he uses it for other women such as Mary, the sister of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-44; 12.1-18), Mary Magdalene (Jn 19:25; 20:1-2; 20:11-18) and Mary of Clopas (Jn 19:25). Why does he then never use the proper name for the Mother of Jesus? I. de la Potterie gives the following answer:

> John has the inclination to present certain persons as "types", that is to say, as role models, figures or symbols who react in a particular manner with regards to Jesus and his message. In such instances, the real name of these persons has but a secondary importance; it is rather the characteristic disposition they represent and of which they become a model that primarily concern him. What is above all important for John is the *typological* and symbolic value of such persons. This is also the case for Mary. […] All of the attention of the evangelist is concentrated on her function in regard to Jesus. He wishes to accentuate above all the fact that she is *Mother of the One* who is the Son of God, the mother of the Word Incarnate. […] That Mary is never presented by name, is not due to forgetfulness, nor to a lack of interest on the part of John with regard to the mother of Jesus. We might even say that he wishes just the opposite, to make her stand out from her private role. In the history of salvation, this woman who became the Mother of the Son of God, has universal significance. It is her role in the work of salvation that interests John, much more than the details and anecdotes of her life.[535]

The first observation that Mary is always referred to as "Mother of Jesus" is important as we move towards the second one.

b) The second observation is that John, who mentions Mary as the "Mother of Jesus" never calls Jesus "son of Mary" but the "son of

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[534] These three observations are due to I. de la Potterie's scholarly contribution (*Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 107-113).

[535] *Ibid.*, 109-110.

Joseph" (cfr. Jn 1:45; 6:42). What could be the reason for it? How to explain this 'paradox'? This observation is so surprising that it may mislead the readers to think that John did not believe in the virginal conception. It apparently contradicts our conviction that John speaks of the virginal conception of Jesus in his Gospel (cfr. Jn 1:12-13). We will deal with this problem in detail later. A completely separate section will be dedicated to this topic.

c) A third point that I. de la Potterie wants to throw light upon is as follows: an attentive reading of the Fourth Gospel makes it very evident that "the theology of John is fundamentally centered on the theme of the Incarnation".[536] Let us now study this point in greater detail in the following section. It will help us to understand that John could not remain indifferent to the reality of the virginal conception, given the fact that the whole theology of John is centered on the theme of Incarnation and that this mystery of God becoming man is closely linked to the virginal conception.

2. The Johannine theme of the Incarnation

As we already mentioned earlier, the theme of the Incarnation is one of the fundamental themes of the Fourth Gospel. As the Evangelists Matthew and Luke present the virginal conception at the beginning of their Gospels, John too presents the virginal conception and virgin birth of Jesus in the Prologue. The Prologue is nothing but a solemn hymn dedicated to the Word Incarnate and a glorious chant revealing the great mystery of Incarnation.

Although the Johannine Prologue belongs to a completely different *literary genre* in comparison with the narratives of the Infancy Gospels, we have no doubt that its primary aim is to poetically narrate the historical coming of the eternal Word into this world and to reveal the great mystery of Incarnation in concrete terms. "For him [John], the physical man of Jesus is the temple of the presence of God. In Jesus God is present among us. He is the Son of God. The Fourth Gospel is entirely constructed around the unity between these two poles: the unity between the *Son of God*, who comes from the Father, and the

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[536] *Ibid.*, 111.

man Jesus, who has appeared among us. We have there the great theology of the revelation on Christ".[537] This revelation of God in His Son Jesus (The Word made flesh: Jn 1:14) is "the fundamental principle and the key to the interpretation of the whole of the theology and symbolism of St. John".[538]

John begins his Prologue with the eternal presence of the Logos in the bosom of the Father (cfr. Jn 1:1) and that Logos who was one with the Father takes flesh and dwells among us (cfr. Jn 1:14). This close relationship between the Father and the Son is mentioned when he speaks about the historical event of the Incarnation. 1 Jn 1:2 is a good example for this: "That life was made visible; we saw it and are giving our testimony, declaring to you the eternal life, which was present to the Father and has been revealed to us". In no other Gospel is the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son so frequently mentioned as in the Gospel of John. John repeatedly employs the words 'Father' and 'Son' to explain the divine Sonship of Jesus. "What is characteristic of John is that he designates Jesus as the 'only Son,' the 'Son of the Father.' John highlights this Father-Son relationship in an exceptional manner as the fundamental relationship between God and Jesus".[539]

All these considerations repeatedly insist that the virginal conception of Jesus mentioned in Jn 1:12-13 is in line with the theology of John's Gospel. All these references and explanations convince us that John's theology of the Incarnation does not overlook the concrete reality of the virginal conception of Jesus mentioned in Jn 1:12-13.

But on the other hand, it is astonishing that John, who presents Jesus as the only Son of God, calls him 'the son of Joseph' (cfr. Jn 1:45; 6:42). We will clarify this problem in the following section. In doing so, we will have recourse to the scholarly study done by I. de la Potterie and will eventually present a summary of his conclusions too.[540]

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[537] *Ibid.*

[538] *Ibid.*

[539] *Ibid.*, 112.

[540] *Ibid.*, 114-133.

3. The formula 'Son of Joseph'

John uses the formula "the Son of Joseph" on two occasions (cfr. Jn 1:45 and Jn 6:42). Before we study these two texts, let us first see how it is used in the Synoptic Gospels. We have three different formulas in the Synoptic Gospels to designate Jesus: "Is this not the Son of Joseph?" (Lk 4:22); "Is this not the son of the carpenter?" (Mt 13:55); "Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary" (Mk 6:3). It is interesting to note there are three different variants in the Synoptic Gospels. From a historical point of view, which of these three Evangelists has handed down to us the most ancient tradition?

There is a big discussion among the scholars with regard to this point. I. de la Potterie is of the opinion that "the expression which seems to be the most primitive seems to be either that of Matthew or of Luke".[541] If we agree with this point, then comes the question: Why did Mark deliberately change this ancient text to "Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mk 6.3).[542] Some exegetes think that "at

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[541] *Ibid.*, 115.

[542] J. Gnilka mentions three variants of this expression in his commentary and interprets the original expression as follows: "La tradizione del testo del v. 3a è insicura. Occorre tenere conto di tre varianti: 1. «l'artigiano, il figlio di Maria» (tutti i codici maiuscoli e numerosi minuscoli); 2. «il figlio dell'artigiano» (P[45], 13, 124); 3. «il figlio dell'artigiano e di Maria» (it. arm., Orig., 33 69). La prima lezione va considerata l'originaria perché è la più scandalosa. La lezione 2 deriva dall'influenza di Mt 13,55. La terza lezione è una versione chiaramente smussata. Per i suoi compaesani, dunque, Gesù è inconfondibilmente definito mediante il suo mestiere e col riferimento alla sua famiglia. È del tutto insolito accenno alla madre. Si è supposto perciò che Giuseppe, il padre di Gesù nel frattempo fosse morto. Ma siccome anche in questo caso l'accenno alla madre è insolito, McArthur non lo considera una determinazione genealogica, ma come rapportato alla situazione: «è il figlio di Maria che abita in fondo alla strada». In Marco Giuseppe non è mai nominato. Va notato però che «il figlio di Maria» è un nome per Gesù. O il nome è usato polemicamente e come insulto oppure come riferimento alla nascita verginale. Per il primo caso bisogna pensare all'influsso dell'ambiente giudaico, dove in questo modo si vuole alludere a una nascita illegittima. Per il secondo si può addurre come testimonianza il *Corano* che presuppone la nascita verginale di Gesù. Si può dunque supporre che nel racconto i compaesani insultino chiaramente Gesù ma che, sullo sfondo, si esprima un'affermazione di fede che

the time Mark was writing the Gospel, Joseph was already for some time deceased, so in speaking of Jesus as 'the son of Joseph' would no longer make sense. Mary, however, was alive and she was well known by the people of Nazareth. Others propose […] that Mark could have changed the text because he refused to accept the title 'the son of Joseph' for his own reasons".[543]

Finding out the exact reason for the textual change is not our main concern here. What we are really interested in is to know whether the Evangelists, using the expression 'son of Joseph', contradict the idea of the virginal conception in their Gospels or not. To find out this, let us now see another important text in the Gospel of Luke where the expression 'son of Joseph' is present: "When he began, Jesus was about thirty years old, being the son, as it was thought, of Joseph son of Heli, …" (cfr. Lk 3:23). Commenting upon this verse, I. de la Potterie says that this expression is not the Evangelist's opinion but he just reports here the opinion of the people:

> It is especially interesting to note here that Luke, who, in the text cited above [Lk 3:23], reports the words of the inhabitants of Nazareth: "Is this not *the son of Joseph?,*" adds explicitly in his genealogy "*hôs enomidzeto,*" "as it was thought (by the people)." Luke who has written an Infancy Gospel and who narrated in detail the circumstances of the virginal conception and birth of Jesus does not hesitate to use in 4:22 the expression, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" for he knew well – as he had mentioned in 3:23 – that this was the opinion of the people. In his Gospel, Luke, then transmits truly what the people think and say about Jesus, but personally does not share their opinion. To know that is, of course, of great importance for a correct interpretation of the expression, "the son of Joseph." What then appears very clear in Luke and Mark goes equally well for the two texts of John, where the same expression is used, even though in a different context.[544]

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fa riferimento alla nascita verginale. A favore di quest'interpretazione depongono l'interrogativo fondamentale circa l'origine di Gesù e forse il fatto che Marco evita di accennare al padre. Ciò che Marco non conosce ancora è una pericope paragonabile a Lc 1,26ss." (J. GNILKA, *Marco*, Cittadella Assisi 1987, 315-316).

[543] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 115.

[544] *Ibid.*, 116.

The same expression used by John does not contradict his conviction about the virginal conception of Jesus. John simply reports the opinion of others. If we anlayze Jn 1:45 and Jn 6:42 in their contexts, we will get a better understanding of the expression 'the son of Joseph'.

a) "Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth" (Jn 1:45)

Here is the entire text of the pericope in which the expression "Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth" is present.

> Philip found Nathaniel and said to him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law, the one about whom the prophets wrote: he is Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth". "From Nazareth?" said Nathaniel. "Can anything good come from that place?" "Come and See", replied Philip. When Jesus saw Nathaniel coming he said of him, "There is an Israelite who deserves the name, incapable of deceit". "How do you know me?" said Nathaniel. "Before Philip came to call you", said Jesus, "I saw you under the fig-tree". Nathaniel answered, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel". Jesus replied, "You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig-tree. You will see greater things than that". And then he added, "I tell you most solemnly, you will see heaven laid open and, upon the Son of Man, the angels of God ascending and descending" (Jn 1:45-51).

Before interpreting the statement made by Philip to Nathaniel, we must take into consideration an important point. When Philip made this statement, he knew Jesus very little. Jesus was just at the beginning of his public ministry. It is very evident that Philip is making a Messianic profession faith. But he adds to this messianic profession the common people's opinion about this Messiah in order to specify whom he is talking about. His further personal contact with Jesus will alone make him grow in his faith. This profession of faith is made at the very beginning stage of his faith journey.

As I. de la Potterie says: "It is evident that after a first encounter with Jesus (who is still at the beginning of his public ministry), Philip too, shared in the common opinion that Jesus was the son of Joseph from Nazareth. But who Jesus really was in the depth of his being, he had no idea whatsoever. All that he knew for the moment is that this man, Jesus, must be the Messiah! This is already a first step in the right direction, but he still had a long way to go to purify and

deepen his vision of faith regarding the mystery of Jesus".[545] A superficial reading of this Johannine text, without any careful attention to these considerations, could mislead us to wrongly conclude that the statement of Philip is here denying the virginal conception and the divine Sonship of Jesus.

