

The Reading of 1 Timothy 3:16 in Manuscripts F (010) and G (012)

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Introduction

Codex F, also known as Codex Augiensis and as GA¹ number 010, is a ninth century uncial manuscript held at Trinity College Cambridge. **Codex G**, also known as Codex Boernerianus and as GA 012, is of a similar date and is held in the Saxon State and University Library Dresden. Scans of them can be seen on the CSNTM website (see our references). The manuscripts are regarded as important evidence for the reading of 1 Timothy 3:16. They also show many similarities in their readings, and they both have a Latin translation, which does not always reflect the Greek, but rather the Latin tradition.

The opposing readings of 1 Timothy 3:16, in manuscript uncials², are:

- The traditional reading:
Θ̅C ΕΦΑΝΕΡΩΘΗ ΕΝ ΚΑΡΝΙ (where Θ̅C³ is the abbreviated form of ΘΕΟC, *God*)
God was manifested in the flesh
- The reading given in most modern Bibles:
ΟC ΕΦΑΝΕΡΩΘΗ ΕΝ ΚΑΡΝΙ
He who was manifested in the flesh

We are aware that codex F has a spelling mistake (ΕΦΑΝΗΡΩΘΗ for ΕΦΑΝΕΡΩΘΗ), but our study is concerned with the preceding word: whether it reads Θ̅C or ΟC or neither.

Summary

The differences are in the word Θ̅C *God* or ΟC *He who*, where we read a theta, Θ, or an omicron, Ο, but that is not all. In the manuscripts in general, and F and G are no exception, overlining of Θ̅C stands for ΘΕΟC, *God*. Now in F and G, we have overlining of ΟC in 1 Timothy 3:16, but – and we show how to verify this – nowhere else in all the nearby⁴ occurrences, in these manuscripts. So the line is not, as some claim, the mark of a breathing (more on this below), because the manuscripts do not use any breathing mark in other occurrences of the same word. The situation at 1 Timothy 3:16 is unique in each manuscript. It means that **the manuscripts are hybrid – a unique mixture Θ̅C and ΟC – and should not be quoted on either side of the argument**. They give a very ambiguous testimony as to the reading of 1 Timothy 3:16 in their predecessor. We do not claim them for ΘΕΟC, and we request that textual critics refrain from claiming them for ΟC. We will prove our case shortly, but first we give some background and motivation for the study.

¹ The GA (Gregory-Aland) manuscript numbering system is named after Caspar René Gregory and Kurt Aland.

² The modern printed Σ is C in manuscripts, and Ω is Ω. Unicode offers *lunate sigma* (U+03F9) and *Latin omega* (U+A7B6), as used here.

³ Our overlining is Unicode U+0305 *combining overline*. It does not render particularly well over a Θ on our computer.

⁴ We are not aware of *any* other cases of overlining of ΟC or non-overlining of Θ̅C. We could extend the search, which would cover more than 200 instances of ΟC, and more than 300 instances of Θ̅C, and far more if other forms than the masculine nominative singular were to be included.

Some background

When the Revised Version of the Bible was published in 1881, Dean John William Burgon (1813 - 1888) reviewed it, and the new Greek text on which it was based, and saw that it was very much a deviation from the traditional text of Scripture. He provided a mass of ancient evidence supporting traditional readings – in other words in support of the Majority Text. His defence of 1 Timothy 3:16, *God was manifested in the flesh*, (where the Revisers have replaced *God* by *he*), can be found in his book *Revision Revised*, which we hereafter refer to as [Burgon-RR], pages 424-520. The present article verifies Burgon's research on Codices F and G absolutely.

The issue in detail

Scans of the manuscripts are available on the internet, and it would be good to be able to reproduce the images here, but we do not wish to infringe copyright, so we simply give the text in my artist's impression – though I am certainly no artist or calligrapher.

Codex F - artist's impression only

OC ΕΦΑΝΗΡΩΘΗ

Codex G - artist's impression only

ΘC ΕΦΑΝΕΡΩΘΗ

The key question is **what do the lines over OC mean?** In most minuscule manuscripts, and in printed editions, breathings are added to the initial letter of words when it is a vowel. A rough breathing was like an English h-sound, called aspiration, and a smooth breathing was without aspiration. The breathings on an omicron are \acute{o} , *ho*, as in *hotter*, and \circ , *o*, as in *otter*. But that is not generally the case in the uncials – they have no breathing marks – and **this applies to F and G**, as our table of locations of the word OC (given below) shows⁵. If the overlining isn't a breathing, it must arise from $\overline{\Theta C}$, which stands for ΘEOC . The manuscript from which F and G were copied (the predecessor⁶) could have looked like this:

$\overline{\Theta C}$

To be unambiguous, the word must either have both the line in the theta *and* the overline, or neither. So either one line has dropped out from the two, or one line has been added when there was none. We are not claiming that the predecessor to F and G *did* look like the above figure, just that it is a distinct possibility. If the predecessor just contained OC, there should be no line over it in F and G, as in other occurrences of the word. If the predecessor contained $\overline{\Theta C}$, there should be a line in the theta, as in other occurrences of the word. May we not fairly claim that the odds are evens either way – and certainly not unquestionably in favour of OC, as presented in [TextComm], the textual commentary on the United Bible Societies' eclectic (non-majority) Greek text?