Now let us try to see what could have been the opinion of the Evangelist himself regarding this statement, as he composed this pericope after so many decades. In order to understand this point, we have to see the literary structure of the pericope. By means of a structural analysis of this textual unit, we will prove that "John's opinion on this matter springs very distinctly from the context of the narrative wherein the expression 'Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth', appears as also from the series of titles (cfr. Jn 1:45,49,51), which are attributed to Jesus in this episode".[546]

In our structural analysis of the text, we must pay attention to the different titles given to Jesus in this passage: Son of Joseph (Jn 1:45), Son of God and King of Israel (Jn 1:49), Son of man (Jn 1:51). We must also distinguish the three different dialogues linked with one another in a progressive movement. We present here how these three dialogues and the titles given to Jesus form a concentric structure:[547]

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[545] *Ibid.*, 118-119.

[546] *Ibid.*, 119.

[547] *Ibid.*, 119-121.

A

Dialogue between Jesus and
Nathaniel (vv. 45-46)
"SON OF JOSEPH"

B

Dialogue between Jesus and
Nathaniel (vv. 47-50)
"SON OF GOD", "KING OF ISRAEL"

A'

Dialogue between Jesus and
Nathaniel (v. 51)
"SON OF MAN"
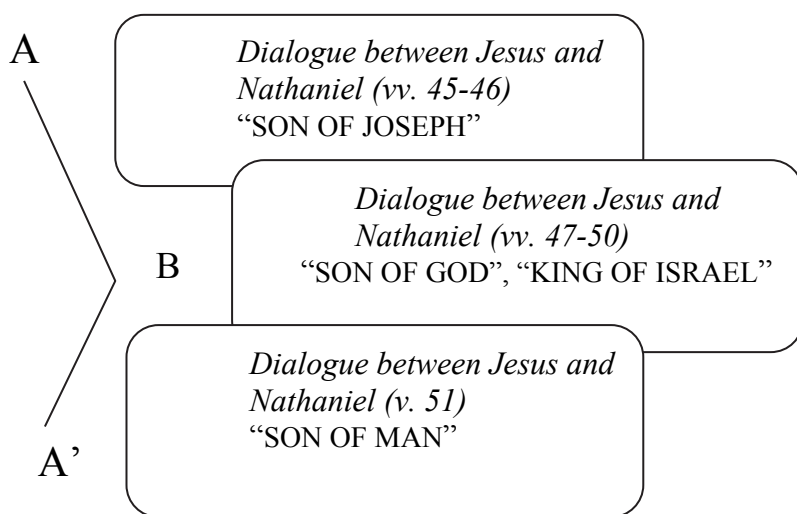
The section A of the narrative (vv. 45-46) is formed by the dia-
logue between Jesus and Nathaniel where Jesus is declared the Son of
Joseph. What the common people thought about him is expressed
here. The "human aspect of Jesus" is the content of this title. Then
comes the central part of the narrative (B), that is the dialogue
be-tween Jesus and Nathaniel (vv. 47-50), wherein Nathaniel
draws a conclusion about the person of Jesus and declares him as
the "Son of God" and the "King of Israel". In the third part of the
pericope (A') is formed by the dialogue between Jesus and Nathaniel
(v 51). Here the future faith of Nathaniel is mentioned. Nathaniel
will recognize Jesus as the "Son of man".

As Nazareth is mentioned in the first section, so heaven is
mentioned in the third section. In this concentric structure, we can also
note that the verb ὁράω is continuously used in every section of the
structure. The 'structured text of Jn 1:45-51' as presented by I. de Pot-
terie is helpful for us to understand better the meaning and the func-
tion of the expression 'the son of Joseph' within the context of this pe-
ricope:[548]

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[548] The literary structure of the text (Jn 1:45-51) has been taken from:
Ibid., 120.

Structured Text of Jn 1:45-51

	45. Philip meets Nathaniel and says to him: *The one whom Moses has* *written about in the Law* *and the prophets,* we have found him: he is *Jesus, the son of Joseph,* *from Nazareth.*
A Present revelation (Philip) Jesus Messiah (incredulity of Nathaniel)	46. Nathaniel replied: Can anything good come from Nazareth? Philip answered him: Come and SEE (ide).
	47. Jesus SAW Nathaniel coming and said to him: a) BEHOLD (ide) A TRUE ISRAELITE, a man without deceit. 48. Nathaniel said to him: How do you know me? Jesus replied and said to him: Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree I SAW you.
B Second Revelation (Jesus) Jesus Son of God (the faith of Nathaniel)	49. Nathaniel answered him: Rabbi b) *You are the Son of God!* *You are the King of Israel!* 50 Jesus said to him: Just because I said: I have SEEN you under the fig tree a') YOU BELIEVE; YOU WILL SEE yet greater things.
A' Future Revelation (Jesus) Heaven opened on the Son of Man	51. And he said to him: I tell you most solemnly YOU WILL SEE heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon *the Son of Man.*

From the structure presented above, we can better understand how the different titles given to Jesus are interconnected. In this structure, "there is clearly a perceptible progress: one starts with 'son of Joseph from Nazareth' (v. 45), comes to 'Son of God, the King of Israel' (v. 49), and arrives at the revelation of 'Son of man upon whom the heavens are opened' (v. 51). […] The third title embraces in some way the first, but immediately gives it a more profound meaning. Here the paradox and scandal of the Incarnation are summed up in one word: the Messiah, the Son of God manifests himself in the guise of a man who moves among the people as 'the son of Joseph'. This title therefore does not mean that John acknowledged the true paternity of Joseph".[549] Thus, it is clear that the title 'son of Joseph' given to Jesus in Jn 1:45 is not at all against the fundamental concept of the divine Sonship of Jesus.

b) "Is not this the Son of Joseph?" (Jn 6:42)

We want to examine this text in the literary context of the pericope Jn 6:41-47. This pericope forms part of Jesus' discourse on the bread of life. It has the following concentric structure.

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[549] *Ibid*., 122-123.

The Concentric Structure of Jn 6:41-47[550]

41. The Jews were MURMURING against him
because he had said:
"I am the bread

(a)   that *came down from heaven.*"

A
Murmuring

42. They said:
"Is this not Jesus,

(b)   THE SON OF JOSEPH,
do we not know
HIS FATHER and mother?

How can he say now: I am

(a')   *come down from heaven*?"

43. Jesus said in reply:
"DO NOT MURMUR among yourselves.

44.   No one *can come to me*
Unless THE FATHER who sent me

(a)   draws him...

B
Not Murmuring

45.   It is written
in the prophets:

(b)   They shall all
be taught by GOD.

Coming to Jesus

(a')   Everyone who has heard THE FATHER
and learned from him,
comes to me."

46. Not that anyone

(b)   has seen THE FATHER

A'
Believing

only the one who

(a)   *comes from God,*

(b')   has seen THE FATHER.

47. I tell you most solemnly
he who BELIEVES, has eternal life.

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[550] *Ibid.*, 125.

There is a progressive dynamic movement in this structure: from the 'murmuring' (lack of faith) of the Jews to their faith in Jesus. We can observe three different phases in this movement. In the first phase (A), Jesus says: "I am the bread that came down from heaven". The Jews object: "Is this not the son of Joseph, and do we not know his father and mother?" If we carefully look at the internal structure of the first section, we can note that the formula "the son of Joseph" placed between the expression "come down from heaven" and makes an inclusion. In the second phase (B), Jesus invites them to have faith. Here also there is an inclusion, which can be noted very well in the structure presented above. The third phase (A') underlines the theme of faith: "He who believes has eternal life". To believe means to accept Jesus as the one who has come down from heaven. Within this third phase too, we note a concentric structure.

Analysing each stage of this threefold (A-B-A') concentric structure of the whole pericope, we come to know the important points: 1) The first stage of the pericope makes it clear that the reason why the Jews murmur is the fact that they do not want to accept Jesus as the bread come down from heaven. The reason for their incredulity is their wrong opinion about Jesus' origin that he was the son of Joseph. Here we should pay attention to the fact that this is not the Evangelist's opinion, but the opinion of the Jews. 2) In the second stage, the Evangelist throws light upon the key word "Father". It is the Father who draws everyone to believe in His Son Jesus. In v. 13, we read: "No one comes to me, unless the Father who sent me draws him…. Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him, comes to me." 3) The third section that presents God as the Father of Jesus makes an inclusion with the first section where the 'paternity of Joseph' is mentioned.

Having analysed the structure of the text, we can conclude that John is very clear in demonstrating the contrast between the divine Sonship of Jesus and the false opinion of the Jews that he was the Son of Joseph. "John was so well aware of the *divine filiation* of Jesus and attached so great an importance to it, that it becomes *the* central

thought of his theology and the key to the whole of his Gospel. That also results from the text of John 6:41-47".[551]

Throughout his Gospel, John is very particular in affirming that Jesus is the Son of God, come down from heaven. Thus, we can conclude that the idea of the virginal conception of Jesus and the divine Sonship of Jesus, expressed in Jn 1:14 is present in the other passages of his Gospel too. We can even say that this idea is at the very core of his Gospel message.

II. MARIOLOGICAL MEANING OF JN 1:13

In the historical and salvific event of the Incarnation, it goes without saying that Christ-God is at the centre of this great mystery in the text Jn 1:13, and thus it is fundamentally a Christological text. So, one might ask why then we should speak about the Marian significance of this verse, as it is a Christological text and Mary's name is not mentioned at all in this verse. Before answering this question, we too completely agree that the central theme of this verse is the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. But we cannot ignore the importance of the Mariological significance of this text, because Mary plays a vital role in the great event of the Incarnation. When the Evangelist uses the expression "not of blood", it is Mary's blood that is referred to. In the mystery of the Incarnation, the virginity of Mary in conceiving Jesus and in giving birth to him is of great theological importance. Thus, the theological significance of Jn 1:13 cannot and should not leave out the role Mary played in the Incarnation of Jesus. In this section we will see how Christology and Mariology are closely interconnected and how Jn 1:13 alludes to the doctrine of the virginity of Mary.

A. MARIOLOGY IN RELATION TO THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

No Mariology can be done without reference to the mysteries of Christ. Applying this principle to the mystery of the Incarnation, we see that Mary's role in the salvific plan of God becomes meaningful and significant, only because the One she gives birth to is the Son of God. Christ is the centre of this mystery. When we speak of the Incar-

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[551] *Ibid.*, 131.

nation, Christ is the primary focus of our study; but at the same time, the role played by Mary in the mystery of Incarnation, should not be considered a marginal factor in our theological discussion. V. Piovesan says: "Mary has a unique place in the economy of salvation and consequently in the doctrine and cult of the Church. Mariology is essentially related to Christology, sharing its orientations and trends. A Christology that emphasizes Christ's divinity will generate a Mariology which brings out the privileges and almost superhuman qualities of God's Mother".[552] Such a close relationship between Christology and Mariology can be understood from the intimate mother-son relationship that exists between Mary and Jesus. A document published by the Pontifical International Marian Academy speaks about it as follows:

> Gesù, Figlio di Dio e Figlio dell'uomo, Messia e Salvatore, è nato da Maria, carne della sua carne: ella lo ha concepito, lo ha dato alla luce, lo ha allattato al suo seno verginale, lo ha educato, insieme con Giuseppe, suo sposo, nella tradizione del suo popolo; di Gesù è vera madre e quindi tra lei e il Figlio esiste un indissolubile vincolo materno-filiale. La persona e la missione di Gesù, il Signore, gettano luce sulla figura della Madre; come dire: la cristologia sulla mariologia. Tuttavia, in una certa misura, la mariologia reca un contributo alla stessa cristologia.[553]

A number of Church documents speak of this relationship between Christology and Mariology.