⁵ Overlining is often present over an initial letter ι, iota, in the same way as we use a dot over the i. Overlining of ι is common in other manuscripts too, as is the use of a double dot instead of a line. This phenomenon in no way has any bearing on the present issue.

⁶ It is possible that the predecessor was simply like F and G. But sooner or later, going back down the transmission chain, some predecessor, but still far from the original archetype, would surely read ΘC or OC, as no other manuscript is like F and G.

We have verified for ourselves Burgon's claim that the relative pronoun ὅς in codices F and G does not take a sign of an aspirate, showing that it must be the sign of contraction in 1 Timothy 3:16 [Burgon-RR, p.442]. The reader, with even an elementary knowledge of Greek, can verify this from the images on CSNTM. The table below will enable the reader to find the place relatively quickly⁷. In the table, the text given is as in [RP-2005]; the manuscripts show spelling errors and variations. For manuscript F the CSNTM file is **GA_10_nnnn.jpg**, where **nnnn** is a number which we give. We add L or R (left or right hand page) and the line number. For manuscript G the file is **012_nnn.jpg**. The manuscript only has one column, so we simply give the line number (excluding the heading) followed by **nnn**. The images of G are of much better quality than those of F. **Remark:** these CSNTM images have been indexed with scriptural references now, and that may be an easier way to navigate them.

Verse	Text	Location in F	Location in G
1 Timothy 3:16, showing the supralinear line			
1 Tim 3:16	θεὸς [FG ὌC] ἐφανερώθη / ἐφανερώθη	0117, line L9	197, line 13
ὅς [FG OC or O], showing <u>no</u> supralinear line			
Eph 1:14	ὅς ἐστιν ἀρραβὼν	0075, line R6	144, line 8
Eph 4:15	ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ	0079, line R17	151, line 11
Eph 5:5	ὅς ἐστιν εἰδωλολάτρης	0081, line L7	153, line 18
Col 1:7	ὅς ἐστιν πιστὸς	0091, line L2	168, line 17
Col 1:15	ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν	0091, line R1	169, line 12
Col 1:18	ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή	0091, line R14	169, line 21
Col 1:27	ὅς ἐστιν χριστὸς	0092, line R1	171, line 1
Col 2:10	ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ	0093, line L5	171, line 11
Col 4:9	ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν	0096, line R1	176, line 13
1 Tim 4:10	ὅς ἐστιν σωτὴρ	0117, line R19	198, line 13
ὅς [FG OC or O], showing <u>no</u> supralinear line			
Phil 2:6	ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ	0086, line L11	161, line 21
Phil 3:21	ὅς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα	0088, line R27	165, line 17
Col 1:13	ὅς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς	0091, line L24	169, line 9
1 Thes 2:13	ὅς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται	0099, line L7	180, line 20
1 Thes 5:24	ὅς καὶ ποιήσει	0111, line L1	187, line 5
2 Thes 3:3	ὅς στηρίζει [FG: τηρήσει] ὑμᾶς	0113, line L19	191, line 5
1 Tim 2:4	ὅς πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι	0115, line R15	195, line 6
Titus 2:14	ὅς ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν	0129, line L18	216, line 8

Final verdict: Codices F and G each give a self-contradictory reading and cannot be adduced as a witness for either side.

⁷ To get started, on www.csntm.org (as it is in July 2018), select library, then manuscripts, then check majuscules, then select GA 010 or GA 012. Then navigate the thumbnail images.

References

- [Burgon-RR] J. W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, originally published 1883.
<https://archive.org/details/revisionrevised00burggoog>
- CSNTM www.csntm.org
The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts.
- [TextComm] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, third edition, United Bible Societies.
- [RP-2005] *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Byzantine Textform, compiled and arranged by Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, 2005.
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<https://web.archive.org/web/20010301175136/http://www.byztxt.com>
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The *FarAboveAll* translation interleaves variations in the Greek of the Received Text and Orthodox Greek Patriarchal Text of 1904 (compiled by Antoniades) with the Robinson-Pierpont text. The English reproduces the variations in the same way as far as is necessary.