We have to remember that the theological discussion of the Incarnation of Jesus in Jn 1:13 has to be fundamentally Christological but its Marian significance cannot and should not be ignored. We want to quote here the words of H.U. von Balthasar: "Ogni possibile Mariologia resta, presa in se stessa, incompleta, qualora essa non venga al tempo stesso riferita alla Cristologia"[554] Thus, the Mariological reflections that we are going to present in the following sections will be

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[552] V. PIOVESAN, "Recent Trends in Mariology", in *VJTR* 43 (1979) 294.

[553] PONTIFICIA ACADEMIA MARIANA INTERNATIONALIS, *La Madre del Signore. Memoria Presenza Speranza*, Città del Vaticano 2000, 21.

[554] H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Le persone del dramma: L'uomo in Cristo* (Third volume of *TeoDrammatica*), Translated by G. Sommavilla, Jaca Book, Milano 1983, 313.

based on the Christological meaning of Jn 1:13. The greatness of Mary will be made clear in reference to the mystery of the Incarnation, because "all of Mariology has to be explained Christologically, and it is this which renders the true grandeur of Mary".[555]

B. VIRGIN AND AT THE SAME TIME MOTHER

In the previous part, we already saw that Jn 1:13 speaks about both the virgin birth of Jesus and the virginal conception of Jesus. In this verse, one might note the paradox that the Evangelist who speaks insistently of the conception and birth of Jesus, does not say even a single word about Mary in Jn 1:13. The word 'Mother' does not appear at all, but it does not mean that the Evangelist is ignoring the presence of Mary in this verse. Regarding this point, I. de la Potterie says:

> John does not give us an account of facts; nonetheless, the fact remains that here there is someone who has been *conceived* and who is *born*, that a woman, therefore, must be implicated. Even though she may not be mentioned in the text, she must be present implicitly (while the non-intervention of the "man" is expressly underlined!). It is important to note this in order to understand the link between the Christological aspect and the Mariological aspect of the Incarnation. For John who wishes to sound the structure of the mystery, the persons and the concrete facts do not have so much importance. He wishes to put in relief the theological meaning and impact of the event. He goes to the heart of things: the Incarnation of the Word of God is realized "without a desire of the flesh, without the will of man" (virginal conception); he is not born of "blood(s)" (virginal birth). It goes without saying, that this birth had to have taken place with the intervention of a woman, the mother of the child who was conceived and brought into the world. Mary, therefore, is fully present here, but implicitly, discreetly, without being perceived; it will continue to be so for the rest of Jesus' life.[556]

The concept of the virgin birth in Jn 1:13 has to be understood in the context of the Incarnation of Jesus, the central theme of the entire Prologue. The three negations that form the first part of v.13 are a clear

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[555] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 153.

[556] *Ibid.*, 153-154.

indication of the virginal conception of Jesus and this first part becomes meaningful only if connected with the second part of v. 14. The virginal conception of Jesus is essential to affirm the divine filiation of Jesus.

The virginity of Mary reaches its complete meaning, only because of the fact that the One whom she conceived and gave birth to is the Son of God. Mary is Virgin and at the same time Mother. These two inseparable aspects make us call Mary: 'the virginal mother of the Son of God'. She is *par excellence* the 'woman of Incarnation'.[557] The virgin birth of Jesus is the 'necessary sign' of the Incarnation of God's only Son. Through this great mystery, Mary is virgin and at the same time Mother.

C. THE PARALLEL TEXT: Lk 1:34-35

While we examine Jn 1:13 from Mariological point of view, it is unavoidable to consider the parallel text of Lk 1:34-35 for a better understanding of the role of Mary in the mystery of the Incarnation. The same theological ideas of Jn 1:13 are clearly expressed in Lk 1:34-35. No other Gospel passages speak so explicitly about the Incarnation as do these two passages.[558] There are many similarities in these two texts with regard to the theme of the Incarnation. Here we are not going to deal with the relationship between the historicity of these two texts. What we are interested in is to show the convergence of theological ideas that help us to understand better the intimate connection between the virgin birth of Jesus and his divine Sonship. The

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[557] S. M. PERRELLA, *Maria Vergine e Madre.* La verginità feconda di Maria tra fede, storia e teologia, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano) 2003, 140: "Maria è la *donna dell'incarnazione*, del Dio divenuto uomo per volontà del Padre e per opera dello Spirito (cfr. Gal 4,4-7; Mt 1,18-25; Lc 1,26-38; Gv 1,1-18). Il Figlio del Padre, dato come dono, figlio e Signore a Maria e all'umanità e nel quale sussiste la definitiva Parola di Dio all'umanità pellegrina, è l'epifania della Trinità nella nostra storia, poiché egli, come afferma la stessa parola della fede, è l'icona visibile del Padre invisibile (cfr. Gv 12,45; 14,9; Col 1,15). […] La storia divino-umana, per opera dello Spirito e del Verbo che si storicizza nella carne, si inaugura con Maria di Nazareth".

[558] Cfr. I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 163.

parallelism between these two texts has been presented in the following diagram:[559]

In the diagram presented above, we note that both the texts (Lk 1:34-35 and Jn 1:13-14) speak of the three important stages of the Incarnation of Jesus: 1) Conception; 2) Birth; 3) Public Revelation of Jesus as the Son of God. Now we are going to concentrate on the second part of the diagram, where there is a clear chiastic structure of parallelism between the two texts.

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[559] This diagram shows how the two texts (Lk 1:34-35 and Jn 1:13) present the virginal Conception and virgin birth of Jesus and some common features that are present in both the texts. This diagram has been taken from I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 163.

1. *Translation of Lk 1:35b*

There is a problem in the translation of the Greek text (Lk 1:35b): διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ.[560] Clarifying this grammatical problem is very important to know the correct translation of Lk 1:35b and eventually its theological message. I. de la Potterie observes that there are four different models of versions:

I.   Il *Santo che nascerà* – sarà chiamato Figlio di Dio
II.   Ciò che *nascerà santo* – sarà chiamato Figlio di Dio
III.   Ciò che nascerà – *sarà (è) santo* e chiamato Figlio di Dio
IV.   Ciò che nascerà – *sarà chiamato Santo*, Figlio di Dio.[561]

In English versions too, we find varieties of translations. We want to present a few of them:

I.   *τὸ ἅγιον as the subject*:
        "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be the Son of God" (King James Version: 1611/1769).
        "And for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God" (New American Standard Bible: 1977).

II.   *τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον as the subject* (our Proposal):
        Therefore the one who will be born holy will be called the Son of God.

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[560] For a detailed study about the problem of translation, cfr. J.M. BOVER, "«Quod nascetur (ex te) sanctum vocabitur Filius Dei» (Lc 1,35)", in *Bib* 1 (1920) 92-94; IDEM, "«Quod nascetur (ex te) sanctum vocabitur Filius Dei» (Lc 1,35)", in *EstEcl* 8 (1929) 381-392; A. VICENT CERNUDA, "La presunta sustantivación τὸ γεννώμενον en Lc 1,35b", in *EstBíb* 33 (1974) 262-273; I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 163-170.

[561] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 163. The author has taken the above-cited translations from the following versions (the second one is his own): "I. « Il (Bambino) *santo che nascerà* (da te) – sarà chiamato Figlio di Dio » (Nardoni; cfr La *Bibbia concordata*). II. (manca). III. « Colui che nascerà – *sarà dunque santo* e chiamato Figlio di Dio » (Lezionario; cfr Vaccari, Garofalo, Zedda; le ed. della Civiltà Cattolica e di Garzanti). IV. « Quello che nascerà – *sarà chiamato Santo*, figlio di Dio » (Utet)" (*Ibid.*, p. 164, note 83).

III.   τὸ γεννώμενον as the subject:
        "And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of
        God" (New Jerusalem Bible: 1966/1985).

IV.   ἅγιον as the predicate of the verb κληθήσεται:
        "Therefore the child to be born will be holy, the Son of
        God" (Revised Standard Version: 1952).

Let us now see the grammatical problems involved in the translations.
The defect of the first translation is that it considers the phrase τὸ
ἅγιον as the subject of the sentence, ignoring the word order of the
Greek text τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον. As I. de la Potterie says:

> L'espressione lucana τὸ γεννώμενον, che è ben conosciuto in greco e
> che si trova qui all'inizio, è da prendere come un tutto (l'articolo τό
> regge γεννώμενον); questo participio, quindi, non può avere la funzione
> di un aggettivo determinativo di τὸ ἅγιον (considerato come un
> sostantivo-soggetto). Solo τὸ γεννώμενον può essere soggetto della
> frase; lo hanno capito bene gli altri tre modelli. Però, ciò non significa
> che questa participio neutro («nato») sia da considerare come un
> *sostantivo*, ossia che debba essere preso come l'equivalente di
> «bambino» (τὸ τέκνον); l'espressione τὸ γεννώμενον conserva intatto
> tutto il suo valore *verbale*, in riferimento all'atto di concepire o di
> partorire, cioè al momento della concezione o della nascita: secondo i
> casi, significa «id quod *generatur*» oppure «id quod *nascitur*». Nella
> situazione presente, quella dell'*annuncio* a Maria, il verbo ha valore di
> *futuro*, e si tratta del *parto*, della *nascita*, non del concepimento; con le
> versioni antiche bisogna dunque tradurre: «ciò che *nascerà*».[562]

Having justified that the subject should be '*the one who will be born*',
let us now resolve the problem with the grammatical understanding of
the word ἅγιον. The second model considers ἅγιον as the predicate of
the verb γεννώμενον whereas the fourth model considers ἅγιον as the
predicate of the verb κληθήσεται. I. de la Potterie criticizes the third
and the fourth models in the following words:

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[562] I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", 165.

Nella forma IV, «Santo» dipende da «*sarà chiamato*» che *segue*; il titolo «Figlio di Dio» diventa allora una semplice apposizione del predicato «Santo», sul quale cade tutta l'*enfasi* del versetto. Questo però è difficilmente sostenibile: la giustapposizione «Santo, Figlio di Dio» non è lucana; del resto, siccome κληθήσεται *separa* i due termini ἅγιον e υἱός, non si può parlare di giustapposizione; inoltre, questa lettura non trova quasi nessun appoggio nella tradizione; infine, dire che Gesù «sarà chiamato *Santo*» sembra contraddire l'uso del N.T., dove «Santo» non è diventato un nome corrente di Gesù, e soltanto indirettamente per la divulgazione della sua divina figliolanza. Troppo spesso, «santo» viene interpretato qui in un modo generico e assoluto, specialmente quando si inserisce il verbo «sarà» (allora l'angelo annuncerebbe la *futura* santità di Cristo); ma queste considerazioni ci allontanano dal contesto. La posizione di ἅγιον in funzione di predicato rispetto a τὸ γεννώμενον ci obbliga a vedere indicate qui in un modo preciso le circostanze della *nascita* di Gesù. Ora, *la santità della nascita* è presentata come una prima conseguenza dell'azione dello Spirito Santo nella *concezione*: a un concepimento santo poteva seguire soltanto un «parto santo». In altre parole, la *concezione* verginale doveva avere come effetto prossimo il *parto* verginale. La «santità» del parto, è vero, viene menzionata solo di sfuggita; il testo si affretta a indicare la conseguenza futura di questa concezione e di questo parto nell'economia della rivelazione: Gesù sarà dunque *riconosciuto* come Figlio di Dio e *chiamato* tale.[563]

Thus, considering the limitations and drawbacks of the translations (I, II, and IV models), we are in favour of the second translation: "Therefore the one who will be born holy will be called the Son of God". This translation renders very well the holiness of the birth of Jesus.[564] The Latin Vulgate is very close to the Greek text and renders it as follows: "Ideoque et *quod nascetur sanctum* vocabitur Filius Dei".

2. The Meaning of 'Holy'

The word ἅγιον is the predicate of the verb γεννώμενον. This word indicates the holiness of Jesus' birth. The holiness of Jesus'

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[563] *Ibid*., 167-168.

[564] "Così si spiega anche l'uso del neutro («*ciò* che nascerà») invece del maschile («*colui* che nascerà»). Infatti non si tratta qui della santità della persona di Cristo, ma della santità del suo *parto*¸ contrariamente a ciò che succede in un parto normale, la sua nascità non fu accompgnta da contaminazione" (*Ibid*., p. 168, note 93).

birth was interpreted by the Church Fathers as the 'virgin birth' that was free from every corruption of sin and impurity and thus undefiled and immaculate.[565] The ritual purification mentioned in Lev 12:1-8 has to be connected with the expression οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων. In Lev 17-26, we note that the word 'holy' indicates the absence of any contamination of blood lost by women during menstruation and childbirth (cfr. Lev 12:2,5; 18:19).

Reading Jn 1:13 from this background, we can understand the following characteristics of Jesus's birth: 1) He will be virginally conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit; 2) As a result of this virginal conception, he will be born in a holy manner; that is, he will be virginally born without any bloodshed on the part of his mother; 3) Since he was virginally conceived and was born in a holy manner, he will be called 'the Son of God'.

It is important to note that Luke uses the term 'Holy' to refer to Messiah in the following passages: "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord" (Lk 2:23); "I know who you are, the Holy

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[565] Here are some more examples: "Ambrosiaster, *Quaestiones ex Novo Testamento*, 51: «sanctum natum est (…). Sanctus ergo Filius Dei in sancto corpore natus est» (PL 35, 2253-2254); san Leone, *Sermo* 22,2: «nascentis incorruptio» (PL 76, 89B); Beda, *In Lucam* (PL 92 319 A-B); sant'Ildefonso da Toledo, *De virginitate perpetua S. Mariae*, I (PL 96, 58 B-C); la *Glossa ordinaria*: «Jesus nascitur sanctus qui conditionem naturae corruptibilis vinceret…» (PL 114, 246 D – 247 A: testo ripreso da Gregorio); il tema dell'*incorruzione nel parto* era stato sancito nella definizione del Concilio Lateranense (649), canone 3: «incorruptibiliter eam genuisse», ἀφθόρως γεννήθησαν (*Dz. Sch.*, 503), canone 3: «incorruptibiliter» (ἀφθόρως) era diventato più o meno un termine tecnico per parlare del *parto* verginale; […] cfr ancora Ivo di Chartres, *Sermo* 15: *De Annuntiatione Beatae Mariae*: «Hoc splendore Filius Dei concipitur, hac *munditia* generatur» (PL 162, 585B). Anche senza nessun riferimento a Lc 1, 35, si leggeva già in sant'Ireneo: «incarnationem *purae gnerationis* (καθαρᾶς γεννήσεως) Verbi Dei», *Adversus haereses,* III, 19, 2 (PG 7, 939); IV, 33,11. Quando i Padri interpretavano l'assenza di contaminazione nel parto di Gesù come il superamento della *corruzione* (che viene dal peccato), indicavano chiaramente quale era per loro il senso teologico del parto verginale e la sua importanza dal punto di vista storico-salvifico: era quasi il rinnovamento dell'*incorruzione originale.* Gli evangelisti Luca e Giovanni lo presentano piuttosto come il segno della *divina figliolanza* di Gesù" (I. DE LA POTTERIE, "Il parto verginale", p. 169, note 95).

One of God" (Lk 4:34); "You rejected the Holy and Righteous One" (Act 3:14). In the theology of Luke, 'the Holy One' is an important title given to Jesus.

The patristic tradition has a number of testimonies to support the idea that the term 'the holy one' is in close relationship with the virgin birth of Jesus. According to the Church Fathers, the expression τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον has to be interpreted as the *Virgin Birth.* For example: St. Ambrose, commenting on Lk 1:35, mentions the virginal conception and the virgin birth of Jesus.[566] In conceiving and giving birth to Jesus, Mary remained a virgin. She was not contaminated by the stain of bloodshed. This interpretation of Lk 1:35 throws light upon the expression οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων (Jn 1:13).

3. A. Serra's Contribution

As a result of his scholarly research, A. Serra proposes some Jewish writings as a background for a better understanding of Lk 1:35 and Jn 1:13. According to him, Jewish writings too support the same doctrine of the 'holy birth', while describing the coming of Messianic era.[567] One of the signs that would indicate the coming of Messianic era would be the 'holy birth' that would not cause any labour pains to the mother who delivers a child.

In the Apocalypse of Baruch (written between 90 and 110 A.D.) we read the following statement that describes the signs that will be seen when the Messiah comes with power and glory to rule all the nations:

> "And women shall no longer then have pain when they bear, Nor shall they suffer torment when they yield the fruit of the womb".[568]

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[566] "Et vere *sanctus*, quia *inmaculatus*. Denique ipsum esse qui lege signetur in eundem modum ab angelo repetita verba declarant: *quia quod nascetur* inquit *sanctum vocabitur filius dei*. Non enim virilis coitus vulvae virginalis secreta reseravit, sed inmaculatum semen inviolabili utero spiritus sanctus infudit; […] Hic est qui aperuit matris suae vulvam, ut *inmaculatus exiret*": AMBROSE, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam,* II, 56-57 (CCL 14, 55-56).

[567] A. SERRA, "Vergine", 1447-1448.

[568] *The Apocalypse of Baruch* 73, 7.

"For that time [of the Messiah] is the consummation of that which is corruptible, and the beginning of that which is not corruptible".[569]

Besides these two examples, he gives a number of rabbinic texts that speak of the birth that does not cause any pain to the mother who gives birth to a child.[570]

4. The Virgin birth of Jesus

Lk 1:35 is an annunciation of the birth of Jesus whereas Jn 1:13 presents the concrete realization of the promise of the angel. Both the texts use the same verb γεννάω. Both the texts speak of the virgin birth with the expressions and οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων respectively. We want to present this idea in the following diagram:

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[569] *Ibid*., 74, 2.

[570] We want to reproduce here the Rabbinic texts cited by A. Serra and his comment on these texts: "A. Abbahu (300 c.) afferma che in questo mondo la donna genera nel travaglio, ma del tempo che verrà è scritto (Is 66, 7): «Prima di provare le doglie, ha partorito; prima che le venissero i dolori, ha dato alla luce un maschio» (*Gen Rabbah* 14,9 a 12,2). R. Giosuè b. Levi (250 c.) e R. Berekiah (340 c.) insegnavano che tale rinnovamento preconizzato per ogni singola donna è tipo della redenzione di un'altra donna, cioè la donna-Israele, nei tempi messianici (*Ct Rabbah* 1,5.3). Oltre all'enunciazione dottrinale di principio, si porta come esempio Yokebed, madre di Mosè. G. Flavio scrive che ella diede alla luce il futuro liberatore d'Israele «in mediocrità di dolori e senza che gravi affanni si abbattessero su di lei» (*Ant. Giud.* II,9.4). E questo avvenne, commenta egli, perché fosse confermata la veridicità della parola che il Signore stesso aveva rivolto in sogno ad Amram, sposo di Yokebed. Il Signore gli aveva promesso che il bambino, di cui Yokebed era incinta, sarebbe sfuggito alla vista degli egiziani, che lo cercavano a morte (*o.c.* II,9.3). Siccome il parto di Yokebed non fu accompagnato da grida strazianti, la nascita di Mosè passò inosservata agli sgherri del Farone (*o.c.* II,9.4). Il carattere eccezionale del parto di Yokebed è ribadito da Giuda b. Zebina (300 c.). Esso fu indolore, così come lo fu anche la sua gravidanza: segno evidente – conclude R. Giuda – che la pena comminata contro Eva (Gen 3,13: «Moltiplicherò i tuoi dolori e le tue gravidanze, con dolore partorirai figli»), non riguardava le donne giuste (*Es Rabbah* 1,20 e 2,2 e Talmud Babilonese, *Sothah* 12a)": A. SERRA, "Vergine", 1447-1448.

Annunciation Lk 1:35	Incarnation Jn 1:13
τὸ γεννώμενον (The one who will be born)	ὅς … ἐγεννήθη (He was born)
ἅγιον (Holy)	οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων (Not of blood[s])
υἱὸς θεοῦ (Son of God)	ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη (Born of God)
Jesus' virgin birth foretold	Virginal Incarnation
Virginity of Mary	*Virginity of Mary*

The similarity of theological ideas and concepts regarding the virgin birth of Jesus becomes very evident in our textual analysis. Both the texts (Lk 1:35 and Jn 1:13) speak of the virgin birth. In both the texts, we have an affirmation about the divine Sonship of Jesus. In both the texts, the virgin birth of Jesus becomes a sign to believe in him as the Son of God. Thus, the comparative study of Lk 1:35 and Jn 1:13 helps us understand better the virgin birth of the Son of God and Mary's virginity in conceiving and giving birth to Jesus.[571]

5. A 'Sign' that reveals Jesus' divinity

The virgin birth of Jesus is a 'sign' that the child, born of the virgin in a miraculous way, is the Son of God. As we saw earlier, various signs were used to calculate or recognize the Messianic era, espe-

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[571] A brief but well documented study on the link between Lk 1:35 and Jn 1:13 can be found in: M. HAUKE, "Die «virginitas in partu». Akzentsetzungen in der Dogmengeschichte", in A. ZIEGENAUS (ed.), *Geboren der Jungfrau Maria. Klarstellungen* (Mariologische Studien, XIX), Verlag, Regensburg 2007, 90-98.

cially the sign that women would give birth to their children without labour pains. Similarly, the Virgin Mary's giving birth to Jesus without losing her virginity is a sign that the newly born child is God. The Evangelist Matthew, narrating the virginal conception of Jesus, associates it with the 'sign' given to Ahaz: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (Is 7:14). The virgin birth of Jesus is a sign that leads us to a mysterious truth about Jesus' divinity.

I. de la Potterie says: "Il fatto *esteriore* del parto verginale era il segno di un fatto anteriore, più segreto, il concepimento verginale; l'uno e l'altro, però, presi insieme, facevano comprendere che Gesù Cristo, essendo stato «generato da Dio», era realmente Figlio di Dio (Lc), il Figlio unigenito venuto da presso il Padre (Gv)".[572] Both the texts (Lk 1:35 and Jn 1:13) presenting the virgin birth of Jesus as a sign, invite us to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. The great mystery of Jesus' divine Sonship is revealed through the sign of the virgin birth. That God is born of a virgin is the core message of this sign. Thus, the virgin birth of Jesus is also a sign that the Virgin Mary is the 'Mother of God'.

D. VIRGINAL INCARNATION OF THE WORD AND RESURRECTION

The virginal Incarnation of Jesus (conception and birth) is one of the greatest mysteries in which Mary was granted the privilege to actively participate. The great events of virginal Incarnation and virgin birth helped Mary to understand that her Son was divine. Mary's involvement in the salvific plan of God was a journey of faith. In this journey, Mary tries to understand better the person of Jesus and his real nature.

In the Infancy Gospel of Luke, the Evangelist writes: "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart" (Lk 2:19); "His mother treasured all these things in her heart" (Lk 2:51b). These two verses give us an impression that Mary should have also treasured in her heart the virgin birth of Jesus and pondered over such a miraculous event that happened in her life.

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[572] *Ibid.*, 171.

The great event in which the eternal Word of God dwelt in the womb of Mary should have illumined her mind to understand the real nature of her Son. In what way such a great event of the virginal Incarnation of Jesus would have influenced her perception about the nature of her Son and increased her faith in the Son of God?[573] A. Serra gives a very scholarly and convincing answer to this question in his writings.[574] He bases his arguments on the evidence from Sacred Scripture and Church Tradition. We want to summarize here the salient points from his articles mentioned above.

1. Parallelism between Incarnation and Resurrection

The central theme of the text that we exegetically analysed (Jn 1:13-14) is the Incarnation of Christ. But it is interesting to note that in the second half of v. 14, the Evangelist fixes his attention on the Paschal mystery of Christ: "… we have seen his glory as of a Father's on-

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[573] In the writings of the Fathers of the Church, we find references to this question. A. Serra gives the following patristic references for the further study of this theme in the patristic literature: "Efrem († 373), *Inni alla Vergine*, tradotti dal Siriaco da G. Ricciotti, ed. SEI, Torino [1939], *Inno I. Sul tono dei Confessori «Dio che voi amaste», strofe 9-11,* pp. 24-25. *Collectio Arriana Veronensis* (fine sec.V-inizio sec.VI). *De Sollemnitatibus. I De Nativitate Domini*, 4 / CCL 87, p. 49). Romano il Melode († 560 ca.), *Inni. Natività (I). Maria e i Magi*, strofa 2 (introduzione, traduzione e note a cura di G. Gharib, ed. Paoline, [Roma 1981], p. 171; cf SC 110, pp. 52-53); Idem, *La Presentazione,* strofa 4 (cf *op.cit.* p. 198; SC 110, pp. 178-179). Eusebio Gallicano (pseudo Eusebio Emesino, secc.VI-IX ca.), *Collectio Homiliarum*, pars altera, LXXVI, *DE Symbolo*, 2-3 CCL 1017, pp. 809-811. Aimone di Halberstadt († 853), *Homilia XVII. Dominica prima post Epiphaniam,* a Lc 2,19 ad «… invicem comparans, unam in omnibus mater sapientiae cernebat concordiam. *Vere Deus erat qui natus erat ex ea*»). Teofilatto († 1108), *Enarratio Domini in Evangelium Lucae*, a 2,19 PG 123, 725-726. Vernerio († 1126), *In Nativitate Domini secundum Lucam*, a 2,19 PG 129, 887-888" (A. SERRA, "La Spiritualità Mariana: legitimità, natura, articolazione", 84, note 56).

[574] A. SERRA, "Maria, Madre di Gesù, soggetto e oggetto di Catechesi. Riflessioni sugli scritti del Nuovo Testamento", in AA.VV., *Il posto di Maria nella «nuova evangelizzazione»*, Centro di Cultura Mariana «Madre della Chiesa», Roma 1992, 53-74; IDEM, "La Spiritualità Mariana: legitimità, natura, articolazione", in E. PERETTO (a cura di), *Atti del 9° Simposio Internazionale Mariologico,* Edizioni Marianum, Roma 1994, 83-106.

ly Son, full of grace and truth" (v. 14b). The Evangelist speaks of the same 'glory' of Christ in Jn 17:1 and Jn 17:24. The same parallelism between the Incarnation of the Word (Jn 1:13-14a) and his paschal glorification (Jn 1:14b) is found in some other New Testaments texts too. We have a number of pieces of evidence for the connection between these two mysteries of Christ in the New Testament and also in the Church Traditions.

2. Incarnation-Resurrection in the person and mission of Christ

According to A. Serra, there are at least six New Testament passages that speak of this parallelism between Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ.[575] The following four passages are from the letters of St. Paul: Rom 1:3-4; Rom 10:6-7; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 2:8. They speak about the relation between these mysteries as a theological synthesis of the person and mission of Christ.

> *Rom 1:3-4*
>
> "… his Son, who was *descended* from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness *by resurrection from the dead"*.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul announces the human origin of Christ, as the one who descends from David. His divine nature as the Son of God is revealed and confirmed by God the Father by raising Him from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. The intimate connection between the Incarnation and the Resurrection is thus explained at the very beginning of his letter to the Romans.

> *Rom 10:5-8*
>
> "Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that «the person does these things will live by them». But the righteousness that comes from faith says, «Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'», that is *to bring Christ down,* or 'Who will descend into the abyss?', that is *to bring Christ up from the dead.* But

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[575] Cfr. *Ibid*., 85. See also R. PENNA, *Paolo di Tarso.* Un cristianesimo possibile, Paoline, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano), 1992, 48.

> what does it say? «The word is near you, on your lips and in your
> heart», that is the word of faith that we proclaim".

In this text, Paul gives a Christological meaning to Dt 30:12-14. He
says that there is no need to wait again for another *Incarnation* or for
another *Resurrection*. These two events took place in the life of
Christ. He already descended from the heaven (*Incarnation:* v. 6b)
and he descended into the abyss and then was raised from the dead
(*death and Resurrection*: v. 7). Everyone can come to know about this
truth through the preaching of the apostles (v. 8). Paul mentions the
beginning of Christ's life on the earth (Incarnation) and his departure
from the world (Resurrection) in order to explain the whole mystery
of Christ.

> *1 Tim 3:16*
>
> "Without any doubt, we confess that the mystery of piety is great: *He
> was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit*, seen by angels, proclaimed
> through gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory".

By 'mystery of piety', Paul refers to the salvific plan of God, that is
the object of our faith. In this confession faith, he uses an antithetic
parallelism: flesh-spirit, angels-gentiles, world-glory. The key words
'flesh' and 'spirit' refer to the Incarnation and the Resurrection of
Christ. Through the Incarnation, Jesus is revealed in the human form
and through the Resurrection he is justified by the Spirit.

> *2 Tim 2:8-9*
>
> "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David,
> according to my Gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point
> of being chained like a criminal".

The second letter to Timothy is considered to be the last one written
by Paul before his martyrdom. The final exhortation of Paul to Timo-
thy is to remember Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead (Resur-
rection) and a descendent of David (Incarnation). In this passage, Paul
presents in a nutshell the whole message of his preaching. Comment-
ing on this passage that speaks of these two mysteries of Christ, A.
Serra writes: "Questa duplice connotazione sembra rimandare a Rm 1,
4. Però con una differenza: la «risurrezione» è nominata prima della

«discendenza davidica». Quasi a dire che la Pasqua è il prisma dal quale si deve rileggere il Natale. La seconda nascita di Cristo (*la risurrezione*) rimanda alla prima nascita *(l'incarnazione)*".[576]

3. Passages regarding the Incarnation-Resurrection of Christ with Marian Import

> Gal 4:4-6
>
> "When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, *born of a woman, born under the law*, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent *the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, «Abba! Father!»*".

These verses of the Apostle Paul demonstrate the reality of Jesus' humanity and his Jewishness. His statement that Jesus "was born of a woman" is the most explicit verse about Mary in Pauline writings. "Paul is concerned above all to relate redemption and adoptive sonship to a certain point in salvation, namely, to the moment when Jesus became a member of humanity and of the Jewish race".[577] In v. 6, the Apostle indirectly alludes to the Resurrection of Christ, by affirming that God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying "Abba! Father!" A. Serra explains how this statement about the "Spirit of his Son" sent to us alludes to the Resurrection of Christ, as follows:

> Se Giovanni scrive che «… non c'era ancora lo Spirito, perché Gesù non era stato ancora glorificato» (Gv 7, 39), Paolo insegna dal canto suo che solo in conseguenza della Risurrezione dai morti Cristo diventa donatore dello Spirito Santo (cf. Rom 1,4), «spirito vivificante» (1 Cor 15,45). Egli, come Figlio di Dio dall'eternità, possiede lo Spirito a titolo univoco; lo comunica però a noi, di modo che tutti, divenuti «figlio nel Figlio», con Lui possiamo esclamare: «Abbà, Padre!» (Gal 4, 6; Rom 8, 15-17).[578]

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[576] A. SERRA, "Maria, Madre di Gesù, soggetto e oggetto di Catechesi", 60.

[577] R.E. BROWN et al. (ed.), *Mary in the New Testament*, Paulist Press, New York-Ramsey-Toronto 1978, 42.

[578]A. SERRA, "Maria, Madre di Gesù, soggetto e oggetto di Catechesi", 60.

Luke 1:31-33

"And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end".

This Lucan text presents the vocation of Mary to become the Mother of Jesus, the Son of the Most High. In the dialogue between the angel Gabriel and Mary, we note that the angel refers to two stages of the Mission of the awaited Messiah: the Incarnation (the starting point of his mission) and the Resurrection (the conclusion of his mission).

The primary point of reference in this passage is the Incarnation; Mary will conceive and give birth to a Son, who will be called great and the Son of the Most High (cfr. v. 31). And then the second point is a reference to the Resurrection; after rising from the dead, he will inherit the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob (cfr. vv. 32-33). A. Serra makes a comparison with the call of David through the prophet Nathan and the promise made by God (2 Sam 7, 11-15).[579]Among all the texts that we analyzed, Lk 1.31-33 is the one that speaks most explicitly about the relation between the Incarnation and the Resurrection.

4. The Mother of Jesus and the Paschal Mystery

According to A. Serra, the Gospel traditions often present Mary in connection with the paschal mystery of Jesus (passion, death and resurrection). The following are some of the important passages in which we note the role that Mary plays in the paschal mystery of her Son.[580] Some of the symbols that represent the parallelism between Incarnation and the Resurrection are as follows:[581]

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[579] *Ibid.*, 65.

[580] Cfr. *Ibid.*, 66-70.

[581]A. SERRA, "La Spiritualità Mariana: legittimità, natura, articolazione", 86-101.

1) The virgin womb of Mary and the new tomb of Jesus: The Evangelists who speak about the virginal conception of Jesus (cfr. Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:34-35; Jn 1:13) in their Gospels say that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was "new" (cfr. Mt 27:60; Lk 23:53; Jn 19:41).

2) As a new-born child, Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes (Lk 2:7b), his body was wrapped in linen and buried (Lk 23:53b).

3) It is interesting to note the symbolic relation between the manger in which Jesus was laid by Mary (Lk 2:7) and the tomb in which the body of Jesus was laid by Joseph of Arimathea (Lk 23:53). Citing many other biblical passages, the Fathers of the Church have interpreted the relation between these two events.[582]

Thus, the disciples and the first Christian community should have been convinced of the mystery of the virgin birth by connecting it with the manner in which Jesus was resurrected. Just as Jesus left the tomb intact during the Resurrection, so did he come into this world leaving his mother's womb intact and virgin.

E. THE '*VIRGINITAS IN PARTU*' IN SOME RECENT TEACHINGS
   OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The conciliar and post-conciliar teachings of the Church on the virginity of Mary are very rich, although they are not very numerous. S. M. Perrella presents a clear picture of the Church teachings on the "virginitas in partu" in one of his articles.[583] In his survey, we can note that, except for John Paul II, no other recent magisterium considers Jn 1:13 as a reference to the virginity of Mary. However, we want to pre-

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[582] For a detailed study of the patristic writings on this point, see J.A. DE ALDAMA, *Virgo Mater. Estudios de Teología Patrística*, Facultad de Teología, Granada 1963, 249-274 (Chapter IX: "El tema del sepulcro del Señor en la teología patrística de la maternidad divina"); A. SERRA, "La Spiritualità Mariana: legitimità, natura, articolazione", 88-101.

[583] Cfr. S.M. PERRELLA, "Il parto verginale di Maria nel dibattito teologico contemporaneo (1962-1994). Magistero-Esegesi-Teologia", in *Mar* 56 (1994) 106-152.

sent here a synthesis of some recent teaching of the Church regarding Mary's *virginitas in partu*.[584]

Though they do not have any direct reference to the text (Jn 1:13), we do not want to completely ignore them in our study, because the magisterium is the guardian and teacher of faith. Though they are not the main object of our study, we want to present here some teachings about the *virginitas in partu* from some magisterial documents, because they can certainly help us understand better Mary's virginity, to which the text Jn 1:13 makes an allusion.

1. Vatican Council II - Lumen gentium, Chapter VIII

For a better understanding of the Marian teaching of the Vatican Council II, it is important to know the problems that the Church was facing with regard to the doctrine on the virginity of Mary during the period 1952-1960. A. Mitterer, an Austrian priest and a physician, published a controversial theory regarding the virginity of Mary.[585]

According to A. Mitterer, Mary gave birth to Jesus in a normal manner like any other woman and that she had labour pain and must have lost her virginity by giving birth to Jesus. According to him, her physical integrity and the absence of labour pain are not to be considered in defining the dogma of the virginity of Mary; otherwise it would contradict her maternity.[586]

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[584] For a detailed survey of the recent studies done on the theme of "Mary's virginity *in partu* and its theological meaning", see J.G. ROTEN, "État actuel de la question sur la virginité de Marie", in *Études Mariales*, Médiaspaul, Paris 1997, 25-34; IDEM, "Virginity between Fact and Meaning", in *MarStud* 58 (2007) 235-324.

[585] Cfr. A. MITTERER, *Dogma und Biologie der heiligen Familie*, Herder, Wien 1952, 93-130. A summary of this book was later published in 1960 as an article: "Maria wahre Jungfrau und Muttershaft in der Geburt", in *ThPQ* 108 (1960) 188-193.

[586] For a synthesis of A. Mitterer's theory, cfr. J.L. BASTERO, "La *Virginitas in partu* en la reflexión Teológica del Siglo XX", in *ScrTh* 32 (2000) 835-848. J. Galot is in favour of A. Mitterer's theory and he says that the birth of Jesus is a virgin birth, not because Mary remained a virgin after giving birth to him, but because he was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (cfr.

On 27 July 1960, the Holy See published a decree in order to prohibit the publications of such theses and theories that go against the official teaching of the Church and the Church tradition.[587] In 1962, the *Marian Scheme* (note 31) published by the Pontifical Preparatory Commission for the Second Vatican Council explicitly refuted the theological opinion of A. Mitterer and J. Galot and confirmed the *Virginitas in partu* as a divine and Catholic doctrine of faith.[588] It is to be noted that the statements about the virgin birth as proposed by the Marian scheme of Vatican II, is not there in the eighth chapter of *Lumen gentium*, the dogmatic Constitution on the Church, dedicated to the theme: "The Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and the Church."

Speaking about the role of Mary in the economy of salvation, the second paragraph of *Lumen gentium* 57 states that the union of the Mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception. Regarding Mary's virginity *in partu*, it says: "… in nativitate vero, cum Deipara Filium suum primo-genitum, qui virginalem eius integritatem non minuit sed sacravit".[589]

Mary's virginal integrity was not diminished by Jesus' birth; rather Jesus consecrated his mother's virginity. This beautiful state-ment has a direct reference to the third Canon of the Lateran Council held in the year 649. This expression of the Lateran Council makes

"Questioni di attualità sulla perpetua e perfetta verginità di Maria nel parto", in *NRT* 82 [1960] 449-469).

[587] Cfr. R. LAURENTIN, *La Vergine Maria*. Mariologia post-conciliare, Paoline, Roma 1983, 296.

[588] "Et communiter docetur hanc doctrinam esse tenendam fide divina et catholica. At, nonnulli moderni auctores putant virginitatem in partu haud consistere in aliqua incorruptibilitate, et virginitatem in partu dicunt univocam esse cum virginitate ante partum (cf. A. MITTERER, *Dogma und Biologie der heiligen Familie*, Wien 1952, pp. 122-124; GALOT, J., *La virginité de Marie et la naissance de Jésus*, in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 92 [1960], pp. 449-470)": *Acta et documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apprando. Series II (Praeparatoria).* Acta Pontificiae Commissionis Centralis Praeparatoriae Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II. Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, vol. II, pars IV, 767, cited in S.M. PERRELLA, "Il parto verginale di Maria", 110.

[589] VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church "Lumen gentium", n. 57, in *AAS* 57 (1965) 61.

evident the link between the human nature of Christ and the virginal maternity of the Virgin-Mother.

2. Paull VI's 'Signum Magnum' (1967)

On 13 May 1967, Paul VI published the Apostolic Exhortation *Signum magnum* to mark the 50th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima. In this Apostolic Exhortation, the Pope writes:

> Vita ergo castissimae Sancti Ioseph Sponsae, quae et in partu et post partum virgo permansit, quemadmodum catholica Ecclesia nullo non tempore credidit atque professa est - idque ceteroqui illam decuit mulierem, quae ad praecellentem divinae maternitatis honorem fuerat provecta - tam expleta sui cum Filio communione eminuit, ut sive gaudia, sive dolores, sive denique triumphos cum eodem participaret.[590]

Mary's virginity during childbirth and after childbirth (*in partu et post partum*) is explicitly mentioned as the faith of the Catholic Church. Pope Paul VI affirms the perpetual virginity of Mary and exhorts the faithful to "unite themselves to her in giving thanks to the Most High for working great things in Mary for the benefit of all mankind […] [and] to pay as tribute to the most faithful handmaid of the Lord, a veneration of praise, of gratitude and of love".[591] It is an undeniable fact that *Signum magnum* is considered to be an important Marian document regarding the Catholic doctrine on the perpetual virginity of Mary.

3. Paul VI's 'Sollemnis Professio fidei' (1968)

On 30 June 1968, Pope Paul VI proclaimed a Solemn Profession of faith[592]. In the fourteenth article of the Profession of faith, Paul VI affirms the perpetual virginity of Mary as follows: "Credimus Beatam Mariam, *quae semper Virgo permansit,* Matrem fuisse Verbi

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[590] PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation "Signum magnum" (13 May 1967), in *AAS* 59 (1967) 469.

[591] *Ibid*.

[592] PAUL VI, "Sollemnio professio fidei" (30 June 1968), in *AAS* 60 (1968) 433-435.

Incarnati, Dei et Salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi".[593] This profession of faith highlights the close relationship between Mary's perpetual virginity and her divine maternity. It is situated within the mystery of Incarnation. We can trace back this Catholic belief to the time of the Synod of Milan (393) itself and thus is not something new to us. But we must understand that it is very dense in its meaning and extremely important to our life of faith today.

4. Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992)

We want to mention also the important teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church regarding the virginal conception and the virgin birth of Jesus. In its teaching about the virginal conception and virgin birth (nn. 484-511), it makes reference to many Biblical passages and the Patristic writings. It is interesting to note that the Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to Jn 1:13 and presents an analogy between the virgin birth of Christ and the spiritual birth of believers. We cite here the article that presents Jesus as the author of this new birth:

> Participation in the divine life arises «not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor will of man, but of God» (Jn 1:13). The acceptance of this life is virginal because it is entirely the Spirit's gift to man, the spousal character of the human vocation in relation to God is fulfilled perfectly in Mary's virginal motherhood.[594]

5. John Paul II's Capua Address (1992)

On 24 May 1992, during the concluding ceremony of the XVI Centenary celebration of the plenary Council of Capua (392 A.D.), John Paul II delivered a speech on the virginity of Mary.[595] In his Address to the theologians, he points out some important directions for

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[593] *Ibid.*, 438.

[594] *CCC*, n. 505.

[595] JOHN PAUL II, "Discorso conclusivo. XVI Centenario del Concilio del Concilio di Capua, 392-1992" [Capua, 24 maggio 1992], in *AAS* 85 (1993) 662-670.

the study of Mary's virginity.[596] He proposes a hermeneutical element as an important point of departure in the discussion about Mary's virginity. The hermeneutic should be centered on Christ-God. He adds that the theological nature of the discussion on the virginity of Mary is more Christological than Mariological.[597] The theological method used in the study of Mary's virginity should maintain an equilibrium between the affirmation of the event and the illustration of its meaning. He also insists on the connection between the Incarnation and Resurrection in his speech. The virginity of Mary should be studied and presented with reverence and respect, and presented without exaggerations and distortions. The Pope gives a number of biblical references to the Virginity of Mary, but there is no mention about Jn 1:13 in his speech.

6. John Paul II's Marian Catecheses (1995-1997)

John Paul II gave seventy Marian catecheses from 6 September 1995 to 12 November 1997.[598] Six of these catecheses were dedicated to the theme of virginity.[599] In the Catechetical message given during

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[596] *Ibid.*, 664. For a synthesis of Pope's Address to the theologians and a good commentary, cfr. S.M. PERRELLA, "Il parto verginale di Maria nel dibattito teologico contemporaneo (1962-1994). Magistero-Esegesi-Teologia", in *Mar* 56 (1994) 122-133; IDEM, "Il «fatto» e il «significato» della verginità feconda della Madre di Gesù. Una rilettura teologica a vent'anni dall'intervento a Capua di Giovanni Paolo II (1992-2012)", in *Theot* 20 (2012) 187-242.

[597] "La questione della verginità di Maria, non può essere trattata adeguatamente partendo dalla sola persona di lei, dalla cultura del suo popolo e dai condizionamenti sociali della sua epoca. Già i padri della Chiesa percepirono con chiarezza che la verginità di Maria prima di costituire una «questione mariologica» è un «tema cristologico»" (GIOVANNI PAOLO II, "Discorso conclusivo. XVI Centenario del Concilio di Capua, 392-1992" [Capua, 24 maggio 1992], in *AAS* 85 [1993] 663, n. 3).

[598] These seventy Marian Catecheses can be found in the following volumes: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, voll. XVIII/2 – XX/2, LEV, Città del Vaticano 1998-2000; GIOVANNI PAOLO II, *Catechesi sul Credo*, vol. V, *Maria nel mistero della Chiesa*, LEV, Città del Vaticano 1998; *La Catechesi mariana di Giovanni Paolo II*, LEV, Città del Vaticano 1998 (Quaderni de «L'Osservatore Romano», 39).

[599] "The series [of Marian Catecheses] begins with the bold statement, «The virginal conception is a biological fact» (July 10, 1996), affirms that «Our

the general audience of 10 July 1996, the Pope says that Jn 1:13 read in the context of the Incarnation of Jesus would allude to the virgin birth of Jesus: "Questa versione al singolare farebbe del Prologo giovanneo una delle maggiori attestazioni delle generazione verginale di Gesù inserita nel contesto del mistero dell'incarnazione".[600]

Going through the synthesis of the recent magisterium about the virginity of Mary, we come to know that the topic of Mary's virginity is a very delicate theme to be dealt with due reverence, remaining faithful to what the Church teaches us about this mystery. Talking about this mystery, the theologians have to always recall to their mind the third Canon of the Lateran Council (649) and the teachings of the Second Vatican Council (1964), especially article number 57 of the eighth chapter of *Lumen gentium*. We have to pay special attention to the words of John Paul II, who considers the text of Jn 1:13 as one of the main attestations for the eternal generation of the Son of God and the virginity of Mary.

The theological discussion should help us increase our faith in the great mystery of Mary's virginity, which is a great gift granted to Mary who had the unique privilege of actively taking part in the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus.

F. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MARY'S VIRGINAL MATERNITY

Mary is Virgin and at the same time Mother. Though it might sound paradoxical, Scripture and tradition bear witness to this historical truth. Jn 1:13 in the same line with Lk 1:35 are the most evident verses that speak of Mary's virginity. The same fact has been affirmed

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Lady intended to remain Virgin» (July 24, 1996), points out the profound relationship between Mary's virginity and the Incarnation in «The Eternal Son of God is also born of Mary» (July 31, 1996), shows how «Mary's Choice» inspires consecrated virginity (August 31, 1996), and presents the marriage of the holy couple as lived virginity: «Mary and Joseph lived out the gift of virginity» (August 31, 1996). The catechesis on virginity ends with «The Church presents Mary as Ever-Virgin» (August 28, 1996)" (J.G. ROTEN, "Virginity between Fact and Meaning", 277).

[600] JOHN PAUL II, "La verginità di Maria, verità di fede", in *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II,* vol. 19/2, LEV, Città del Vaticano 1996, 76.

and reaffirmed in various patrtistic writings. We want to quote here the words of Cyril of Alexandria: Ἡ μήτρα ἡ παρθενική. ὤ τοῦ θαύματαος! ἐκπλήττει με τὸ θαῦμα.[601] Mary, by becoming the mother of Jesus, the Saviour of the world, becomes the mother of the whole human race. This maternal virginity of Mary has a profound theological meaning and practical implications for our Christian life today.

God has revealed this great mystery of Mary's virginal maternity to the whole Church as a fundamental object of faith. We have to respond to this revealed truth through our obedience. As the Vatican Council II says: "«The obedience of faith» (Rom. 16:26; cfr. 1:5; 2 Cor. 10:5-6) must to be given to God as he reveals himself. By faith man freely commits his entire self to God, making «the full submission of his intellect and will to God who reveals» and willingly assenting to the Revelation given by him".[602] This mystery has to be accepted, contemplated, proclaimed and lived as a fundamental object of our Christian faith. The dangerous 'dichotomy' between the *fact* and its *meaning* has to be avoided. In other words, the artificial dissociation between the historicity of this event and its theological sense has to be avoided in discussing the theme of virginal conception and virgin birth of Jesus. Regarding this I. de la Potterie writes:

> It is essential that we always look at the facts and their meaning together, the concrete reality and that which it signifies and symbolizes. Every work of salvation is an intervention of God *in history*, by means of *concrete facts* or events. But the revelation of the plan of salvation wiled by God is found precisely *hidden* in these facts, and cannot be discovered except by delving into the interiority of the facts, beyond their physical and empirical aspect. This is so for the virginal conception of Jesus, which becomes a highly significant "symbol" of the *mystery*. The physical fact refers to "something other," spiritual and interior, which transcends the fact itself and gives it its true significance.[603]

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[601] CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *Homilia* 4 (PG 77, 992C).

[602] VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, n. 5 in *AAS* 58 (1966) 819; The English translation has been taken from: *Vatican Council II*. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (edited by A. FLANNERY), Costello Publishing Company, Northport (NY) 1981, 752.

[603] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, 163.

The meaning of Jesus' Incarnation and Mary's virginal maternity can be discussed from various points of view. Whatever be the point of view, the first and foremost element to be given importance is the Divine Sonship of Jesus, which is revealed through a marvelous sign of Mary's virginity. Another important element is the soteriological aspect of Jesus' Incarnation through the Virgin Mary. Jesus came into this world as the 'Saviour of the world' (Jn 4:42). God wills that the eternal Word be conceived in Mary's womb and be virginally given birth for the salvation of human kind. And it is in this context that Mary's virginal maternity has to be interpreted and proclaimed.[604]

Believing in this mystery implies certain spiritual and moral effects in our life of faith. It is not just a dogmatic belief but a mystery that involves a historical truth and helps us live our faith with love and commitment. It is worth quoting here the words of C. Boff, who gives five reasons why we believe in the virginity of Mary and how it helps us live our Christian faith:

A che serve, dunque, credere in questo mistero? Per noi, serve:

1. Per confessare la verità della fede in Gesù, quale Figlio di Dio, di cui la verginità di Maria è un segno eclatante, esplicativo e significativo;
2. Per celebrare Dio tri-uno che "compie meraviglie", tra le quali appunto la prodigiosa verginità della Madre del Salvatore;
3. Per capire la natura "verginale" dell'amore umano nella sua essenza più intima e nel suo traguardo ultimo;
4. Per illustrare in modo del tutto particolare l'"opzione di Dio per i poveri", tra i quali "primeggia" la Vergine (*Lumen gentium* 55);
5. Per imparare a conservare in tutta fedeltà la verità rivelata da Dio in Cristo; cioè la *virginitas fidei* a cui è chiamata tutta la Chiesa.[605]

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[604] Cfr. M. MASINI, *Maria di Nazaret, la Vergine*, Edizioni Messaggero, Padova 2008, 65-88.

[605] C. BOFF, "Postfazione. Il significato della verginità di Maria per il nostro tempo", in S. M. PERRELLA, *Maria Vergine e Madre*, 277.

The Johannine proclamation of virgin birth of Jesus in Jn 1:13-14 serves as important Scriptural evidence to believe in the great mystery of Incarnation of Christ and at the same time in the mystery of Mary's virginal maternity. Her virginal maternity possesses a universal dimension too. Her 'corporal maternity' to the Son of God is expanded to a 'spiritual maternity'. We are spiritually in communion with her, because she is our Mother. The universal motherhood of Mary is affirmed by the same Evangelist in his passion narrative (cfr. Jn 19:25-27).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

At the end of our study, the general conclusion of the whole research is presented on three levels. First we are going to summarize the main content of the three parts one by one. Secondly, we will present the final remarks of our investigation. These remarks will include a summary of various conclusions drawn in our research. Thirdly, some concrete and practical proposals will be given, in connection with our research conclusions, so as to help our day-to-day Christian life founded on the life and teachings of the Incarnate Jesus.

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The whole work has been divided into three parts. The first part was completely dedicated to the textual criticism of Jn 1:13. The 'thoroughgoing eclectic method' was followed in our text-critical study. The *Status Quaestionis* of the previous studies done by important scholars covering a time period of more than a century - starting from A. Resch (1896) to our present day scholars - prepared the background for our research. Going through the modern versions of the New Testament, we observed that all the modern versions read Jn 1:13 in the plural, except the *Bible de Jérusalem* published in 1973. This is the only modern version that reads Jn 1:13 in the singular. The 'Critical Apparatus' taken from C. von Tischendorf (1869), F. Blass (1902), K. Aland and others (1975) and the text-critical commentaries of B.M. Metzger and R.L. Omanson (2006) provided us with numerous variants of the text and respective references to their sources.

The previous studies done by the scholars of the last one century show that there is no common agreement among them. Some defend the singular and others the plural. We observed that most of the scholars who consider the plural as the original base their arguments on the overwhelming number of Greek Mss. Just because all the Greek Mss read it in the plural, we cannot judge that reading to be the original one.

The point of departure of our text-critical study was based on the principle that the quality of the textual evidence is more important

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than the mere quantity of Mss. In our research, we found hints and clues in the patristic quotations and commentaries on Jn 1:13 (especially in the writings prior to the 3rd century) to consider the singular as the original reading. Among the oldest writings that we examined were the *Epsitula Apostolorum* (c. 160 AD) written in Asia Minor and the *Liber Comicus*, the oldest lectionary from the Iberian Peninsula, attributed to St. Idelphonsus († 667 AD). Both of them read Jn 1:13 in the singular form. We also explained how the plural reading could have come into existence. It seems highly probable that the Gnostics and Manicheans could have changed the singular into the plural for doctrinal reasons. As we mentioned earlier, Tertullian accuses the Valentinians of tampering with the original text. On the whole, our external criticism of the text resulted in favour of the singular being the original reading.

Then, the internal criticism of the text was carried out by analyzing various elements of the text such as the grammar (aorist tense, use of personal pronoun and verb forms), John's use of vocabulary, the structure, the context, the Johannine style, the polemical thrust of the verse, the coherence between v. 13 and Johannine theology and so on. The internal criticism too resulted in favour of the singular reading.

At the end of the first part, we gave 22 reasons as the result of our text-critical study. We agree that many of these arguments were already proposed by various authors,[606] as we observed in the *Status Quaestionis*. Going through the Johannine bibliography of recent times, we noted that such an elaborate text-critical study of Jn 1:13 has never been attempted. It certainly adds more value to our present work. We can say that the first part, which establishes the correct form of the text, plays a fundamental role in this study.

The second part was dedicated to the exegetical analysis of the text. We applied the historical-critical method proposed by the Pontifical Biblical Commission's document (1993): *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. After determining the beginning and end of

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[606] For example, J. Galot gives a list of 13 reasons in favour of singular reading as the overall conclusion of his book (Cfr. J. GALOT, *Être né de Dieu*, 123-124).

the textual unit (Jn 1:11-14), we proceeded with the diachronic and synchronic reading of the textual block. An enquiry into its literary genre, textual origin, linguistic-syntactic features, a sentence diagram, grammatical elements and textual structure led us to a deeper understanding of the various literary characteristics of the text. The structural analysis showed us that the section vv. 12-13 is to be considered as the 'pivot' of the Prologue, like the "hinge between two parts of a diptych".[607]

Then we exegetically analyzed the pericope verse by verse, giving importance to the meaning of key words and lexemes in their immediate and proximate contexts. It was clear that the Evangelist basically develops the theme of the Incarnation as the core message of this pericope in a spiral movement like a wave. In our exegetical analysis, the three negations in v. 13 were considered as the key element to understand the virginal character of Jesus' birth expressed in the positive expression ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη. The same concept of the Incarnation is solemnly proclaimed in v. 14.

The third part was dedicated to the theological implications of Jn 1:13. We basically divided this part into two chapters, dedicated to its Christological and Mariological meaning. In our theological investigation of the text, we started with the problems of interpretation. We analyzed the serious difficulties put forward by A. Vicent Cernuda. Reading Jn 1:13 in the singular, should we interpret it as the eternal birth of the Son of God or the temporal birth (Incarnation) of Jesus? We found that there are difficulties in both cases. In our theological argument, we demonstrated that in Jn 1:13 the Evangelist speaks of "the human conception and birth of the One who, from all eternity, is the Son of God. Moreover, indirectly and implicitly, it also alludes to the eternal birth of the Son of God".[608]

The parallelism between Jn 1:12-13 and Jn 20:31 shows that John invites his readers to believe in the divine Sonship of Jesus. Believing in Jesus as the Son of God is an important condition for taking part in His life (cfr. Jn 3:14-15; 5:11-13; 6:35,47,61; 11:25; 12:36; 14:12; 20:30). We observed that Jn 1:12-13 is better understood in

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[607] M-É. BOISMARD, *St. John's Prologue*, 80.

[608] I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Mary in the mystery of the Covenant*, 144.

comparison with 1Jn 5:18, because there is a close link between these two texts. In both texts, John speaks about the divine Sonship of Jesus. The importance of believing in the divine Sonship of Jesus is an important condition for participating in His life. Then, we analyzed the Johannine use of the expression 'Son of Joseph'. We demonstrated that the Incarnation of Jesus is at the very core of his Gospel message.

The Mariological significance of the text Jn 1:13-14 was then explained in comparison with the parallel text Lk 1:34-35. The structural similarity between these two texts was presented in a diagram in order to show how the term 'the Holy One' (Lk 1:35) indicates the virgin birth of Jesus. The parallelism between Incarnation and Resurrection was brought out with reference to Rom 10:5-8, 1 Tim 3:16, 2 Tim 2:8-9 and Gal 4:4-6. Then we saw some recent teaching of the Church's magicterium that deals with the theme of Mary's virginity. We concluded the third part by presenting the significance of Mary's virginal maternity.

1. Final remarks of our research

Having given a brief summary of each part, we present here the conclusions we have drawn as the fruit of our research on the textual problem of Jn 1:13 and its theological implications. In our research, we found that the text critical problem was a complicated issue. Both external and internal criticism proved that the singular should be the original reading, despite the overwhelming number of Greek Mss containing the plural reading. The scholars who defend the singular reading give various reasons from different points of view. Having critically analyzed them, we attempted to examine the textual variants from an external and internal point of view. Once we established the singular reading as the original text, we exegetically analyzed it and then attempted to find out its various theological implications. We want to summarize here the important conclusions we drew in our research process:

a) From the survey of the previous studies, we concluded that the age-long textual problem has not reached any definite solution, in spite of much research carried out by biblical scholars and

theologians. There is no consensus among them. The external criticism that examined the variants from the oldest Mss and Patristic literature showed that the singular reading is attested by the earliest writings. From the numerous citations and commentaries found in various patristic writings that are much older than the Greek Mss, we conclude that the singular should be the original reading.

b) Our conclusion in favour of the singular is also based on the results of our synchronic analysis of the text, such as grammatical, lexical and structural analysis and so on. In the course of our text-critical study, we found a number of reasons to support the singular reading. The most important of these can be listed as follows: the aorist tense of the verb ἐγεννήθη, the use of the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ in v. 12, the usage of verb forms in vv. 12-13, the explanatory character of the conjunction καί in v. 14, John's use of vocabulary, the context, the Johannine style of writing, the polemical thrust of v. 13 and so on. Many more reasons have been already presented at the end of the first part which we do not want to repeat here.

c) In our exegetical analysis, examining how the vocabularies and lexical semantics of v. 13 are interconnected with the neighbouring verses, we concluded that v. 13 has to be studied in the immediate context of vv. 11-14. Regarding its literary genre, we concluded that the Prologue belongs to the category of Wisdom hymns, such as Prov 8:22-31 and Sir 24:3-27.

d) The detailed grammatical/syntactic analysis was of great help in understanding the role that each word plays within the sentence pattern. The use of aorist tense gave us a strong reason to conclude in favour of the singular reading, because the Incarnation of Christ is a historical event of the past which took place once and for all.

e) Various literary structures of the Prologue proposed by the exegetes show that vv. 12-13 are at the very core of the Prologue

and describe the main theme of the whole Prologue, the Incarnation of Jesus.

f)   The three negations that John uses in v. 13 explain the 'mode' of Jesus' birth. These negations reveal their full meaning only in connection with the final positive statement (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη). They contrast birth from God with human begetting and emphasize that Jesus was not born of flesh and sexual desire. He is born of God. The divine Sonship of Jesus is the first and foremost theological implication of Jn 1:13.

g)   The expression οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων intends to offer a contrast between human and the divine generation. Interpreting this negation in reference to the OT texts (Cfr. Lev 12:4,7 and Ezek 16:6, 9), we arrive at the following important conclusion: the blood mentioned in v. 13 refers to Mary's blood. It implies that Mary did not shed any blood either at the moment of conception or during childbirth. Thus Mary's virginity in conceiving Jesus and in giving birth to him is one of the theological implications of Jn 1:13.

h)   The parallelism between Jn 1:12-13 and other texts such as 1 Jn 5:18 and Lk 1:35 clearly demonstrates the virgin birth of Jesus, his divine Sonship and the maternal virginity of Mary. The nature of Jesus's virgin birth is better understood when we compare it with the mystery of his Resurrection. In our research, we made use of all the possible biblical and non-biblical texts, Mss, patristic literature and the theological works of various modern scholars attempting to demonstrate that Jn 1:13 has to be read in the singular reading. Interpreting it in the singular, it refers to the mystery of the Incarnation and Mary's virginal maternity.

i)   The mystery of the Incarnation and the mystery of Mary's virginity are inseparable. They both play an essential role in our Christian faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us: "What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary

illumines in return, its faith in Christ".[609] Thus, we conclude our research, stating that Jn 1:13 seeks to reveal to us two important dogmas of faith: the Incarnation of Christ and the Virginal Maternity of Mary. Her vocation as the mother of the Incarnate Word is intimately related to her virginity. Mary's virginal integrity was not diminished by Jesus' birth; rather Jesus consecrated his mother's virginity.[610]

j) While interpreting our text (v. 13 of the Johannine Prologue), we have to keep in mind an important principle that the historicity of the fact (the Incarnation) and its theological meanings should not be separated. Both aspects are equally important. In dealing with the theme of the virginal conception and virgin birth of Jesus, we should maintain a balance between the physical/biological aspects of the historical event of the Incarnation and its symbolic/theological implications.

k) Noting that there is no consensus among scholars about the correct reading of the text, we consider it as a controversy which is still open for further studies. We observe that there is a kind of reluctance or hesitation on the part of theologians to accept the singular reading in their theological reflections. We propose that this controversy be subjected to further research by other exegetes from other points of view in order to ascertain that the singular should be the correct reading. We would like the singular reading, as proposed by our research in line with the opinions of great scholars such as M. Vellanickal, J. Galot and I. de la Potterie, to be accepted in today's theological thought as the correct reading.

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[609] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 487, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 1997², 122.

[610] Cfr. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* 57, in *AAS* 57 (1965) 61.

2. *Actualization*

Having given a summary of the conclusions drawn by us in our research, we want to provide some practical proposals to actualize the theological reflections we have presented. J. Varghese says: "Exegesis and theology can be seen to be fruitful only when their results are brought down to the grass root level of the Church's existence. Otherwise it remains an academic exercise, which although being necessary fails in its primary task: to uncover the riches of God's word for the simple people".[611] It is not enough that the Word of God be exegetically analyzed and theologically interpreted; it should also be lived out in the situations of everyday life. That is the ultimate goal of all our efforts to interpret any biblical text in a correct way, making use of the best exegetical methods available. Regarding the importance of actualization, the Pontifical Biblical Commission says:

> Actualization is possible because the richness of meaning contained in the biblical text gives it a value for all time and all cultures (cf. *Isa* 40:8; 66:18-21; *Matt* 28:19-20). The biblical message can at the same time both relativize and enrich the value systems and norms of behavior of each generation. Actualization is necessary because, although their message is of lasting value, the biblical texts have been composed with respect to circumstances of the past and in language conditioned by a variety of times and seasons.[612]

Based on the principles mentioned above, we propose the following guidelines inspired by the theological reflections of our research.

a) The necessity of professing our faith

The most important theological implication of Jn 1:13 is the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus, the Son of God. Our Christian faith is rooted in his Incarnation and divine Sonship. The dogmatic truth of his Incarnation and his divine Sonship has to be believed, professed and lived out. The scope of the Fourth Gospel is mentioned in

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[611] J. VARGHESE, *The Imagery of Love in the Gospel of John* (AnBib, 177), Gregorian and Biblical Press, Roma 2009, 375.

[612] PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 117-118.

Jn 20:30-31: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name". Thus the intent of the Evangelist is to make his readers believe that Jesus is the Son of God and to invite them to profess openly what they believe.[613] This is also true for our text, Jn 1:13. The Evangelist describes the virgin birth of Jesus in v. 13 of the Prologue in order to produce readers believing in the divine Sonship of Jesus. "To confess that virgin birth is to confess the deity of Christ; to confess the deity of Christ is to confess the virgin birth. They are inseparable Siamese twins".[614] Out of love for humanity, the eternal Word was born of a virgin and dwelt among us. This divine truth has to be believed and proclaimed.

Coming from India, where more than 97% of the population are not Christians, I am aware that it is not easy to openly proclaim Jesus as the Son of God in today's secular world. The proclamation of the Gospel is a basic responsibility of every Christian. As John says, proclaiming his divine Sonship we may have 'life in his name'. In the midst of difficulties and challenges, proclaiming Christ becomes our duty. If our proclamation of faith is not accepted, then we can evangelize them with our witness of life. The proclamation of the Gospel has to be done, not just by preaching alone, but by living out an exemplary life of charity and loving concern for others.

b) Following the Virgin Mary to be faithful to God

In our theological reflection, we stated that Mary is mother and at the same time virgin. By collaborating in the salvific plan of God, she became the 'Mother of Jesus, the Son of God' without losing the integrity of her virginity. She lived the virtue of holiness and remained a virgin throughout her life. Her life of virginity is a source of inspiration for us Christians to live a life of holiness. Her virginity is not

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[613] J. BEUTLER, "Faith and Confession. The Purpose of John", in J. PAINTER – R.A. CULPEPPER – F.F. SEGOVIA (ed.), *Word, Theology, and Community in John*, Chalice Press, St. Louis (MO) 2002, 29.

[614] R. GROMACKI, *The Virgin Birth*, Kregel, Grand Rapids (MI) 2002, 224.

merely a dogma of faith to be believed; but it is something much more than a simple object of faith.

Mary's virginity is a sign of her fidelity to God. Mary remained faithful to God's salvific plan at every moment of her life. We too are called to be faithful to God, as Mary was. In that way, Mary becomes a model for us to live a life of fidelity. In this regard, M. Pantahpallil writes:

> The virginity of Mary is the faith – collaboration with God. […] Rev 14:1-15 sheds light on the fact that metaphorically, virginity with regard to the believers is presented as fidelity to Jesus Christ and as a 'sign' of their eschatological union with the lamb. In short, Virginity and Maternity co-exist at the level of the profound mystery. The corresponding elements which we have highlighted both in Mary and the Church place them in parallel position and make Mary, a type". It means that every member of the Church is called to remain faithful to our God, who revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ. If one is really faithful to the only One God, he/she will not go behind the other false gods such as money, power, etc. Mary is our model for us to live a faithful Christian life.[615]

Mary is God-bearer, the *Theotokos*. To be Mother of the Son who is God is a great privilege of Mary. Her motherhood is extended to all the faithful. Her maternal care and love lead us always towards her Son and she inspires us all to live a faithful Christian life. We need to follow her life-style of holiness and fidelity to God's salvific plan. She invites us to do whatever her Son has told us (cfr. Jn 2:5).[616] Following in her footsteps, we can penetrate the mystery of God who was made man out of love.

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[615] M. PANTHAPALLIL, *Mary, the type of the Church in the Johannine writings*, 179.

[616] For a detailed study of John 2:1-12, cfr. D.S. KULANDAISAMY, "The First Sign of Jesus at the Wedding at Cana", in *Marianum* 68 (2006) 17-116.

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[1] We have classified the Bibliography into eight parts: 1) Biblical Texts, 2) Parabiblical Jewish texts, 3) Patristic Literature, 4) Magisterium of the Church, 5) Liturgical source, 6) Documents of Pontifical Commissions and Academies, 7) Documents of Ecumenical dialogue, 8) Books and Articles. The bibliography has been arranged in alphabetical order. But the fourth part containing the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church has been arranged in chronological order.

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